<Begin Tape 1, Side 1>

INTERVIEW BEGINS

Ray Ann: Today is June 19, 1989. This is Ray Ann Kremer interviewing Chippie Alterman for the Jewish Oral History Collection of Atlanta, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, The Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. I am interviewing her at her home. The first thing I would like to ask you . . . we’ll just jump right in . . . is how you got your name?

Chippie: It’s a derivation of ‘Zippora.’ I was named for my father’s mother, I believe. It could have been translated into Sarah, Celia, Chippie or something. They chose ‘Chippie’ for me. It stuck with me all these years . . . to an advantage and sometimes a disadvantage, but I’ve enjoyed it.

Ray Ann: That’s good. There’s not too many ‘Chippies’ around.

Chippie: No, not really.

Ray Ann: When they say ‘Chippie,’ you know who they mean.

Chippie: That’s right.

Ray Ann: That’s great. I’d like to begin as far back as you can remember in your family history. Could you tell me . . .

Chippie: Are you taping this?

Ray Ann: Yes.

Chippie: I think it’s very important in my background to know that my parents came to this country as teenagers . . . were married, they came to Atlanta [Georgia] because, as with everybody else, they had family, and no money.

Ray Ann: Where did they come from?
Chippie: My mother came from Poland and my father came from Russia.
Ray Ann: Do you know where?
Chippie: Poland . . . what do you call it . . . I forget the name of the city . . . Krakow [Polish: Kraków] or one of those cities. My daddy came from the deep part of Russia. His parents were fanatical types of Hebraist.¹ He and his brother left because they resented the difficult training of learning Hebrew. They became agnostics. Brilliant men, both of them, self-learned, self-educated in this country and learned all the classics, philosophers. Through them I was introduced to most of that. It’s a very heartening experience.
Ray Ann: Did they share with you what life was like in the part of Russia that they lived in?
Chippie: Yes.
Ray Ann: Tell me a little bit about that.
Chippie: They shared every young Jewish revolutionist background. They tell of the massacres and the dodging of the enlistment in the Russian army. That was one of the things that brought them to this country.²
Ray Ann: About when did they get here?
Chippie: In 1910 . . . in that period of time. The other brothers remained in New York. My father and mother came south. My mother never learned to read and write. As young grammar school children, [we] tried to teach her. My father, as I mentioned, was a self-educated philosopher. He had earned a living and did what other people did in this part of the country. He put a pack on his back and went up into the hills of Georgia, Tennessee, I guess [North or South] Carolina, and tried to eke out a living. As that wore off, he became a painter, among other things. He did anything he could to make a living, to send us to school, and get an education. That was the most important thing.
Ray Ann: Where did your parents meet?
Chippie: They met in Atlanta . . . introduced through one of their relatives. Let me tell you about the story that happened later on. We were educated in Columbus, Georgia. I was born in Atlanta. We went from one place to another, and then came back to Atlanta. My daddy went to LaFayette, Alabama. There were two girls at the time, and as I mentioned to you my mother

¹ A specialist in Jewish, Hebrew and Hebraic studies. Specifically, scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries who were involved in the study of Hebrew language and literature were commonly known by this designation, at a time when Hebrew was little understood outside practicing Jewish communities.
² Beginning in the 1880’s, waves of violent attacks against Jews swept across Russia. More than two million Jews fled Russia between 1880 and 1920, mostly to the United States.
couldn’t speak a word of English. This was an interesting thing to me as I look back. She lived as a single family of Jews . . . they did . . . in a town which looked upon the Jew as a strange phenomenon. She could not relate to her next door neighbor. If she wanted a bottle of milk or a potato or whatever, my father had to take care of that.

Ray Ann: She never learned to speak English?
Chippie: She did, as we went to school. We taught her by talking. She learned to speak English. She didn’t want to read for some reason. She was engrossed, I guess, in raising a family. That’s my mother over there . . . <Chippie points to her mother’s photo> . . . beautiful woman. I thought . . . for that part of this century when Jewish people were really looked upon as the extraordinary person . . . when I think of how she must have hated it . . . [she] never mentioned it . . . but not a friend with whom she could . . . can you imagine? It was like isolation. My daddy was accepted whole heartedly. They loved my father. He was always able to relate to the non-Jewish world. He had that type of personality and he was educated enough to where he could make his own way.

Ray Ann: Don’t you think maybe it was a communication problem . . . if she couldn’t talk to them?
Chippie: No, I think she couldn’t understand. She felt embarrassed. They couldn’t understand her. She, I guess, withdrew. She was a sick woman. She had asthma and that particular area didn’t agree with her. It was so difficult for her.

Ray Ann: This was in Columbus?
Chippie: This was in Lafayette, Alabama. We moved to Columbus [Georgia] because my daddy thought there were other Jews there to whom she could relate, which eventually she did. She loved Columbus. Columbus had a community that was growing . . . had a rabbi. It’s also an interesting thing that, because my daddy was agnostic, we didn’t belong to a synagogue. At that time, we didn’t know. We didn’t realize we were outsiders. My daddy felt . . . he was a very individual type of person. He felt as a young person a revolutionary type of feeling. He left to establish his identity. He didn’t want to have to be a believer in that sense. Interestingly enough, in his last years, he went back and joined the synagogue here in Atlanta. It was the most interesting . . . never told me about it but he joined the synagogue. Evidently [he] felt the need for it. I don’t know. In Columbus we went to school. We did go to Sunday school because we lived in the section of town where the temple was. The temple, as I look back on it, must have
taken us in to Sunday school as charity students because we didn’t belong. We knew everybody there. We played with all the kids and went all the way through Sunday school. It wasn’t until I was grown did I realize that we didn’t belong. But we got that type of Sunday school education because, I think, we fought for it. We wanted to be as other children . . . accepted. If you’re not, you play with children, go to school with them five days a week, and they ask you, “What did you do on Sunday?” To say, “We did nothing,” at that time . . . it was shameful for us.

Ray Ann: You knew you were Jewish. Did you do anything at home?

Chippie: Yes, everything. My father took the Jewish . . . The Forward. He had Hebrew books. Some of his . . . I gave to the libraries, different places. Everything in our home was symbolic of living Judaism. That’s the thing that I find so interesting. Where some of us today put such emphasis on inane things that you try to teach children, and it doesn’t take. We all three knew we were Jewish children and were proud of it in a Christian community, more or less. We had all Christian friends plus Jewish friends.

Ray Ann: You celebrated all the holidays?

Chippie: So to speak, yes, when you say celebrate. We never kept kosher, but never had treif. But we knew . . . I would say yes, we celebrated holidays.

Ray Ann: You lit the candles for Hanukkah?

Chippie: Oh, yes.

Ray Ann: Sabbath candles?

Chippie: Everything, yes, my mother did everything.

Ray Ann: Passover?

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3 The Forward, also called The Jewish Daily Forward, is an American newspaper published in New York City for a Jewish-American audience that began in 1897. The organization today publishes two newspapers, weekly in English (The Forward) and biweekly in Yiddish (Yiddish Forward or Forverts) and websites updated daily in both languages. (2016)

4 Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law such as pork or foods that are not prepared according to kosher standards.

5 Hebrew for ‘dedication.’ An eight-day festival of lights usually falling around Christmas on the Christian calendar. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees in 165 BCE over the Seleucid rules of Palestine, who had desecrated the Temple. The Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple altar to Jewish worship by rekindling the menorah but could only find one small jar of ritually pure olive oil. This oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days, enabling them to prepare new oil. The Hanukkah menorah, or hanukiah, with its nine branches, is used to commemorate this miracle by lighting eight candles, one for each day, by the ninth candle.

6 Sabbath candles are lit by the eldest woman of the house no later than 18 minutes before sundown on Friday evening (just before the Sabbath begins). After kindling the candles, she waives her hands in front of the flames three times to welcome the Sabbath, covers her eyes with her hands, and recites the blessing over the candles.

7 Hebrew: Pesach. The anniversary of Israel’s liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, matzot, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty
Chippie:  [We] didn’t keep kosher, but we had everything. We knew we were Jews. I don’t know how to explain it. Why were those things so important?

Ray Ann:  Did your mother feel it was important?

Chippie:  My daddy more than my mother. My mother was a follower. My daddy was a leader. Having come from a very observant family in Russia, he must have felt some need that he couldn’t discard. I’ve often wondered about that. But we didn’t keep kosher. We knew we were Jewish people and that is a phenomenon to me today.

Ray Ann:  Did your father have any contact or write his family that was back in Russia? Did he lose contact with them or keep it?

Chippie:  He had a brother who went to Argentina, with whom he kept in touch. No, I don’t think they kept . . . I think that when they became certain money earners, he and his brothers would send back a few dollars. But they tried, as other people did, to bring all their family over here. I think those that wanted to come, finally could come. He kept in touch to that degree. As I said, we were educated in Columbus, Georgia . . . he established a business here. He was not a good business man. He was that type of person. He had a credit clothing store. Are you familiar with that type of business? People would come in and buy things with what they said “on time.” They would pay $1 a week. You give them the merchandise, and they would come back to you and pay you $1 a week. There was a big mill town besides being Fort Benning, Georgia. The whole town was actually built because of Fort Benning and the mills. My father became friendly with a lot of the officers in the army and the other people. Our social life was mainly with non-Jews. My daddy would pick out one or two families with whom he would feel comfortable. One was an older Jewish man from a prominent observant Jewish family, interestingly enough. He was what you would call a ‘renegade’ at the time. He was the [Samuel] Myers family from Columbus, Georgia who was related to the Feinbergs, and the

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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.

8 Fort Benning is a United States Army post established in 1918 outside Columbus, Georgia with the capability to deploy combat-ready forces by air, rail, and highway. Much of the growth of Columbus can be attributed to the development of Fort Benning.

9 Louis Feinberg (1905 -1982) was born in Columbus Georgia, one of five children of Mr. and Mrs. Abe Feinberg. He lived in Thomasville, Georgia for 43 years. He was the owner of the Shoe Box store. Siblings: William, Israel,
Cohns,¹⁰ and all the Jewish people. But my daddy never did associate with most of the Jewish people.

Ray Ann: Except for this one man?

Chippie: Except for this one man.

Ray Ann: And his name was?

Chippie: One more eccentric.

Ray Ann: What was his name?

Chippie: Coleman. The Coleman family. These were very . . . radicals so to speak. I think my daddy was a radical. He was among the first of the whites to associate with the black movement. I’m jumbling around . . .

Ray Ann: Let’s go back to that. When was that approximately?

Chippie: You mean to associate with the blacks?

Ray Ann: Yes, and how did he do it?

Chippie: He was . . . after he lost his credit business because he had to give that up. He gave all his merchandise away and didn’t collect for it. He just couldn’t say, “No.” The men would come in with their children. They didn’t have anything to wear, no shoes. He kept giving them the merchandise, and the mills closed down. He had no way of collecting it, so we went broke. We lost our home, our car, and all that stuff. But during the time, it must have been the very early years, he would associate with the college professors at Spelman College¹¹ [Atlanta, Georgia].

Ray Ann: We’re not in Columbus anymore?

Chippie: No, I’m sorry, we’re in Atlanta. I’m jumping around, excuse me.

Ray Ann: Wait a minute.

Chippie: You’re right, this was in Atlanta.

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¹⁰ Born in Columbus, Georgia, Aaron Cohn (1916 – 2012) served as a juvenile justice judge for over 45 years. First appointed in 1964, Cohn won multiple honors for his service to the community. In 2003, he became the longest sitting juvenile court judge in the country. In 2009, at age 94, Cohn was still on the bench helping to guide the lives of troubled youth. During World War II, Cohn served as an officer under General George Patton, helping to liberate the Ebensee Concentration Camp. His wife, Janet Ann Lilienthal Cohn (1921 – 2011) spent her life raising her family and supporting various charitable and philanthropic causes throughout the Columbus community. The Cohns had three children: daughters Gail and Jane, and son, Leslie.

¹¹ Spelman College is a liberal arts women’s college in Atlanta. It was founded in 1881 as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary, and is one of America’s oldest historically black colleges for women. Spelman received its charter in 1924.
Ray Ann: Let’s go back. When you were in Columbus and you lost the business, about when was that?

Chippie: I’ll tell you exactly when. I was in my last year of high school. I went to an industrial high school, so I was able to go to work. I couldn’t afford college. This was in 1932, at which time we moved to Atlanta. I went to work as an all-day salesperson for $1.25 per day. I won’t mention the Jewish people’s names, but most people know them. I gave $1 to my parents and I kept the quarter to use.

Ray Ann: What did you do? You were selling in a store?

Chippie: Women’s merchandise.

Ray Ann: What store were you selling in?

Chippie: Wait a minute.

Ray Ann: Where were you working?

Chippie: On Edgewood Avenue and Boulevard. Most of the Jewish storekeepers lived in that neighborhood on Marietta Street. They had clothing stores. I don’t know whether you would be familiar with that or not. It’s a regular . . . they used to call them the Jewish type stores, where they hire all these people for Saturday. It was almost like slave driving because they wouldn’t let you sit down. It was a very interesting type of thing in Jewish life. It was like, you hire people and they produce. They would pick us up, actually, and they’d take us home. It was too late for young kids. I was 15 years old. And . . . I can’t tell you, everybody that wanted or needed a job was glad to get it. We were thrilled. I worked in a store on Marietta Street.

Ray Ann: What was the name of it?

Chippie: I don’t think they had names. It was Mrs. Russ’s store, Mrs. Horowitz’ store, Mr. . . . he had a store. All the Jewish people had this kind of clothing store that everybody needed to sell cheap merchandise.

Ray Ann: Who were the customers?

Chippie: The customers were any working people who couldn’t afford to go downtown to Rich’s and the other kind of stores to buy things. These were so called ‘values.’ You could get

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12 Marietta Street is a historic street in Downtown Atlanta. The street leads from Atlanta towards the town of Marietta, as its name indicates. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Marietta Street was a center for family owned businesses and local merchants, many of whom were Jewish. Jacobs’ Pharmacy, where the first Coca-Cola fountain drink was sold in 1886, was on Marietta Street, as well as stores selling dry goods, stationery, men’s and women’s clothing, and accessories.

13 Rich’s was a department store retail chain, headquartered in Atlanta that operated in the southern United States.
a pair of shoes for the cheapest price. Bargain stores, you could label all of them.

**Ray Ann:** Kind of like the Lower East Side [in New York City, New York] now.

**Chippie:** That’s right. Absolutely, that type of thing. You were glad to get a job there. The move into Atlanta with my father and his association . . . he subscribed to . . . the radical [news] papers. He was not a ‘card carrying communist.’\textsuperscript{14} He was a party sympathizer.

**Ray Ann:** Is that what you mean by radical?

**Chippie:** Yes, because in those days they were considered radical. You remember when McCar . . . what was his name?

**Ray Ann:** McCarthy?

**Chippie:** [Joseph] McCarthy\textsuperscript{15} was looking into . . . we were investigated. When my sister went to work in Washington [D.C.], they sent people from Washington to investigate us. Because she had applied for a job . . . gave information, and they had to come and check. The whole thing. I thought at the time that my father was communist, but that was his prerogative if he wanted to. I subscribed to *The Nation*\textsuperscript{16} magazine and *New Republic*\textsuperscript{17} . . . you get the trend, what they would call the liberal.

**Ray Ann:** Very liberal.

**Chippie:** Very liberal in those days, in 1935 or so. My daddy . . . I want to make a point of this because my daddy became socially friendly with black professors. My mother was

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\textsuperscript{14} ‘Card-carrying Communist’ is a term that was popularized during the Second Red Scare (roughly from 1950 to 1956) as a label for members of Communist Party and was used in this manner by both the House Un-American Activities Committee investigations and Senator Joseph McCarthy.

\textsuperscript{15} Joseph McCarthy (1908-1957) served as a United States Senator from Wisconsin (Republican) from 1947 to his death in 1957. He latched onto Communism and exposing Communist sympathizers in the government and military and made the issue his cause célèbre. The whole anti-Communist fever of the 1950’s became known as ‘McCarthyism.’ According to McCarthy there were 205 Communists in the State Department (or 87 or 51, depending on which speech he was giving). Although McCarthy carefully avoided any antisemitic innuendo linking Jews and Communism, many Jewish organizations responded negatively. In fact, 21 percent of people in 1948 believed that “most Jews were Communists” and more than half associated Jews with spying. Of the 124 people hauled before McCarthy’s committee (House Committee on Un-American Activities), 79 were Jews, thus leading to their sensitivity on the matter. McCarthy eventually got so carried away finding “Communists under every bed” that he himself was the subject of a congressional investigation and he was censured by the Senate. He died in 1957.

\textsuperscript{16} *The Nation* is the oldest continuously published weekly magazine in the United States, founded in 1865. Devoted to politics and culture, it is self-described as “the flagship of the left.”

\textsuperscript{17} *The New Republic* is a liberal American magazine of commentary on politics and the arts founded in 1914 by leaders of the Progressive Movement.
frightened to death because we lived on Pulliam Street,\(^\text{18}\) which was an enclave of very conservative Jewish people, among whom was Rabbi [Harry] Epstein,\(^\text{19}\) who lived there at the time . . . and a lot of other Jews whose ideas were very conservative. He invited, into our home on Pulliam Street, a black group of intelligent men and women. My mother, I remember so well, pulled the shades down and was terrified that somebody would report it. I think eventually it got out and he didn’t do it anymore. But he continued his friendship with those people because, don’t forget, my father was a very intelligent, sympathetic, liberal, kind person. My mother had the sense of humor in our family. She was the one who cared for the home. When we had to have a dollar stretch to a hundred, she was like so many other Jewish people. She was able to do it. She had no compunction about telling us children that daddy has to eat chicken. “If there’s only one chicken, and if there is any left, you can have it because daddy has to get out and work and make a living.” It was a very unusual background, Ray, when I look at it, because we didn’t feel poor. We didn’t know what poor was. Our house was filled with music and laughter and young people and, I don’t know, excitement and joy. I guess you would call it joy. When you look back on a childhood, there are so many people that blame certain incidence in their childhood. We had a happy childhood. Until I was grown, I didn’t know that we were poor. We didn’t have all the dresses and things that people had, but we didn’t miss it because it was just a good . . . good life. That’s all. I know that there were times when my mother was unhappy and my daddy bored her because we had family in Atlanta, and they were very nice to us. Except, this is one time when I realized we were poor. They had a wedding, which they thought was socially outstanding and it probably was at the time. We were not invited. They said [it was] because my mother didn’t have the proper clothes. So at that time I realized that something was awry. But it didn’t bother any of us. It didn’t bother us at all.

**Ray Ann:** Did it bother your mother?

**Chippie:** Yes, terribly, terribly. Because it bothered her, it hurt my father. My daddy was . . .

**Ray Ann:** What relatives would these be . . . on your mother’s side or on your father’s side?

**Chippie:** On my mother’s side.

\(^{18}\) Pulliam Street runs parallel to I-75/I-85 in Downtown Atlanta in what was formerly a residential neighborhood in the vicinity of the old Atlanta Stadium (near the current Turner Field). The area was the center of much of Atlanta’s Jewish community from the late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century, and was home to many Jewish families, and civic and business leaders. Several synagogues were located in the neighborhood.

\(^{19}\) Rabbi Harry Epstein (1903-2003) served as rabbi of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia from 1928 to 1982, when he became rabbi emeritus. Under Rabbi Harry Epstein, the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they joined in 1952.
Ray Ann: Because you mentioned that both of them came here because they had relatives here.
Chippie: Yes.
Ray Ann: Who came here first? What relatives came?
Chippie: My father . . . my mother’s relatives I think came. These were the ones who were good to us, so to speak. Not knowing the difference, we accepted that.
Ray Ann: How were they related to them?
Chippie: My mother’s stepmother [from] Europe . . . if your mother died, you married the sister or something of that sort or whoever in the family. By the chain of events she was part of this family’s group. They did not mean to be unkind. They were so impressed with money.
Ray Ann: They had probably made it . . . what did they do to make it?
Chippie: Dry goods20 store.
Ray Ann: Dry goods store . . .
Chippie: They had a nice little home . . .
Ray Ann: What was their name?
Chippie: I’d rather not say . . . because it’s not complimentary to them. Wish I could say something.
Ray Ann: This was a long time ago.
Chippie: Yes, but a great number of them are living. This marriage to which you were not invited is still in effect. However, interestingly enough, she would love to be friendly with us now. But that’s neither here nor there.
Ray Ann: There is no relationship then with that part of the family?
Chippie: No. No relationship at all. It is not a big thing except that it hurt my mother. It came at a time when I realized that money was what we didn’t have and that was why we were not invited. That chilled that family relationship, more or less. I’ll give you this little story. From one job to another, I had been able to secure a job with a wholesale cloak and dress company here. These people are our dear close friends now. We’ve been friendly with them personally and socially for 52 years.
Ray Ann: Who’s that?
Chippie: Sylvan Makover.21 He’s been president of the synagogue. I’m telling you this

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20 Dry goods are products such as textiles, clothing, personal care, and toiletry items. In United States retailing, a dry goods store carries consumer goods that are distinct from those carried by hardware stores and grocery stores.
because when I was working for him I got another job . . . [I] was recommended to go to work for Mr. Alterman\(^{22}\) and his brothers. I went to work for him when I was sixteen-and-a-half. I did all these other jobs during the year and I worked for him and . . .

**Ray Ann:** Was that a store also?

**Chippie:** No, he was in the wholesale feed and grocery business, which they developed into wholesale groceries, tobaccos, and stuff. His father came to Atlanta when . . . Sammy was born in Atlanta. Two of his brothers were born in New York, and his sister. He and the rest of his brothers were born in Atlanta. He had to quit school to go to work because all of his other brothers were younger.

**Ray Ann:** Had his father come to this country?

**Chippie:** Yes, he came from Russia. His mother came from Austria. His mother’s family is prolific in this city, the Newman family. A lot of people on her side of the family are here. When his father . . . started business, he was in a little grocery store about the size of this room, and they had a room behind it. They had eight children who survived. His mother died in childbirth. She had too many pregnancies, and they didn’t know how to handle. She was on her feet cooking and standing in the store and taking care of the children. It was one of those typical, I would say, types of living for Jewish families trying to get ahead. They didn’t want a hand out. They didn’t make a good living until the boys were able to come along. The daughter worked in the store and went to school, came home and took care of the children. It is so typical, I would say, of any Jewish family of that era whether they were in the steel or metal business or grocery business, to which most of them gravitated, and all of them were raising families and wanted them to be educated. That was the main thing, but when Mr. Alterman moved out of the grocery

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\(^{21}\) Sylvan Makover (1914-1999) moved with his family to Atlanta, Georgia in 1928. His father Thomas started Shirley of Atlanta, a manufacturer of wholesale dresses. Sylvan and his younger brother Stanford later ran the business. Makover was a leader in Atlanta’s Jewish community serving on the board of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center. Other organizations in which he was active include Camp Barney Medintz, Israel Bonds, Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Moas Chitim Appeal (a once-a-year effort to give Jews funds to enjoy Passover).

\(^{22}\) Louis Alterman, a Russian immigrant, founded the family business in 1923 as a small wholesale food company. In 1939, Louis and four of his five older brothers launched the retail grocery business, Alterman Foods Inc., and the industry in Georgia was on its way to being revolutionized. They opened the first supermarket in Atlanta on Marietta Street in 1949. The store was named Big Apple after a popular dance of the time. The company grew quickly and operated under the banner of Big Apple and Food Giant Supermarkets. The company also had a wholesale division, ABC Food Stores, which supplied independent grocery stores throughout the state and enabled the Alterman brothers to command a greater share of Georgia’s grocery business. By 1968, the company went public on the American Stock Exchange. By the time the company was sold in 1980 it had grown into a supermarket chain of 110 stores.
store into the feed business. When I say “feed” [meaning] horses, and whatever went with that. Tobacco. Each little segment was supposedly moved forward.

Ray Ann: What is Mr. Alterman’s first name?


Ray Ann: Louis.

Chippie: This is a picture of him and the boys. Only one of them went to college. He was in college at the time.

Ray Ann: Who was that?

Chippie: Abe Alterman. The rest of them worked. Not another one went to college. They became involved in making the business grow and go.

Ray Ann: What did Abe do?

Chippie: Abe studied literature. He was one of the interesting ones in the group, but different. He did not want to go into the business. He just didn’t. He didn’t believe in the work ethics . . . He left Duke [University; Durham, North Carolina] and they . . .

Ray Ann: That’s where he went?

Chippie: Yes, he went to Duke. He left Duke and went to Columbus, Ohio. He went to work because they wouldn’t furnish him a living, as such. They would send him money from time to time. He went to work in a funeral parlor at night and tried to make a go of it there. He met a most unusual girl, who was a daughter to the Schiff family.23 Have you ever heard of the Schiff family? She was from the artistic Schiffs.

Ray Ann: Of New York?

Chippie: Yes. She was from the Schiffs there. They were authors and musicians and big in . . . publishing and so forth.

Ray Ann: I thought some of them were in the securities business.

Chippie: Yes, that’s right.

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23 Jacob Henry Schiff (1847 – 1920) was an American banker, businessman, and philanthropist. He helped finance, among many other things, the Japanese military efforts against Tsarist Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, Schiff migrated to the United States in 1865, and joined the firm Kuhn, Loeb & Co. From his base on Wall Street in New York, he was the foremost Jewish leader from 1880 to 1920 in what later became known as the ‘Schiff era,’ grappling with all major Jewish issues including the plight of Russian Jews under the Tsar, antisemitism, care of Jewish immigrants, and the rise of Zionism. He also became a director of many corporations including the National City Bank of New York, Equitable Life Assurance Society, Wells Fargo & Company, and the Union Pacific Railroad. Schiff and helped establish and develop Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Division in the New York Public Library, and the American Jewish Committee. His granddaughter, Dorothy Schiff (1903 - 1989) was an owner and publisher of the *New York Post* for nearly 40 years.

Chippie: Yes, they were, too. She was a very innocent type. Anyway, he told us she would never have to cook. All she would have to do was fix tuna salad or that kind of stuff. He was so enamored of her. Unfortunately, since then they’ve been divorced . . . about 10 or 15 years ago. He was a different type of person. Eventually he came back to Atlanta. He was staked to a business and made a tremendous success in the dog food business, sold out, and he’s retired at this point. There are so many ramifications of interest in this family . . . it would take years. But I think we need to get back to his involvement. When I was 16 and working for these different people and earning . . . out of my quarter a week, I began to save. Do you remember what a dime bank was? Do you remember?

Ray Ann: A little.

Chippie: Little things. You saved $5 . . . if you could put it aside. I became very active. My first interest was Young Judaea.24 That was where all the young people were involved. We had . . . I’m sure you’ve heard ‘the Alliance,’25 as it was called. It was the original [Atlanta Jewish] Community Center on Capitol Avenue.

Ray Ann: Tell me a little bit more about that. I haven’t heard about that.

Chippie: That was the meeting place for all people.

Ray Ann: All Jewish people?

Chippie: All Jewish people. It was a place where they had the [Ben] Massell [Dental] Clinic,26 where all people were allowed to come. Not just Jews, it was for everybody. Edward

24 Young Judaea is a peer-led Zionist youth movement founded in 1909. Its programs include youth clubs, conventions, summer camps and Israel programs that provide experiential programming through which Jewish youth and young adults build meaningful relationships with their peers, emphasize social action, and develop a lifelong commitment to Jewish life, the Jewish people, and Israel.

25 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.’

26 The Ben Massell Dental Clinic (BMDC) provides dental care to Atlanta's neediest patients. Its roots date back to 1929 when a dental clinic was added to the Morris Hirsch Clinic which provided outpatient medical services to those unable to afford care. When the dental clinic needed to relocate, Ben Massell, one of Atlanta's builders and developers, acquired a location on Pryor Street. In 1959 the clinic needed to move again and Ben Massell, with help from the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, secured a location on 7th Street where it remained for 49 years. In honor of his involvement clinic was renamed the Ben Massell Dental Clinic (BMDC). In 2008 it moved to its current location on 14th Street. (2016)
I’m sure you’ve heard the name, was, in my opinion, the father of this community, the Jewish community. He never did learn to speak without an accent, something like Henry Kissinger, if you’ll recall. He was the most brilliant social worker that this country, not this city, had ever seen. I knew it at the time, and I have known it more as time went by. I have had such an interest in that type of thing, that I had listened to him tell stories about a man who was head of the YMHA [Young Men’s Hebrew Association] in New York. He said he was ‘the master social worker.’ I wish I could recall his name but I’m sure that you will find it. I went to visit with him, and he greeted me as if I were something special. Why? Because he felt that Ed Kahn in Atlanta was one of the most unusual men that the Jewish social workers had ever seen. I mention this to you because I think his influence on guiding the Jewish people in Atlanta was so remarkable, and it still carries to this day. I must add that he did it at the sacrifice of his social life. Nobody liked him.

Ray Ann: What did he do that made them not like him?

Chippie: He was very domineering. He was caustic. He was honest to a fault. He was opinionated, dogmatic, all of those things. He married Helen [Schulman Kahn], I can’t remember, from Louisville, Kentucky, who worked there and is still living today at the Jewish Towers. But this man taught, gave value to this community. He guided the development and he brought together and focused a view of community that was influential. In other words, there were synagogues who were vying for influence. There were organizations who were looking for influence, what do you call it, on their own . . . what is the word, not automatically . . . they wanted to be a separate enclave of influence. He almost laid down the law and taught how you look at things from a central point of what is good for community.

Ray Ann: He didn’t care what synagogue you belonged to . . . it was just the community?

Chippie: No, but he wanted the interest first to be . . . in maintaining the community and

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27 Edward M. Kahn (1895-1984) was an immigrant from Bialystok, Poland. He became a leader in Atlanta’s Jewish community and served as executive director of several organizations including the Jewish Educational Alliance, the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, and the Atlanta Federation of Jewish Social Service, an earlier incarnation of the current Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. He also worked with Southern Israelite as a writer and adviser.

28 Henry Alfred Kissinger (b. 1923 Heinz Alfred Kissinger in Germany) is an American diplomat and political scientist. He served as National Security Advisor and later concurrently as United States Secretary of State in the administrations of presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. After his term, his advice has been sought by world leaders including subsequent presidents of the United States.

29 The Young Men’s Hebrew Association was set up in various cities of the United States for the mental, moral, social and physical improvement of Jewish young men. The first YMHA was started in New York in 1874 and spread across the country in the following years. They still exist today and are more like social clubs.
seeing to it that people thought first from the umbrella type of thing.

**Ray Ann:** What period of time are we talking about?

**Chippie:** I’m talking about when I became interested. I was 16 going on 17.

**Ray Ann:** Where were you born?

**Chippie:** I was born here.

**Ray Ann:** When?

**Chippie:** In 1917. I’m 72 now. That must have been 56 years ago at least. He was able to get what we call the German element . . . we didn’t have Hispanic at the time . . . the Russian element, and, I guess the non-element of people, to come together, which was a feat of unbelievable accomplishment and, not only that . . . to hold it together. There was always some group fighting . . . ‘autonomy’ was the word I wanted. Autonomy seems to still be a diversifying thing in a community. I was grateful that I came along during his time because I think I realized that unless you build an umbrella, there’s nothing cohesive. People will still continue . . . they do today. The AA [Ahavath Achim]\(^{30}\) is a tremendous synagogue. They furnish almost everything that a Jew could want, I imagine, in order to become autonomous. I’m not being critical, I’m just giving you my point of view. There was, during many years, a bitter fight among the synagogues and the Community Center and other groups because there was not enough volunteer work, I mean [enough] volunteers to go around. Each person, each group fought for volunteer’s and for their ideals, which I imagine is good. Nobody says, “That’s not good.” But you have to have a strong base . . . I say that he did it . . . he sacrificed his whole being for it. He formed a cohesive Atlanta community.

**Ray Ann:** Was this the forerunner to the Atlanta Jewish Community Center?

**Chippie:** It was part. He was part of it. He was . . .

**Ray Ann:** He helped start it?

**Chippie:** He was the executive director. No, he didn’t start it, exactly, but he was the executive director who brought it all into focus. Let me say this. Whether people liked him or not, he was respected. He had the knowledge, he had the background, he had the inspiration, he had the drive. This was a phenomenal person, Ray. Atlanta was blessed with his presence here.

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\(^{30}\) Ahavath Achim was founded in 1887 in a small room on Gilmer Street. In 1920 they moved to a permanent building at the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer Street. 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.
Since he died, Atlanta has grown and gone forward, and I would say greatly because of those that he educated. I will say this. I think during his lifetime that he developed leaders whose work still shows today.

Ray Ann: Who would some of those people be?

Chippie: Barney Medintz, Max Kuniansky . . . some of them died . . . Philip Shulhafer, Rebecca Gershon, Josephine Shulhafer, Rabbi [Jacob] Rothschild was one of his protégées, and Janice Rothschild [Blumberg]. We also had those from the Arbeiter Ring. Do you know what that means?

31 Barney Medintz (1910-1960) was a Jewish leader both nationally and locally in Atlanta. He was one of the national leaders of the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Bond Organization. He was also vice-president of the National Community Relations Advisory Council, vice-president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and a former member of the executive committee of the American Jewish Committee. Locally he was president of the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and past president of the Atlanta Jewish Community Council and the Atlanta Bureau of Jewish Education. He was also president of the Southeast Regional Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. Medintz graduated from Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois where he was a star basketball player. He came to Atlanta after he graduated to become a recreation director at the Jewish Educational Alliance. Camp Barney Medintz, a Jewish camp in Cleveland, Georgia, is named in his honor.

32 Max Kuniansky was a pillar of Atlanta’s Jewish community for decades. Together with Erwin Zaban, Milton Weinstein and Sidney Feldman, he was instrumental in expanding the (then) Jewish Community Center in midtown Atlanta. Max was instrumental in working with the Blumenthal family to develop the (then) Cobb County Shirley Blumenthal Park (SBP) branch of the JCC located in East Cobb. While the SBP campus was named in honor of the Blumenthal family; the SBP building was named in honor of the Kuniansky family.

33 Philip Shulhafer was the personnel director at Montag Brothers, Inc. and was active in Jewish community organizations in Atlanta. In the 1950s, he began to integrate Montag Brothers, which became one of the first businesses in the South to have white employees working side-by-side with black employees. His wife, Hannah, worked to abolish child labor and to set fair labor standards for all workers.

34 Rebecca Mathis Gershon (1889 – 1987) was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On a visit to Atlanta she met and later married Harry Gershon. She was involved in the life of the Jewish community of Atlanta including the National Council of Jewish Women, the Federation, and Hadassah as well as in the civil rights movement.

35 Josephine Wachtel Shulhafer (1874 – 1968) was one of the oldest members of the Temple in Atlanta and was active in the Sisterhood, and the National Council of Jewish Women. During World War I and II she was a ‘Grady Lady’ at Grady Memorial Hospital and the old Hospital 48 for veterans. She was a former circulation manager for Life and Look magazines and was married to Arthur A. Shulhafer (1869 – 1940) who was active in the Temple.

36 Rabbi Jacob Rothschild (1911 – 1973) was rabbi of the city’s oldest Reform congregation, the Temple, in Atlanta, Georgia from 1946 until his death in 1973 from a heart attack. He forged close relationships with the city’s Christian clergy and distinguished himself as a charismatic spokesperson for civil rights.

37 Janice Rothschild Blumberg (b. 1924) has held leadership positions in numerous organizations, including the B’nai B’rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, and served as president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. She has lectured at universities, synagogues, museums and academic conferences across the country. In addition to authoring and contributing to several books, she has written articles for the Encyclopedia Judaica, Southern Jewish History, The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Sunday Magazine. In 1946, she married Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, a prominent and well-known rabbi of the Temple in Atlanta. Rabbi Rothschild died in 1974. Janice later remarried and moved to Washington, D.C. with her second husband, David Blumberg. Following his death, she returned to Atlanta in 2012.

38 The Arbeiter Ring is a Yiddish language-oriented American-Jewish organization committed to social justice, Jewish community and Ashkenazi culture. It provides old age homes for its aging members, as well as schools, camps, affordable health insurance and programs of concerts, lectures and holiday celebrations. It was founded in 1900 and was strongly socialist politically. It has moved more to the right on the American political spectrum in modern times.
Ray Ann: Tell me about that.

Chippie: That’s the labor movement. We had people, brilliant people. Mr. [Michel J.] Merlin,
his wife, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Davis . . .

Ray Ann: Mr. Davis?

Chippie: D. Davis. He was Barney Medintz’s father-in-law. They were almost from the opposite ends of the pole, but respected each other. They worked towards the same thing . . . [they] worked for Jewish education. Those things were such strong points in these people’s groups. I’m thinking . . . some of the other . . . the [Aaron] Lichtensteins.

Ray Ann: Would you say he had a great influence on you too?

Chippie: Definitely. During the time when he was active . . . we had in this community . . .

Mr. Kahn was instrumental in bringing in another force that made such an impact on this community. His name was Sam Rosenberg. People who came in contact with him were never the same. He was a rabbi but not a practicing rabbi. He was an educator, the likes of which I don’t think you see anymore. He brought within his realm . . . almost every person in the community who respected his ability, his knowledge, his kindness, his sweetness. Incidentally, he and Barney Medintz became inseparable.

Ray Ann: What was he doing for a living?

Chippie: He was working and establishing the Bureau of Jewish Education.

Michel (Mitchell Julius) Merlin (1886 - 1969) came to the United States from Dubrovna, Russia. He became a prominent citizen after arriving in Atlanta in 1907 and was active in the Jewish community and beyond. Soon after the Arbeiter Ring or Workmen’s Circle was established in New York City, a branch was established in Atlanta with Merlin as the acknowledged leader. On a national level, he represented the People’s Relief Committee during World War I. He was also involved in the Jewish Labor Committee which was organized to fight antisemitism. Merlin was a board member of several organizations including the Jewish Social Service Federation, the Jewish Educational Alliance, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Home, and the first Jewish Welfare Fund.

David Davis (1884 - 1978), also called ‘D. Davis,’ was born in Russia and settled in Atlanta in 1905. He was a businessman who was active in the Jewish community and authored the book *In Gang Fun Di Yorn, The Passing Years: Memories of Two Worlds*. He was a partner in Mutual Clothing and Uniform Company, and was active in B’nai B’rith, the Atlanta Jewish Community Council, the Jewish Home and the Jewish Community Center.

Samuel H. Rosenberg (1905 – 1962) was executive director of the Atlanta Bureau of Jewish Education. He came to Atlanta to head up the Bureau in 1949 after having served as educational director of congregations in Rochester, N.Y., New Haven, Conn., Jacksonville, Florida and Buffalo, New York. He was a member of the board of the National Council for Jewish Education, which is made up of professional Jewish educators and worked very closely with the American Association for Jewish Education. He was particularly instrumental in the development of a Hebrew High School in Atlanta and an Institute of Jewish Studies.

The Atlanta Bureau of Jewish Education (ABJE) was created in 1946 to foster Jewish education in the city. In 1947, it was instrumental in forming a Hebrew High School in Atlanta. Over the course of four decades, the Bureau offered services to schools, the community and individuals including curriculum guides for Atlanta-area public schools, Holocaust education programs, conferences, workshops, programs for teenagers in Israel, festivals, adult education, classes, lectures, and extension classes for Sunday school teachers. The organization also operated a
Ray Ann: What did Barney Medintz do? The name of the camp [Camp Barney Medintz],\(^43\) I know . . .

Chippie: Barney was in the uniform business. He was not able to go into the service because he had a heart murmur. He touched every facet of Jewish life in this community. He molded it, directed it, and he sacrificed his personal aggrandizement, financially and family-wise, because he was at the beckon call of this community. He was involved in everything. It was interesting that Rabbi . . . I could be sued for some of this . . . Rabbi [David] Marx,\(^44\) who we always thought was anti-Israel. When Barney came back from his first trip to Israel, Rabbi Marx came to the Jewish Progressive Club\(^45\) to hear his lecture and congratulated him. That’s how he molded this community together. We haven’t had any of that since Sam Rosenberg died, since Ed Kahn died, and since Barney died.

Ray Ann: Tell me a little bit more about Sam Rosenberg.

Chippie: Sam Rosenberg was a person you were privileged to know. If you would have differed with him on anything, he would acknowledge it and find a way to make you feel comfortable. He respected whatever you thought. It’s most unusual. He was the inspiration to a generation of people in Atlanta. There’s not a soul who came in contact with him who didn’t really almost worship him.

Ray Ann: He actually started the Bureau of Jewish Education?

Chippie: Yes.

Ray Ann: Did he come from someplace else to do that?

Chippie: He came from Buffalo, New York. He worked . . . to him it didn’t seem like work. He was so inspirational. How can one person touch so many lives? Barney did it in his inimitable way, but he was a volunteer worker who became enmeshed in the ideal, in idealism of Israel and Judaism, and you knew it. When he worked, he was a selfless person with every

\(^{43}\) An overnight Jewish summer camp near Cleveland, Georgia in the North Georgia mountains. It was founded in 1963 and named in honor of Barney Medintz, a prominent Jewish leader in Atlanta, who died in 1960.

\(^{44}\) 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.

\(^{45}\) The Jewish Progressive Club was a Jewish social organization that was established in 1913 by Russian Jews who felt unwelcome at the Standard Club, where German Jews were predominant. At first the club was located in a rented house until a new club was built on Pryor Street including a swimming pool and a gym. In 1940 the club opened a larger facility at 1050 Techwood Drive in Midtown with three swimming pools, tennis and softball. In 1976 the club moved north to 1160 Moore’s Mill Road near Interstate 75. The property was eventually sold as the club faced financial challenges and the Carl E. Sanders Family YMCA at Buckhead opened in 1996.
organization in Atlanta. I often thought his father-in-law might have done it, Mr. Davis, who was a labor movement Jew. He married Mr. Davis’ daughter [Dorothy Davis].

Ray Ann: Was she involved also?

Chippie: Yes, I would say she was.

Ray Ann: What was her name?

Chippie: Dorothy. She was a beautiful young woman and they were leaders. Barney brought Abba [Solomon] Eban\(^{46}\) over here. He brought every personality that Atlanta ever . . . Barney was under the direction, more or less, of Ed Kahn. He gave him credit at every turn. Atlanta was fortunate, Ray, to have had three such devoted, knowledgeable, dedicated people.

Ray Ann: These people were involved in the community through the Forties [and] into the Fifties?

Chippie: Thirties, Forties, Fifties, and Sixties . . . I think Barney died in 1960. And so did Sam Rosenberg . . . died about one month later. It was a terrible tragedy.

Ray Ann: What happened?

Chippie: Terrible when they both died within a month of each other.

Ray Ann: Because the Jewish population really exploded in the Sixties here?

Chippie: Right.

Ray Ann: They didn’t see that . . . they just sort of laid the ground work for . . .

Chippie: Ed Kahn was retired and they brought Max Gettinger\(^{47}\) in. He did an incredible job. But there is a difference between an inspirational leader and a person who tries to extract response. I’m sure you know that there is such a difference. There wasn’t a person in Atlanta who wasn’t glad to be involved with Sam Rosenberg and Barney Medintz. It was an era which we haven’t seen again. We’ve been lucky that we have had leadership come up . . . and responsive, and responsible leadership. But we haven’t seen their likes since then. Atlanta is an unusual community, I think. Ed Kahn taught people to give . . . he taught them to give. I was

\(^{46}\)Abba Eban (born Aubrey Solomon Meir Eban; later adopted Abba Solomon Meir Eban (1915 – 2002) was an Israeli diplomat and politician, and a scholar of the Arabic and Hebrew languages. In his career he was Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister, Education Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and ambassador to the United States and to the United Nations. He was also Vice President of the United Nations General Assembly and President of the Weizmann Institute of Science.

\(^{47}\)Max C. (Mike) Gettinger (1911-2000) forged a life-long career in Jewish social services in both the United States and Israel. He became the executive director of the Atlanta Jewish Federation in 1962, a post he kept until 1982. During his leadership, the Federation experienced tremendous growth and re-organization. Gettinger authored the book *Coming of Age: the Atlanta Jewish Federation, 1962-1982* which was published in 1994.
going to tell you this instance with me, when I became involved. . . I told you I didn’t have a dime to my name, hardly. I was involved with the Alliance. Let’s call it the Alliance, so that we can differentiate. We used to go see the boys play basketball. We used to meet our friends. We had our Young Judaean meetings there. Everything evolved around that. When I became active in Young Judaea, I also became active in [Jewish] Federation [of Greater Atlanta]. As part of the Young Judaea element, I went to my first meeting when I was 17 years old and I made my pledge of $5 for the year. I took my dime bank, and whenever I had a dime I would put it in there. It took me almost a year to save it up. As I became an earner of a certain amount a week, I tried to give more. And I did. I accomplished what Ed taught me. You give back to the community and you take care of the Jewish people. That has been my credo for living and giving. I thank my father for my concern for Jewish living and my awareness of Jewish living, and my mother, too. Evidently, it was embedded within me because I had this feeling to express it. Through the years I have immodestly been very active in everything, in every organization in the city. I would never become president because I felt that I wanted to do what I wanted to do at my pace. I did not want . . . how can I express this . . . I did not want to have to answer . . .

Ray Ann: This is side two of tape one of Chippie Alterman on the June 19, 1989. You didn’t want to become president?

Chippie: No.

Ray Ann: You were vice-president?

Chippie: Of almost every organization. In fact, I was . . .

Ray Ann: Which vice-presidency did you usually take? What was your . . .

Chippie: Hadassah and . . .

Ray Ann: No, I mean what was the area you were always interested in?

Chippie: All areas, Ray. I didn’t have any . . .

Ray Ann: Were you a big fundraiser? Were you an administrator?

48 The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta raises funds which are dispersed throughout the Jewish community. Services also include caring for Jews in need locally and around the world, community outreach, leadership development, educational opportunities. It is part of the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA).

49 Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America, is a volunteer organization founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, with more than 300,000 members and supporters worldwide. It supports health care and medical research, education and youth programs in Israel, and advocacy, education, and leadership development in the United States.
Chippie: I didn’t care for that. I was, but I hated it. I didn’t like fundraising. I liked education, I liked organization. I liked just working with people. I did it all because when you’re active you must be active in all the things. Atlanta grew from a small . . . when I say small . . . we used to use the figure 16,000 [Jewish people] for years. Then I think we went to 20,000. It was, I think, always more. We had an authentic study made of the demographics of Atlanta. I forget . . . Jonovich. Do you remember the name of it? I don’t remember, which is unimportant. After the war, people who were here stayed . . . loved Atlanta. Great many service people stayed in Atlanta. To their credit [they] became active and involved. We used to have to search a lot of them out because some of the environs of Atlanta did not attract Jewish people. The Ku Klux Klan was active in Stone Mountain, East Point, and Forest Park. It was a great surprise to me when I began to learn of Jewish people settling in these areas . . . establishing a synagogue. There’s one [synagogue] in the Stone Mountain area. However, they burned a cross on the grounds before they . . .

Ray Ann: That was fairly recently wasn’t it?

Chippie: Yes, the last ten years or so.

Ray Ann: The Klan is still active there?

Chippie: I don’t know whether they are, in the sense of marching. When I was working on Marietta Street and I was a teenager, 17, the area for the Klan was out that way. They used to march. It was one of the most terrifying things a person could see . . . because it was an area where Jewish people had stores. Do you understand? But it was also the natural habitat of the non-Jews who were not big money earners. So that mix could have been volatile. I don’t know if they ever attacked any of the Jewish store owners.

Ray Ann: Do you remember seeing them march?

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50 A study sponsored largely by the Atlanta Jewish Federation and the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in conjunction with the Georgia Institute of Technology that was conducted between July 1983 and November 1984. The Metropolitan Atlanta Jewish Population Study of 1984, compared population data to a 1947 report in which there were 9,600 Jewish persons living in the city of Atlanta and the five surrounding counties of Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett and Clayton in 1945-46. By 1984, there were 59,100 Jewish persons in metropolitan Atlanta, living in 26,200 Jewish households. A total of 66,900 people lived in these households, including 7,800 non-Jews (12 percent of all Jewish households).

51 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.
Chippie:  Yes.
Ray Ann:  How often did it happen?
Chippie:  It depended.  Usually it was on a Saturday night.  I guess it depended when they wanted to stir up things.  It was maybe every . . . we never knew . . . maybe every month or two. Something like that.  I would go inside the store and close the doors.  It was that terrifying.  I have seen the crosses burning in some of the Christian neighborhoods.  I think most of that, hopefully, is gone.
Ray Ann:  Did they threaten Jewish people directly at that time?
Chippie:  I wouldn’t know, honey, because at 16 I would not come in contact with it.  I know that the Jewish people were terrified of the Klan.  It was a reality.  It’s not something you read . . . and when you see it . . . it’s such a reality that terrifying is the only word you can use . . . because at that time . . . was their most active time.  They’re more or less dormant now . . . when you could get a [David] Duke\(^{52}\) elected to the legislature in Mississippi is it . . . ?
Ray Ann:  Louisiana.
Chippie:  Louisiana.  You can imagine how dormant the Klan is now.  At least, they’re not publicized as much, but when they were marching it was . . . it was something . . . that’s all I can tell you.
Ray Ann:  Do you remember the time of the Leo Frank\(^{53}\) incident?
Chippie:  I don’t remember too well.  I must have been about nine or ten, which is early.
Ray Ann:  What do you remember your father saying about it?
Chippie:  I remember this much about it . . . when we were singing songs . . . I was singing them too.  “Little Mary Phagan . . . she went to work one day, she went to the pencil factory and .

\(^{52}\) David Ernest Duke (b. 1950) is an American white nationalist, antisemitic conspiracy theorist, politician, and former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. A former one-term Republican Louisiana State Representative, he was a candidate in the Democratic presidential primaries in 1988 and the Republican presidential primaries in 1992. Duke unsuccessfully ran for the Louisiana State Senate, United States Senate, United States House of Representatives, and Governor of Louisiana.

\(^{53}\) 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.
. . whatever killed . . . or didn’t come home that day.” This was a song all of us were singing, but it’s like you would sing a rock song today. That’s what the kids were singing and who knew what . . . our fathers’ never discussed in front of us that she was raped or killed. You know . . . we didn’t know . . . I must have been eight or nine at the time. But Lord, yes . . . and the family of Leo Frank today . . . I’m very friendly with some of them who are relatives of his.

Ray Ann: Who is that?

Chippie: Dorothy Joel and Josephine [Joel] Heyman and some of the other ladies in that group.

Ray Ann: How are they related to him?

Chippie: They were cousins of the family. They remember going to visit him when he was in prison and taking the young children on a Sunday. That was before they took him out and . . . dragged him out of there. That is part of Jewish history that is still oral today among the survivors, among the people who tried to help defend him . . . in that group. There are so many things that are so much a part of Jewish history in Atlanta.

Ray Ann: Of course, the Leo Frank incident . . . it’s definitely Atlanta . . . all over the world, the country. It’s just one of those things that’s ours.

Chippie: The fact that the reopening of the case and the lack of complete exoneration is a very sad reflection, in my opinion, of the community at large. The fact is he did not kill Mary Phagan. He didn’t do it . . . even to save face for certain people. Do you remember the last trial . . . not trial . . . the last hearings where he was completely exonerated even by the man who was there at the time He said he cannot go to his grave knowing that Leo Frank wasn’t guilty. This was a white gentleman. All of that has been wiped out, but the official, complete exoneration was not given. Hopefully that part of history is gone and Atlanta is entering a new era. Hopefully, because a lot of things come up.

Ray Ann: Let’s go back to your father and his liberalism because that was interesting.

Chippie: Yes, it is. It was a rare thing. Don’t you think that took courage?

Ray Ann: Yes.

Chippie: A great deal of courage.

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54 Little Mary Phagan was written by American country musician Fiddlin' John Carson (1868-1949). He wrote this song in 1915 and performed it on the steps of the Georgia State Capitol. Ten years later it was recorded by his singer-guitarist daughter Rosa Lee Carson (1911-1992). The song is also known as The Ballad Of Mary Phagan, and there are variations on the words. The inflammatory song was reflective of the mood of the times that lead to the lynching of Leo Frank in 1915 in Marietta, Georgia.
Ray Ann: He obviously had great many deep beliefs.

Chippie: Yes. I’ll tell you an interesting thing, too. His belief at the time and his own convictions now demand a great deal of respect from me. At the time he wouldn’t let us go to shul. He wouldn’t join the synagogue. I could not understand it . . . nor could I forgive him for that for a long time. The fact that he let us go to Sunday school . . . it was a Reformed [Judaism] Sunday school, I forgot to mention. Reformed Sunday school, which, [the] rabbi at the time . . . it was another Rabbi Rothschild [this might be Rabbi Frank Rosenthal]. But he would not let us go. Yet today, I respect him for that because he was a forward-looking person. It caused him his entire social life. In a small country town, Ray, when you are anything outside the realm of conformity, you are looked upon as a queer person, as a heathen.

Ray Ann: How did that make you feel as a child?

Chippie: I told you that we hated it, but mostly only at the holidays. That’s when it bothered me most.

Ray Ann: I don’t mean the synagogue so much. I mean his other beliefs as you got older. I mean, how did you react to his other liberal things?

Chippie: I was afraid at one time . . . that I came to his beliefs early.

Ray Ann: What happened? How did that happen?

Chippie: How did it happen? I went to school. I had a very fine history teacher in high school. My grammar school years were not as formative, I don’t think, because I didn’t have a teacher who affected me as much. I always had a thirst for learning, whether it was normal, regular learning, or Jewish learning. I knew that whatever I needed to know in Jewish learning, my daddy could direct me. You live in a house where you have all kinds of Jewish books, Hebrew books, Yiddish books, ritual objects, and talk, talk, talk about what’s in The Forward magazine . . . what are people talking about in New York. He used to read [to] my mother [about] the problems and answers from the lovelorn in the Jewish paper. She used to live for

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55 *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.

56 This may be a reference to Rabbi Frank L. Rosenthal (1865 - ?) who was born in New York. He came to Columbus, Georgia from Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1907. Rosenthal led the effort to rebuild Temple B’nai Israel after it was damaged by a fire. He became very involved with local civic organizations, becoming a charter member of the Kiwanis Club and an active member of the Masons. Rabbi Rosenthal was also a leader of the local B’nai B’rith and helped to push for the construction of the B’nai B’rith Hospital in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Rosenthal served as the spiritual leader of B’nai Israel for 33 years. Rabbi Rosenthal led services for soldiers at Fort Benning and served as president of the Jewish Welfare Board.
that. What happened . . . he divorced this one . . . she went to work . . . the fire in the factory.
We were privy to all of that. When I was in high school, I was interested in everything . . . not only literature. I was interested in everything, but I tended to lean towards some of the philosophers, and to my surprise and respect, my father was reading [Baruch] Spinoza,\(^{57}\) (Friedrich) Nietzsche\(^{58}\) . . . every philosopher there was. He was either familiar with them . . . he had read them in Hebrew, and he was reading them in English. I developed a thirst for that type of thing. He guided me, and it was out of that . . . I lost the feeling of criticism that I had for his beliefs. You learn, as you grow up, to respect a person’s belief. I often wonder, as I look back, if we suffered anything. I don’t think we did. As I say, all of us, not only me, but my two sisters and I both had a good life. When you grow up happy and you have loving parents and so forth you . . . if you miss something you put it in this perspective, I imagine.

**Ray Ann:** You have two sisters. Are they younger than you?

**Chippie:** One older and one younger.

**Ray Ann:** Tell me about them.

**Chippie:** My older sister is in Washington D.C., never married. My younger sister . . .

**Ray Ann:** What’s her name?

**Chippie:** Ann. She visited me about three weeks ago.

**Ray Ann:** What was your maiden name?

**Chippie:** Rubin. R-U-B-I-N. We were not related to all the other Rubin’s in the south.

**Ray Ann:** I don’t think I have your parent’s names . . . your parent’s names were?

**Chippie:** Lipow. L-I-P-O-W . . . Ida Rubin and Harry Rubin, I’m sorry.

**Ray Ann:** What was Lipow?

**Chippie:** That was my mother’s maiden name.

**Ray Ann:** Your older sister?

**Chippie:** She’s in Washington and my other sister is in Buffalo. She has two sons. They lead disparate lives. One is a doctor at Lahey Clinic [Lahey Hospital & Medical Center—Burlington, 57A Jewish-Dutch philosopher (1632-1677). Spinoza helped to lay the groundwork for the eighteenth century Enlightenment and modern biblical criticism. Citing his “evil opinions and acts” Spinoza was ostracized and censured by the Jewish community in Amsterdam, Holland.

58Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) was a German philosopher, cultural critic, musical composer, poet, and Latin and Greek scholar whose work has exerted a profound influence on Western philosophy and modern intellectual history.
the other was a Hare Krishna\textsuperscript{59} devotee. Isn’t that interesting? We have spread out in different areas. For her, though, it must be interesting to have given them both the same background and to have had one who went to John Hopkins Medical School at Massachusetts General [Hospital] . . . he took his doctorate there. He was solicited by Lahey Clinic to come practice there. He’s been there a couple of years. The other one is in California and part of the Hare Krishna movement.

\textbf{Ray Ann:} You have a few other radical genes in the family.

\textbf{Chippie:} Yes, I think that . . . maybe that type . . . we have three adopted children. Of course, you don’t trace genes in that direction, but being raised in the same family . . . from the same parents, my two sisters and I are as different, if not more so, than our three children. It’s a very interesting thing to follow. That’s another whole thing. As active as I was in the community, not one of my children took it up. That was always a little bit of a disappointment to me. Yet, I have seen people who were not active at all, whose children have taken leadership in the community. I’ve tried to understand it and explain it to myself, but it really doesn’t matter as long as I was able to do what I was able to do. I was fortunate, Ray, in this instance. My husband was understanding, permissive, and encouraging. I think I would have been considered one of the first woman liberals of this generation. There was never any problem if I wanted to do anything. I was on the board of UJA [United Jewish Appeal]\textsuperscript{60} Women’s Division for years. They wanted me to take one of the vice-presidencies, at which time my husband developed a malignancy and I practically dropped out of most everything. I couldn’t go. We didn’t know if he was going to live or not. Since then, he has had brain surgery for which he was successful. He’s leading a normal life. I’m grateful for all of it, but I want to spend my time, at this point, with him. I was active for about 40 years. Enjoyed every minute of it. I keep up with things as much as I can. But he was very understanding and I was grateful for that, grateful for the privilege of working in the Jewish community. I think for anyone who would be interested, one of the finest by-products of being active in Jewish life is the people with whom you associate. Generally, they have the

\textsuperscript{59} The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known as the Hare Krishna movement or Hare Krishnas, is a Gaudiya Vaishnava Hindu religious organization. It was founded in 1966 in New York by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who is worshipped by followers as Guru and spiritual master. Its core beliefs are based on select traditional Hindu scriptures, particularly the \textit{Bhagavad-gītā} and the \textit{Śrīmad Bhāgavatam}.

\textsuperscript{60} The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was a Jewish philanthropic umbrella organization that collected and distributed funds to Jewish organizations in their community and around the country. UJA existed from 1939 until it was folded into the United Jewish Communities, which was formed from the 1999 merger of United Jewish Appeal (UJA), Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal, Inc.
same interest at heart. Sometimes you find a few selfish people who are in it for the publicity, and it’s discouraging. But more than that you have people who are so dedicated, really dedicated, concerned, and it’s interesting to see how so many young people replace all of those of us who go by the wayside. There’s always . . . I say it with such pride . . . people to take over and to do as good a job or better. Isn’t that a tribute to the Jewish people? I think it’s a tribute. You see all sides of it . . . all sides of the coin.

Ray Ann: Let’s go back. You were working, and then you went to work for the Altermans.

Chippie: Right.

Ray Ann: That’s how you met your husband, obviously. Tell me about your romance.

Chippie: I had a little kind of a romance with most all of his other brothers that were working at the same time. I went with his older brother and one of his younger brothers. Then I went with him.

Ray Ann: My goodness. That must not have made for good brotherly relations.

Chippie: Yes, it was. It was kind of like ‘puppy love.’ But I always had my eye on him. He was the one to whom I was looking. He didn’t know I was existing most of the time. He was working very hard.

Ray Ann: Was he a lot older than you?

Chippie: He’s three and a half years older than I. In those years when I was 17 and he was 20, he represented to me actually, a man of years of 30 or more. Because, don’t forget, he was out on his own. When I was going with young kids at that age . . . most of us in Atlanta . . . you went with boys your same age. None of them had a car. We got together and we danced at some people’s houses, or we might have walked to the movie. He had a car.

Ray Ann: You lived pretty near each other?

Chippie: Yes, that’s the interesting thing.

Ray Ann: Where did you live?

Chippie: I lived on Pulliam Street. He lived on Washington Street, which was a block over and down the street somewhere. All the Jewish people lived in the Washington Street area.

61 Washington–Rawson was a neighborhood of Atlanta that was a center of Jewish community in the city. By the mid-1870’s, Washington Street was becoming one of the city’s finest residential streets. The neighborhood was wealthy at the turn of the twentieth century: Encyclopedia Britannica of 1910 listed Washington Street as one of the finest residential areas of the city. The neighborhood included the area that is now the large parking lot north of Turner Field, until 1996 the site of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. It also included the intersection of the two streets for which it was named. That intersection’s location is now the site of the I-20-Downtown Connector interchange.
Ray Ann: Where is that?

Chippie: Washington Street is on the south side of town. That’s where all the synagogues were. The Reformed, the Greek Orthodox Church, the AA Synagogue, all of them in that area. We used to walk to synagogue and back. On the holidays, boy, boy! We all got a new dress and a new pair of shoes. I thought to myself, “Why don’t I wear an old pair of shoes?” Somebody would look at my feet and say, “Her father couldn’t afford to buy her a pair of shoes.” We used to get blisters on our feet because we wore . . . we would be so hot . . . you would wear velvet . . . either September or October. People dressed up and we paraded. Maybe that was a take-off on an Easter parade. You know, I think about it now. This just occurred to me. It must have been our idea of an Easter parade, because there wasn’t a soul who didn’t struggle to buy a new outfit for synagogue. Nobody, it seems to me, came without a new outfit. You walked to and from, and you suffered if you were hot. We came home and had a wonderful meal. Then we took off the ‘glad rags’ . . . and we played ball outside. We did all the things that kids do. Living on that side of town, I guess, was comparable to a ghetto. I use ‘ghetto’ loosely because when the mold became broken, one of the richer ones would break out and go to the north side. Ah, that was an achievement.

Ray Ann: Where was the north side?

Chippie: North side was across town where the Virginia Highland area is, Park Drive, Inman School, Boulevard, and those areas. Then they desire to go [to the] north side, infecting the Jewish people as it would every other type of person who’s striving for economic achievement. Then you were trying to move over to the north side. Eventually that was achieved. I must say this. There was an interesting thing. You may appreciate it or you can delete it. There was a young girl. I don’t want to mention her name because it might not reflect . . . I don’t know why it wouldn’t, but she was one of the poorest young girls. She was about 10 when I was 30, probably . . . lived on Capitol Avenue, which was the place for the delicatessens and the Jewish bakery that we had . . .

Ray Ann: Capitol Avenue near the capitol?

Chippie: No, the Alliance was on Capitol Avenue, too.

Ray Ann: Where on Capitol?

Chippie: Near Fair Street. That was a lot of Jewish people [who] lived on Fair Street, too. A lot of the original Jews lived on Fair Street. That was a whole enclave there. This young girl
was very poor. Recently, maybe 10 or 15 years ago, she married a man who came to Atlanta. He became so successful, must be a multi-millionaire, that the meeting . . . no, it wasn’t American Jewish Committee, but one of the meetings . . . for [Michael] Lomax took place. He’s running for mayor of Atlanta . . . the black man who is running opposite of Maynard Jackson. This young girl and her husband built a home which is considered the most elaborate home in the city of Atlanta. Her art work is considered . . . they bought a painting for over $1,000,000. This is what came out of that meeting, and it has been the talk of the town. Her husband is philanthropically generous. She is still the same little nice plain Jewish girl. I say this because people seem to think that money should have made a big difference in her demeanor, but this is what happens. She lived on Capitol Avenue near the Alliance in the same whole Jewish area that we lived. Everybody moved out and up. Now she is in the area of town where I’m not. I’m almost called the south side of town, and she’s on the north side. I thought I would just bring that up to you because I think it’s very interesting. But the movement in Atlanta . . . I would liken [it] to breaking out of the ghetto in Warsaw [Poland] and Germany, and wherever it was. Once people get out, then they can mix and learn. It’s not just mixing. They mix with people who are not Jewish at all. I think that’s one of the beauties of Atlanta. It must be prevalent in other cities. Where those people who have never been interested in anything Jewish, they mix with other people who are economically important and who foster a love for Judaism, which makes it fashionable. Do you understand what I’m saying?

Ray Ann: I see.

Chippie: Yes, and it works. Mr. Kahn must have known that, because during the time he was selecting leadership, he would pass over some of the very capable people who were ready for leadership in order to involve some of the other groups who shunned leadership. The groups with money. Over a period of time they came together, Ray.

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62 The American Jewish Committee (AJC) is a Jewish advocacy group established in 1906. It is one of the oldest Jewish advocacy organizations in the United States. Besides working in favor of civil liberties for Jews, the organization has a history of fighting against forms of discrimination in the United States and working on behalf of social equality.

63 Dr. Michael Lucius Lomax (b. 1947) is, since 2004, the president and chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund of the United States. Lomax taught literature at Morehouse College and Spelman College, Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Georgia. For seven years he served as president of Dillard University in New Orleans. Lomax also served for 12 years as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, part of the greater Atlanta region. In 1989, he was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for mayor of Atlanta.

Ray Ann: Who were some of the catalytic people who came in?

Chippie: The Oberdorfers [Donald and Eugene Oberdorfer]. The Hirschs, Harold Hirsch.

I’m old now. You have to forgive me.

Ray Ann: No, I think you have a remarkable memory.

Chippie: No, I don’t. I should have reviewed a lot of this. The Gershons.

Ray Ann: Which Gershons?

Chippie: Reb [Rebecca Mathis] Gershon and her husband [Harry], who died unfortunately.

The Joels, Seligs, and the Massells. Have you heard the name Massell in your interviews?

Ray Ann: Yes.

Chippie: He was one of the Orthodox Jews.

Ray Ann: Which Massell are we talking about?

Chippie: Ben Massell. Sam Massell was his nephew. He was mayor... Jewish mayor of Atlanta at one time. Ben Massell amassed and lost several fortunes. Barney Medintz, who was a distant relative of his, called him when he came to Atlanta. When Barney became active, he activated Ben Massell, who became the philanthropist in this community. That’s a very little known fact, but it’s a very important fact because Ben Massell was not part of this community.

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65 Donald Oberdorfer Sr. (1901 – 1984) was a member of the prominent Oberdorfer family in Atlanta. His father was in the insurance business and he followed successfully in his footsteps. He was very active in the Jewish community, both in Atlanta and nationally, as well as the general Atlanta community in organizations such as the American Red Cross, the Atlanta Community Chest, and others. He was involved with the American Jewish Committee, the ADL, many of the Jewish social service agencies over the years, both local and nationwide, and worked with the Joint Defense Appeal which was organized to help the Jews of Europe in World War II.

66 Eugene Oberdorfer (1896 - 1965) was a pioneer in the areas of civic and community service in Atlanta. He was a professor of military science at Emory University in Atlanta during World War I. After the war he served adjutant general of Georgia. Founder of Oberdorfer Insurance, he was president for 30 years. He spearheaded the Armed Services Division of the Jewish Welfare Board and USO projects, and was active in B’nai B’rith, the Temple, and the Chamber of Commerce.

67 Harold Hirsch (1881 – 1939) played football at the University of Georgia from 1900 to 1901, studied law at Columbia University in New York and was the general counsel for The Coca-Cola Company for more than thirty years as an attorney with the firm of Hirsch, Smith & Kilpatrick. He was active in the Allied Jewish Campaign and was instrumental in establishing the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund in 1936.

68 Rebecca Mathis Gershon (1889 – 1987) was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On a visit to Atlanta she met and later married Harry Gershon. She was involved in the life of the Jewish community of Atlanta including the National Council of Jewish Women, the Federation, and Hadassah, as well as in the civil rights movement.

69 Benjamin (Ben) J. Massell (1886-1962) was a civic and community leader in both the Jewish and general communities of Atlanta. In the early 1900’s, he and his two brothers, Sam and Levi, founded the Massell Realty Company, which had a hand in the development and sale of several landmark properties in Atlanta. Civic leader Ivan Allen, Sr., was known to say, “Sherman burned Atlanta and Ben Massell built it back.” Ben Massell was the uncle of former Atlanta mayor Sam Massell.

70 Sam Massell (b. 1927) is a businessman who served from 1970 to 1974 as the 53rd mayor of Atlanta. He is the first Jewish mayor in his city's history. A lifelong Atlanta resident, Massell has had successful careers in real estate brokerage, elected office, tourism, and association management.
He became part and parcel of this community, and was not only that . . . influential . . . when I use the word influential before . . . in bringing to the giving part of the fund . . . so many people. It was what we used to call ‘economic blackmail.’

**Ray Ann:** How did he do it?

**Chippie:** He didn’t twist the arm, but he said to him, “I expect you to do this. You know that Atlanta needs certain things.” Evidently a lot of people were not only beholden to Ben Massell, but they respected him at this time because he was almost ‘Mr. Atlanta.’ You had people giving and doing who would have never, never given. Also, we had a family of Garsons who were always givers. Always among the giving, they established the Jewish Home. The family, his children, still participate, guide, and what you would call, encourage, everything that goes about the Jewish Home. It was a beautiful . . .

**Ray Ann:** Who was the founding father? Which Garson?

**Chippie:** Mr. Frank Garson. He was an unusual man. I don’t know whether to give you this little thing or not. Use your judgment about keeping it or taking it out. He was a very hard worker. He established Lovable Brassiere Company. He had a son, Arthur [Garson], who was a mathematical genius. He opened up the New York part of it, and developed it all over the world. Mr. Garson went to Israel the first time . . . I believe that was . . . yes. He was giving his report to the Federation board, and different people who were there at the club. He was excited about everything he had seen. He was just talking and talking. He said, “But I want to tell you one thing. I don’t care for those black Jews they’ve got over there.” Words to that effect. You could have heard a pin drop. We always said later, “That’s what they called financial liberty.” Nobody would have stood for it. He was the biggest giver at the time, and he didn’t mean any harm. But there were some that might not have been just that. The disparaging remark that he

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71 A nursing home in Atlanta providing short and long-term dementia, Alzheimer’s, and nursing care. In 1941, a search to find a suitable home for an elderly Jewish Atlanta woman propelled Fannie Boorstin into a campaign to establish a home for the Jewish aged. Her proposal was controversial for the time and was met with skepticism, but her mission to educate the Jewish community on the importance of filling this housing void was rewarded when she visited prominent Atlanta businessman and civic leader Frank Garson, who took up her cause. The Jewish Home opened in 1951 on 14th Street NW, on land donated by real estate developer Ben Massell. Its growth over the years called for a larger, updated facility, leading to the construction of a new building on Howell Mill Road, NW. The second Jewish Home opened in 1971. In 1991, it was renamed the William Breman Jewish Home to honor its third president, Bill Breman.

72 Frank Garson (1886-1955) was an Atlanta businessman and philanthropist. He founded the Lovable Company, manufacturing lingerie and brassieres. He was born Frank Gottesman and later changed his name to Garson. Garson was active in the United Palestine Appeal, the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, and was instrumental in founding the Jewish Home.
made at the time was entirely innocent. But it just fell like a dud on those people, those of us who were sitting there. He helped Arthur to make this community one of the nicest . . . I use that word for him . . . his children. His grandchildren have not participated at all. Isn’t that interesting?

Ray Ann: Who are his children?


Ray Ann: Dan Garson?

Chippie: Yes, Dan and his wife.

Ray Ann: Charlotte?

Chippie: Charlotte [Rosen Garson], yes. My mind slipped.

Ray Ann: They’re real active in AJC [American Jewish Committee]. I happen to know them.

Chippie: Yes, that’s right. [They] have been active in everything in the community. Real fine. We use the word, you might not be able to translate, balebatish. Have you ever heard that word?

Ray Ann: No, but can you spell it?

Chippie: B-A-L-E-B-A-T-I-M. Balebatim is the plural. Balebatish is an adjective or an adverb which describes the loving care and responsible type of human beings to the family, and to the Jewish family, and to the pride that they take in doing it. They’re an unusually nice family, but Ben Massell was another character. He, I think as much as anybody, came into Federation at a time when he helped to establish the art of giving. I go back and give credit to Barney Medintz again. That’s what we call a ripple effect. That’s a pretty good description. In going to visit Israel, Barney, I think, was one of the first. He worked hard to see that people came to visit Israel. When I went to Israel on my first trip, we were privileged to have [Israeli Prime Minister] Golda Meir as a person to visit our group when we visited Knesset. I was impressed by one thing she said. I feel it’s true, among many I should say. She said, “Please send your children to Israel. Don’t get scared. I’m not asking you to send them to stay. Let them visit Israel one time.

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73 Yiddish for respectable, responsible, of good standing in the community, well-mannered,
74 An expression meaning the continuing and spreading results of an event or action.
75 Golda Meir (1898-1978) was an Israeli teacher, politician and the fourth Prime Minister of Israel.
76 The Knesset is the unicameral legislature of Israel. As the legislative branch of the Israeli government, the Knesset passes all laws, elects the President and Prime Minister, approves the cabinet, and supervises the work of the government.
Let them see what it is. Let them know what we’re trying to do. Promise that you’ll do that.” This is one of the most important things I remember that she said. There were many other important things that we saw and heard and experienced. Atlanta is, to me, the most wonderful city that a person could live in. I have seen it grow demographically, literally, brick-by-brick. It’s unbelievable to me what a success it has made with people, mainly. Anybody can build bricks if you have the money. Trump can do it for you, anybody. But to build a homogeneous society among Jews, and we always quote, “If there are three Jews together, each one will tell you which synagogue you should go to, or why not to belong to a synagogue.” The wonder of it is the influx of what my husband calls ‘barbecued Yankees,’ Westerners, and Easterners and whatever. It has become a stronger community, I think, a more knowledgeable community, a more liberal community, and a more cosmopolitan community, much to our benefit. Of course, with it comes a lot of problems and other things. But there is no city without problems, is there? I think we have seen Atlanta grow from three synagogues. I think there may be 16 or 20 by now, of all kinds. I’m astounded when I see in the paper. I’m talking about the different types of worship, even. They had one group of gays, Jewish gays, I believe, at Emory [University—Atlanta, Georgia]. Who would have thought you would live to see that? I wouldn’t have.

I consider myself a liberal, so to speak, even politically, when Atlanta had the first black mayor [Maynard Jackson]. This is why I mentioned Elaine Alexander to you. This was an interesting thing. I worked and worked hard for him. Elaine was the chairman of his inauguration. She also worked for him. That’s why it’s important for me to mention it to you. She sent out the invitations. She put on my invitation “Mrs. Sam Alterman.” When I saw it, I called to tell her that I couldn’t come because Sammy was, I think, sick at the time. I said, “Elaine, I don’t think that’s right. As long as I’ve worked for you, you didn’t even invite Sammy?” “Oh” she said, “I don’t believe it. I don’t believe that.” Anyway we have enjoyed each other through the years. I saw her early this year. We were talking, and I said, “Elaine, I have to tell you something. I don’t know whether you’re going to believe it or not. I am not supporting Maynard Jackson.” She said, “Chippie, neither am I.” I said, “I feel better.” I’m

77 Donald John Trump (b. 1946) is an American businessman, politician, television personality, and candidate for the Republican nomination for President of the United States in the 2016 election. He is the chairman and president of The Trump Organization and the founder of the gaming and hotel enterprise Trump Entertainment Resorts. Trump is a son of real estate developer Fred Trump (1905 – 1999).

78 Yankee has several meanings, all referring to people from the United States. In Southern American English, ‘Yankee’ refers to a Northerner.
crazy about her. She’s such a beautiful person inside and out. Isn’t she?

Ray Ann: Yes. Tell me, what do you think your father would think about Atlanta now? I mean, here is this liberal man . . .

Chippie: Yes, I think he would love it. I think, first of all, he would support any liberal movement at any place. He would be proud that black children are being educated and taken care of. He would hate the homeless situation. I don’t know whether he would understand that a city would come this far along in every other respect and not see to it that people could work, have a job, and not be left out on the streets. But I think he would adore any movement that augured liberal thinking, politically, because at the time he was way before his years. He thought that education should be the prime concern. Education. He was a firm believer in education. The platforms of both mayors now tend to support that. Yes, I think he would. He would, socially, be at home with them. I think he would be joyful that it had reached this part and hopefully it would go further. Yes, I hadn’t given that a thought but I know that he would. It’s a long way from Russia, a long way from Russia. To live to see it . . . I’ll tell you one thing that he had: life’s disillusionment. He thought that the Russian five-year plan79 was going to be the savior of the Jews and other people in Russia. I’m sorry that he lived to see a disappointment. He was so heart sick, as was Mr. Davis and the other people who came from Russia and who hoped that the people who were left behind would benefit from the so called, five year plan. You’re too young for that.

Ray Ann: No, I do know what you’re talking about.

Chippie: It was a terrible disappointment to him and all of his group. It surely was.

Ray Ann: They were involved and cared about what was going on?

Chippie: Sure, sure.

Ray Ann: I’d like to go back again, because we keep getting away from this, to your romance and getting married. First tell me about getting married. You say you picked him over his brothers.

Chippie: Let me say this. He was going with someone else, naturally. He’s a good looking man. There he is up there on the wall <Chippie points to his picture> and there he is with his

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79 There were several different five-year plans for the development of the national economy of the Soviet Union (USSR). Each five-year plan dealt with all aspects of development: capital goods (those used to produce other goods, like factories and machinery), consumer goods (e.g. chairs, carpets, and irons), agriculture, transportation, communications, health, education, and welfare. However, the emphasis varied from plan to plan. In the 1930’s a five-year plan optimistically announced increase employment for hundreds of thousands of Jews in Soviet Russia.
brothers. He’s the one third from the end. He was busy making a living. He took me to one of the Hadassah dances. He brought me home and said, “I’m not taking you out anymore.” He didn’t tell me why. Of course, I cried myself to sleep. Later on, he told me he was not ready to get married. I was 17 and he was 20. I was not a very popular person. I managed to get to a lot of places, but that wasn’t my big thing. I always loved to read and I loved being with people. I had many friends and I was active in everything, even then. No matter what it was, I was active in Jewish causes. I did [American] Red Cross\textsuperscript{80} work, anything that was community work. I saw him every day, but I used to hate to answer the phone when the girls would call for him. I heard him making arrangements to be with them. It wasn’t pleasant. Anyway, he began to take me out. I was also going with a fellow. It’s a strange thing. His married sister in Birmingham [Alabama] had a brother and he was coming to Atlanta to see me. One night when he came here and I was with him, Sammy decided to call me. He figured I must be getting close to him and he wanted to take him to the train station. The trains were what was used most. I said, “He’s not ready to go.” He said, “Tell him I’ll be there about one o’clock and I’ll take him to the train station. You can go with me.” From then on, I didn’t see this fellow again, and we started going together. That was when I was about 19. We decided to get married that June. I wasn’t old enough to get a wedding certificate without my father’s signing. He was, so he came to the court house. I had to bring my daddy. My daddy had to pay the $2, which was a very big deal to him. I mean, $2 in those days to him, was a lot of money. I often told Sammy he should have given it back to him. Anyway, he paid the money, we got the certificate, and they published it in the Fulton County Daily Report,\textsuperscript{81} which is a magazine which tells about business transactions and that sort of thing. They published licenses of people getting married. That traveled like wild fire. We were going to go away to get married, run away. My mother was in New York and his father was in Birmingham, or whatever.

Ray Ann: Why was your mother in New York?

Chippie: She was visiting. They published it in that magazine and my brothers-in-law . . . they weren’t my brothers-in-law then . . . they all saw it . . . the one’s that were in Atlanta.

Ray Ann: You were trying to keep this a secret?

\textsuperscript{80} The American Red Cross (ARC) is a humanitarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief and education inside the United States. It is the designated US affiliate of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

\textsuperscript{81} The Fulton County Daily Report, also referred to as the Daily Report, is a daily legal newspaper based in Atlanta. The newspaper was established in 1890 and covers Georgia legal and business news.
Chippie: Yes, because we were going to run off and get married that Friday. Anyway, they read it. We had to call New York and get my mother here on the train overnight. My father-in-law came in from Birmingham. He was visiting Sammy’s sister. She brought her two children. We got married at Rabbi [Tobias] Geffen’s\(^{82}\) house on Washington Street. We didn’t have anything to serve. My daddy went across the street and got two jars of herring, a challah, and some wine. We got married under a chuppah.\(^{83}\) I didn’t know what Rabbi Geffen was saying. He did it all in Hebrew. Afterwards, we got in the car, and my sister-in-law put her two little boys in the back seat. We were driving to Jacksonville [Florida] and then we were going to Miami [Florida]. Anyway, we went with them. They traveled all the way with us. We couldn’t find them in Jacksonville. We had to look all over to return them before we spent the night in Jacksonville. It was a real ‘how do you do,’ but anyway it was . . . what do you call it . . . it took, 52 years ago. We came back and I still went to work. We were in Florida and someone broke into the safe at the office there . . . $5 then was a lot. We stayed at the William Penn Hotel. It was $5 a week. We were having lunch across the street at one of the little restaurants there. At that time everybody from Atlanta went to Miami in the summer time. We saw everybody, congratulations and all that stuff. “We heard they broke in your safe.” Sammy jumped up from the table, took me by the hand, and we went back to the hotel. We got out of there in ten minutes and drove all the way home. He was actually in charge of a lot of big collections and whatever we were doing. That was the beginning to a wonderful marriage.

Ray Ann: Where did you live?

Chippie: We lived at the Biltmore Hotel\(^{84}\) for the first month. When he went into the service, I moved in with my mother. When he came back, we were still on Pulliam Street. There was not any place to be found.

Ray Ann: Why did he go?

Chippie: The war [World War II]. Every house and every apartment was taken. There were not as much buildings.

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\(^{82}\) Rabbi Tobias Geffen (1870-1970) was an Orthodox rabbi and leader of Shearith Israel in Atlanta from 1910-1970. He is widely known for his 1935 decision that certified Coca-Cola as kosher. He also organized the first Hebrew school in Atlanta, and standardized regulation of kosher supervision in the Atlanta area.

\(^{83}\) Hebrew for ‘canopy.’ The canopy under which a Jewish wedding takes place.

\(^{84}\) The Biltmore Hotel on West Peachtree Street in Midtown Atlanta opened in 1924. There were towering radio masks on each end of the building, with vertical illuminated letters that spelled out ‘BILTMORE.’ In 1967 it was sold to Sheraton Hotels and became the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel. The building has now been renovated and turned into office space and condominiums and is still called the ‘Biltmore.’ (2016)
Ray Ann: He went into the service?
Chippie: He enlisted in 1942. We got married in 1937.
Ray Ann: I was trying to figure out when this was that he did that. You had been married for five years?
Chippie: That’s right, yes. We lived in the Biltmore first. Then we subleased an apartment off Peachtree Road on West Wesley [Road]. That’s where Christ the King Church is. That was really high cotton\(^{85}\) because the Kuniansky boy that Sammy knew was going back to Louisville, or wherever it was . . . Nashville [Tennessee]. We rented the apartment temporarily. When Sammy went into the service, I went back to live with my mother. He was in three years in the [United States ] Navy. I worked down at the office during that time. Gradually time passes.
Ray Ann: He came home when?
Chippie: In 1945, I think, after [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt\(^{86}\) died. We adopted three children.
Ray Ann: How old is your oldest? Give me the ages.
Chippie: My oldest son, Larry <Chippie points to his picture> is over there with his bar mitzvah\(^{87}\). My oldest one is 42. My daughter, my middle one, is 40. Danny, the youngest one, is 35. They all have children.
Ray Ann: They all live here in Atlanta?
Chippie: Yes, we’re very fortunate. We have seven grandchildren. I would like for them to become interested in Jewish things. I think the oldest one is on the way. Intermarriage figures in our family as it does in most families. We have learned to cope. I won’t tell you that I was thrilled, but I have learned.
Ray Ann: Did the spouses convert?
Chippie: Yes, I’ll tell you. I shouldn’t go on record for saying this. In my realm of living, I

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\(^{85}\) The term ‘high cotton’ or ‘tall cotton’ originates from pre-American Civil War rural farming communities when ‘high cotton’ meant that the crops and the prices were good. The term has come to mean one is doing well or is successful.

\(^{86}\) Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) was the 32\(^{nd}\) 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.

\(^{87}\) 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.
think I’m as conscious on Judaism as anybody else, I find if a person . . .
</End Tape 1, Side 2>
</Begin Tape 2, Side 1>

**Ray Ann:** This is the second tape, but we’ll just do a part of it, from June 19 of Chippie Alterman by Ray Ann Kremer for the American Jewish Committee, National Council of Jewish Women, and the Jewish Federation’s Oral History Project. I want to get this other statement on and then we’ll continue on with this tape in our second interview.

**Ray Ann:** You were talking about the children in your . . .

**Chippie:** . . . intermarriage and Judaism.

**Ray Ann:** Right.

**Chippie:** Two of the children were converted. Interestingly enough, the one that’s married to my youngest son, Cathy Morris, converted before she met Danny. She was a Catholic, questioned her religion, and did not seem to find an answer to what she was looking for in her religion. She studied many religions in Buddhism, *Krishna*, and several other religions from a point of view of fulfilling her questions for a way of life. She came to Judaism and converted and is a very observant Jewish woman. She is a smart, smart person and seems to have found an answer for her. She’s made of my son an appreciative Jew. They participate in many things. She does. She’s very active in all Jewish organizations. She was elected one of the forty-two young leaders to be trained for leadership for the year in community, the Irving Goldstein Award.88 Paul’s wife, that’s my oldest son, married Pam [Meeks] who, of her own, without my knowing was converted by Rabbi [Donald A.] Tam.89 They adored him. He represents to them a

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88 Dr. Irving H. Goldstein (1905 - 1979) was an Atlanta dentist, philanthropist, and leader in Jewish and civic activities. He was one of the earliest dentists that taught and practiced preventive and minimally invasive dentistry and established what would become Goldstein, Garber & Salama in 1929. Goldstein was dedicated to providing dental services to low income people. After heading the Morris Hirsch Dental Clinic for nearly 30 years, he founded the Ben Massell Dental Clinic with Dr. Nathan Blass in 1955. He was also instrumental in founding the Hebrew University School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem. For 20 years he served as chairman for the Mayor’s Committee for the Employment of the Handicapped and was honored by the National Committee for Hiring of the Handicapped the night before his death. The Irving Goldstein Award, created in his honor, is presented annually in Atlanta for outstanding achievement.

89 In 1987, Rabbi Donald A. Tam, along with a group of congregants, founded Temple Beth Tikvah in Roswell, north of Atlanta. Prior to founding Temple Beth Tikvah, Rabbi Tam had served on the pulpits of congregations in Atlanta, Glencoe, Illinois, Dothan, Alabama, and Ottawa, Canada. Rabbi Tam attended Hebrew Union College (HUC) and was ordained in 1973. He received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from HUC in 1998. Congregants Arthur Blank, co-founder of The Home Depot, and his wife, Stephanie Blank, paid tribute to Rabbi Tam by naming in his honor the Institute for Jewish Studies at Emory University, which they established through a generous grant. Rabbi Tam now serves as Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth Tikvah. (2016)
magnificent example of understanding and inspiration. She told Paul when she married him, as most converts do, that if and when she became pregnant, she wanted to raise their children in the same religion as his other two, which she has done magnificently. I would say, Tudy’s husband, my daughter, did not convert. He did not see any reason to because he is neither observant in his religion, or her religion. Tudy and he both joined Rabbi Tam’s Synagogue. When he’s in town, he goes with her. If not, she goes with her children and seems to find something in there that’s worthwhile. I have never pushed any of them as much as I would have wanted to. I wanted very much to do that, and I must say that I exercised a bit of self-control. We do fine, and this is what I wanted to say in the beginning . . . we do fine. There is a wonderful respect for Judaism coming from all of them, including all seven grandchildren. That is as much as anyone can ask of life.

Ray Ann: Rabbi Tam’s synagogue is called?

Chippie: It was Emanu-el. He left here once and came back. I’m not familiar now.

Ray Ann: This is Temple Emanu-el?

Chippie: I don’t think so. He had a temple. I’m not sure. You may have to put it in there. But he came back, and he is an exemplary rabbi. He attracts a lot of convert couples, because I imagine they feel comfortable there. I think that’s an important statement. I talked to a couple of intermarrieds and they feel comfortable. He makes them feel comfortable. He has a way about him of bringing up on the bimah, even at the bar mitzvah time, a child of mixed marriage. It’s a way of saying to the . . . unconspicuously, or inconspicuously . . . to participate, to read the English part of the ceremony. Such a nice way of doing it. He is accomplishing in his way, something very important, I think.

Ray Ann: That’s great. We are going to stop. I’m going to thank you because we have another time we can do it.

<End of first interview>

Ray Ann: Today is July 6, 1989. This is Ray Ann Kremer for the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Jewish Committee, and the Atlanta Jewish Federation Oral History Project interviewing Chippie ALTERMAN. We are going to do this second tape anew and we’ll just

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90 Hebrew for ‘platform.’ The bimah is a raised structure in the synagogue from which the Torah is read and from which prayers are led.
give it a start.

**Ray Ann:** Chippie, we’re going to go back. I have one question that kind of made me curious. When you were talking about the Ku Klux Klan marching when you were working, about what time period was that? I read in a timeline that it really got started after the Leo Frank [case].

**Chippie:** It had to be when I was about 17 years old because after that I left that place where I was working on Marietta Street and went to work in heart of Atlanta at the Makover’s [Shirley Cloak and Dress Company]. I was born in 1917 and I was 17. It must have been 1934. That’s right.

**Ray Ann:** That was well after.

**Chippie:** Yes, absolutely. The height of the Ku Klux Klan . . . I guess achieved its largest participation in the early 1940’s, probably. What they did . . . I think . . . continued. I don’t think they had as many crosses burning. I don’t remember when they disrobed them, as far as not being able, or permitted to cover their faces. That took a lot of the sting because most of them didn’t want to be identified, but the ramifications are still here. There are people who are frightened. As I talk with you, I am surprised what an impression it made on me. Coming from Columbus, Georgia when I was 15, and knowing that I was Jewish but not particularly immersed in Jewish activity until I got here, I couldn’t believe that it frightened me so. In my mind, we knew that blacks and Jews were identified together as targets of their wrath, of their ignorance. And as you look back, it was their jealousy, I guess. When you think of it, an organization like that and any other organization, they have to feel better than someone else. They have to be able to look down on other people, or what else do they have? They have to be able to do that. That was, I guess, the success, if you call it success, of their organization. They scared the bejesus\(^\text{91}\) out of people.

**Ray Ann:** Do you know anyone who was directly confronted by them?

**Chippie:** No, I really don’t. I think that all of us at that age were frightened. We would run, really, when we saw them. We’d get out of the streets. The burning of the cross, that which they chose, was so frightening. You have to have seen it to understand what significance it was. It wasn’t just like a regular fire . . . the background of their ability to scare a person, to kill them, to hang them, to shoot them, whatever. It was like an animal instinct that they had at that particular time. They accomplished what they set out to do. I know that when we would drive out a little

\(^{91}\) An expression used as a mild oath or noun for emphasis.
beyond Atlanta, we would see the remnants. The cross must have been about usually ten feet high. To me at the time it was that big. Usually they were big. The one that they burned in front of the sight of Stone Mountain synagogue [Congregation Beth Shalom] before it was built I understand was the same regular large size cross. They’re still at it. A little bit intimidated, but I think that they really accomplished what they wanted to do.

**Ray Ann:** Scare people.

**Chippie:** Scared them to death. My father, my parents, and all the Jewish people on Marietta Street. That was where the hub of the Klan was, interestingly enough. There must have been four or five Jewish merchants, two on one side of the street, and three on the other side, in one block right there. Right in the center of Bankhead Highway and Marietta Street [is] where they marched the most. It’s no wonder they were scared to death. Why they ever chose that, I’ve never really thought about it since then, but that’s where they were. They catered to the class of people . . . the merchants . . . Jewish merchants . . . the class of people who had to have inexpensive or cheap items. I guess it was a sort of resentment toward the Jewish people that they had to buy from them. They were really about the only merchants on the street at that time.

**Ray Ann:** Do you remember the names of those stores?

**Chippie:** Yes, I think, one of them is Borochoff’s [sp] store. I don’t know what her trade name was. One was Mrs. Russ. One was Conrad’s, and . . .

**Ray Ann:** Is Russ, R-U-S-S?

**Chippie:** Yes, R-U-S-S. All had exactly the same kind of stores. The fear, I guess, in the people when the Klan came by, all went indoors and closed the doors. I don’t know what they thought the Klan would do to them. Let me say that the police protection at that time would have been very insignificant. The other one was Sunshine [Sunshine Department Store], Philip Sunshine’s father. He was also a merchant. That’s right, I think about it now and I reflect that it’s interesting that most of the Jewish people at that time were there except for Mrs. Horowitz, who was the lady that I worked for. She was on Boulevard with Jack Rothenberg. At one period of time, we had a great number of newcomers who were put into the grocery business. Either they had a little money to set themselves up . . . this was after . . .

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92 Congregation Beth Shalom is a Conservative synagogue on Winters Chapel Road in Atlanta. The congregation was founded in 1975. While construction of the congregation’s first permanent home in suburban DeKalb County was underway, a cross-burning occurred at the site in full view of more than 75 members of the congregation, including children, who were attending Friday evening services at an elementary school across the street. The synagogue was completed and dedicated in 1981.
Ray Ann: Was this the immigration of Russian Jews?

Chippie: Yes, that’s right. There was a later immigration, not early that my father came in. This was in the 1940’s. When did they start coming over from Germany? No, these were the World War [II] refugees.

Ray Ann: These were the German in the late 1930’s and 1940’s. Those who could get out. You’re talking about the German Jews, the Holocaust?

Chippie: No, not really. The Jews of Europe, Polish, Hungarian, German, whatever. People who came from the ghettos to France and from there . . . the one’s who didn’t go. Israel wasn’t established as a state. They were reluctant, as they are now, to go there. Everybody wanted to come here. This country . . . I don’t know if you’ve ever heard the expression . . . was known as the goldeneh medina. Did you ever hear your parents talk about, that? It means the ‘golden streets’ . . . the ‘golden opportunity’ . . . the ‘land of golden opportunity.’ This is where people wanted to go. When Atlanta became set up as a viable, organized community which could handle community concepts and community needs, most of these people were helped to go into a grocery business. I don’t know why they did that. My husband was in it too. Most of them seemed to thrive in the grocery business.

Ray Ann: Who helped them?

Chippie: The Community Center, the Alliance, and the Jewish community, which brought on . . . after a few years . . . after these people were in business. I was very active at the time. We had a call for an organized aid to get some of these people out. There was a time when the blacks and the poor whites in those neighborhoods said they were being bilked by the Jewish grocers. They were being sold old meats and charged more, old produce and charged more for it. There was almost an uprising. We had a communal meeting with the Jewish people and those who wanted to move were given money or lent money to be brought out of that neighborhood. That was a neighborhood which was solidly black. Let me say this. I think in a few respects they were right. Some of the Jewish merchants, in order to get ahead quicker, must have tried some of that. It was true, because my husband was in the wholesale grocery business at the time and they contended with some of these people. However, as wrong as it was, I understood at the time, having met a lot of these people. I had personal contact with a lot of them. In order to

93 Goldeneh medina means “golden country” in Yiddish. The expression came to mean “America” and was used by Jews who wanted to seek a better life, or golden opportunity in the United States.
survive, they had to do whatever was necessary. Many of them came from the [concentration] camps. Many of them were on the march all over and they were coming from everywhere. They only knew that to survive, not to live but to survive, you had to grab everything. Incidentally, I just passed a lady this morning who I greeted. She’s 80. She must have been a young, young girl at the time. She was a cripple and her husband was a cripple, having come from the camps. She lives down the street and around the corner.

**Ray Ann:** Who is this person?

**Chippie:** I don’t know what her name is. I wish I did. I know I met her when she first came to Atlanta. She still walks like a young woman. Imagine what she went through to survive. She carries her bag. She walks to get a bus. It must be a mile from where we are. She takes her husband lunch, and she works in the store. I thought to myself, “There has never been one of our generation born here that I have seen as stalwart.” That is the word I think of when I see her. She’s a survivor. That’s exactly what she is. In the same vein of the survivors in Atlanta, we had a ‘Clothes Closet,’ is what we called it, at the Alliance that we discussed before, Capitol Avenue. There was a friend of mine, Barney Medintz’s wife [Dorothy Davis Medintz] and I, who were in charge of the closet. People brought clothes. We would not accept anything that was dirty. We felt to offer something to these people who had lived through such a tragedy, to offer them dirty, wrinkled clothes, was an insult. We would only accept clothes on a hanger that had been cleaned, that were nice looking clothes. I guess this is a type of Jewish humor. I had just bought a new dress. It was black, I can see it right now, with an orange collar. I loved it. It was a straight line. I was thin at the time. I took it off and hung it up on a nail that we had in there. This lady here . . . I guess that’s why I remember her so well . . . I didn’t miss it. We were handing out clothes. It was very busy. So many people came in. I had hung this up right there, almost at the entrance. Everybody was gone and I went to get dressed. I missed that dress. I said, “How am I going to get out of here?” I found something to throw on. I jumped in the car and I ran with the car, ran. She hadn’t gotten too far. She was up the street. She didn’t mean to steal it. She thought it was a part of the stock. She was very embarrassed. I would have let her have it, but I was so selfish at that time. I just couldn’t part with that dress, which was stupid now that I look back on it. It must have been humiliating for her. In the meantime, the Clothes Closet was a big thing in their lives. I’m looking back on it now. I didn’t remember how big it was. They came here with nothing. For them to see some of the things they saw in that closet
was really a wonderful lift for them. They would try them on there, something like Loehmann’s [Department Store], I think. It was a big room on the second floor. That was one aspect. Then we had other people, women, boys, men and students who ran into the call of teaching the English language. I think they hit on an idea. I don’t know whether it was original here or not. They may have gotten it from some of the other bigger cities . . . to go into the grocery stores with some of these people.


Chippie: No, I don’t mean that. I mean shopping.

Ray Ann: Take them [shopping].

Chippie: Some of the women took the other women shopping to teach them, to show them the money, to help learn the language. That was one way. And we had, like every place else, English classes. There was a slow integration into community. Now, as I look, we have quite a few of the newcomers living up the street. Brilliant, some of them, and a joy to have in the community.

Ray Ann: Was this also at the same time there was a service to new Americans that NCJW [National Council of Jewish Women]94 used to have?

Chippie: Yes, that’s right.

Ray Ann: They both were separate things but did . . .

Chippie: Right. Under the aegis of United Jewish Appeal,95 we used to collect money. Some was given to HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society].96 Some was allocated for JDC [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee].97 Some was allocated for Israel, as Israel came into being. One of the things that I found hard to understand . . . I didn’t have to accept it, but in

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94 An organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into advocacy and philanthropy inspired by Jewish values. They strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and families.

95 The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was a Jewish philanthropic umbrella organization that collected and distributed funds to Jewish organizations in their community and around the country. UJA existed from 1939 until it was folded into the United Jewish Communities, which was formed from the 1999 merger of United Jewish Appeal (UJA), Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal, Inc.

96 HIAS was founded in 1881. Its original purpose was the help the constant flow of Jewish immigrants from Russia in relocating. During and after World War II, they had offices throughout Europe, South and Central America and the Far East. They worked to get Jews out of Europe and to any country that would have them by providing tickets and information about visas. After World War II, they assisted 167,000 Jews to leave DP camps and emigrate elsewhere.

97 The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (commonly called “the Joint”) is a worldwide Jewish relief organization headquartered in New York. It was established in 1914. After World War II, the Joint provided desperately needed supplies and necessities to survivors inside and outside of displaced persons camps in Eastern Europe, Hungary, Poland and Romania.
participating as I did a great deal in those years, I found it difficult to understand why these people didn’t give money or time. I guess now that I see, Ray, it must have been they were terrified. They wanted to have security. They wanted to hold on to everything. When I collected over a period of years I used to go into a lot of the homes. I was thrilled to see that they were using decorators. I’m just saying this because the observation was, in my mind and I could have been wrong, if they can afford that, they should have been able to understand that to give to the United Jewish Appeal, or as we called it here, the UJA . . . JDC brought them over here.

Ray Ann: Some of the people do, and did give back. I’ve interviewed a number of those people and they are very giving.

Chippie: Yes but a lot of them, this is what I want to say, a lot of them didn’t. Let me say, even commensurate with what they were earning, we understood and there were certain facts to back up the fact that a lot of them came with money. In fact, a couple of them that lived around the street . . . It’s typical what I’m saying. They were insecure. They didn’t want to turn loose of it. Even today, we have a great deal of that, a great deal. I would say this also. The first wave of Russian émigrés, when was that? Was that in the 1940’s? Also, there were some . . . maybe a little bit later . . . the people, social workers, found it difficult to deal with them. They were agitated. They came from an environment that fought for them, made their whole decisions for them.

Ray Ann: That was more the group in the late 1960’s and 1970’s.

Chippie: That was what it was. I had a friend with whom I worked. She was the chairman. I helped her because I was busy doing other things. She took it as her project. Her name was Mrs. Al [Alfred] Weinstein, Hannah Entell, whose husband was on the Death March in Bataan

The Bataan Death March was the forcible transfer from Saisaih Pt. and Mariveles to Camp O’Donnell by the Imperial Japanese Army of 60,000–80,000 Filipino and American prisoners of war which began on April 9, 1942, after the three-month Battle of Bataan in the Philippines during World War II. About 2,500–10,000 Filipino and 100 - 650 American prisoners of war died before they could reach their destination.

Chippie: He came back. He survived. She started a family. We collected furniture, silver ware, linens, beds, anything we could to subsidize the expenditure of the Community Center and the Federation. We would take things out. I can see that these people wanted better. We tried to give them the best we could, and they started them with certain things. However, the discontent . . . I was not privy to much of that . . . but they tell me that the Russian Jewish people were
extremely difficult. I have not heard that of the recent ones. First of all, I’m not active anymore, and I wouldn’t hear a lot of it. That was a bone of contention between the social workers and the Russian émigrés. People in Atlanta . . . there was never a time when they didn’t give of themselves to everything . . . car-pooling, taking people to the doctor . . . all of that kind of thing. It was just when it came to the physical attributes, furniture and that type of thing, I think they would rather . . . they didn’t want to be made to feel like charity. It became obvious, I guess, in the types of things they were given. I think it worked out better. I think they have become acclimated and waiting for more now. Hopefully they will be absorbed and give back. I don’t know what happened to most of the beginning people from the camps, the refugees. It was a difficult thing to educate them to give. I know everybody tried. It was a fear, I think, an inbred fear that they would not have anything again. It was a long haul. A lot of them were educated, but never to the extent that I found that they would give and want to give. We also have an interesting experience in finding newcomers to Atlanta, Jewish newcomers. Out of the Federation, they sent out a group called Shalom Atlanta, which we started. It enjoys a wonderful success.

Ray Ann: Was that something you started?
Chippie: I was part of it, yes.
Ray Ann: We did a little bit of that when we moved here.
Chippie: It’s a wonderful thing. What do you think about it?
Ray Ann: I think it’s a great idea.
Chippie: At one time, we had some kind of a get together. We had several hundred people, like a barbecue at the Community Center. People met each other. I don’t know how successful it was as for integrating newcomers into a city. I don’t know whether there are better ways, but that was what we instituted. Out of it came a lot of participation for people. They’re always looking for more ways. Now, as I look at the leadership of Atlanta, I think I told you some of that before. We have such a diverse, wonderful group of people whose imprint is felt here in a, I think, positive way. We’ve got young leaders who come up and give of themselves. It’s remarkable.

Ray Ann: We’re jumping around a little and we’re going to get it all, but I’d like to go back

99 Founded in 1970 as part of Jewish Federation of Atlanta, Shalom Atlanta helped welcomed newcomers to Atlanta and serve as a guide to Jewish living in the area.
through all of your volunteer work. When did you start volunteering? I know you saved . . . you told me the story about your nickel bank. Go from there to your involvement in everything and all your many phases.

Chippie: That was Young Judaea, and from there the next step would have been to Hadassah, which was the prevalent women’s organization. We didn’t have all of these other organizations until time went by and we got more people. As a young married woman in the community I had, as most others did, a maid, and as we got the children, a live-in maid. That reflected in our ability to be out while the children were in school. We sort of tended toward doing volunteer work. I did all kinds. I did Red Cross. I did Jewish and non-Jewish work. At that time when I was young, I was physically capable, collecting for polio and all the things they were working there.

Ray Ann: Was it easy to have non-Jewish community work involvement here?

Chippie: Yes. I think that Atlanta has, in my opinion, always been liberal in that way except that they did not include Jewish people, to speak of, in the higher echelons of the budget. They do now for the Community Chest.¹⁰⁰

Ray Ann: United Way.¹⁰¹

Chippie: That’s it, and some of the other organizations. Now I think they do more so. Not many, but more than they used to.

Ray Ann: You think it’s deliberate discrimination?

Chippie: Yes, it was. There is no question. The same as Emory . . . [they] came out and made a statement that they had certain quotas on Jewish students for medicine, and that type of thing. There was no question about it. I don’t think there was any . . . they didn’t hide it even. It was an accepted thing, just as some of the clubs today. There was an article, did you happen to read it . . . by . . . Pat Conroy¹⁰² that wrote this article. I had a friend of mine whose name . . . I shouldn’t mention. I won’t mention her name . . . whose child grew up in the home of this man

¹⁰⁰ The Community Chests in the United States and Canada were fundraising organizations that collected money from local businesses and workers and distributed it to community projects. By 1963, and after several name changes, the term “United Way” was adopted in the United States, whereas the United Way/Centraide name was not adopted in Canada until 1973 - 1974.

¹⁰¹ United Way is a national system of volunteers, contributors and local charities helping people in their own communities.

¹⁰² Donald Patrick ‘Pat’ Conroy (1945 – 2016) was a bestselling American author who wrote several acclaimed novels and memoirs. Two of his novels, The Prince of Tides and The Great Santini, were made into Oscar-nominated films. Conroy was born in Atlanta and is recognized as a leading figure of late-20th century Southern literature.
who openly said he did not want Jews in his home. The child used to spend the night over there all the time. She was absolutely destroyed when she read this in the paper.

**Ray Ann:** No, you didn’t tell me that.

**Chippie:** Yes.

**Ray Ann:** I’m trying to think of the man’s name. Was in the paper?

**Chippie:** Yes, but the man who was president at one time of the Piedmont Driving Club¹⁰³ . . . Pat Conroy, the author, was the one who wrote the editorial.

**Ray Ann:** Right.

**Chippie:** She was out of town when it happened. I saved it for her. She said someone called her from Atlanta. She just couldn’t believe it. She said, “My son and his son were the best of friends.” Here is this man openly vowing today that he did not want Jews in his home. Also, the clubs. There was a time when Ed [Edward E.] Elson . . .¹⁰⁴ I remember distinctly, we were meeting at the Progressive Club. Ed Elson, who was very active, do you know the name? Ed Elson, a very nice man. I’m crazy about him. I’ve been a friend of his for years. He said that if the Progressive Club was not integrated, he would not eat lunch there anymore. So we said to him at this meeting, “You are not allowed in the Capital City Club.¹⁰⁵ You’re not allowed in the Piedmont Driving Club. You’re not allowed in the Cherokee Country Club.”¹⁰⁶ He was a liberal. He was very active in American Jewish Committee. So it came to pass.

**Ray Ann:** Did he stop eating lunch in those clubs, too?

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¹⁰³ The Piedmont Driving Club is a private social club in Atlanta, Georgia with a reputation as one of the most prestigious private clubs in the South. Founded in 1887 originally as the Gentlemen's Driving Club, the name reflected the interest of the members to ‘drive’ their horse and carriages on the club grounds. The club later briefly used the adjacent grounds as a golf course until it sold the land to the city in 1904 to create Piedmont Park. The club's facilities include dining, golf, swimming, fitness, tennis, and squash.

¹⁰⁴ Edward Elliott Elson (b. 1934) was an American diplomat who served as the United States Ambassador to Denmark (1993 - 1998) under President Bill Clinton. He was a past chairman of the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Publication Society, and has served on boards of many organizations in the United States and around the world. Elson was the founding chairman of National Public Radio in Washington D.C., and in the mid-1970's procured enough from Congress to turn the NPR into a substantial radio network. Elson became a successful businessman in Atlanta where he lived for many years.

¹⁰⁵ The Capital City Club is a private social club founded in Atlanta in 1883. It is among the oldest social organizations in the South. The club presently operates three facilities, the oldest of which is the downtown Atlanta Club. The Capital City Country Club, located in Brookhaven, was leased in 1913 and purchased in 1915. In the autumn of 2002 an additional club facility, the Crabapple Golf Club, was completed in the northern portion of Fulton County.

¹⁰⁶ Cherokee Town and Country Club is a private club founded in Atlanta in 1956. The club has two locations: the Town Club, which occupies the famed Grant Estate on West Paces Ferry Road in Buckhead, one of Atlanta’s grand residences built during World War I, and the Country Club, which is located near the Chattahoochee River in Sandy Springs.
Chippie: Yes. He was a very sincere, brilliant man. Susie Elson, his wife, is a doll. She’s a lovely woman, very big volunteer. She was president of Mental Health [National Mental Health Association], national president, a wonderful worker. It’s interesting. I’ll get off me for a minute and then I’ll get back to that. Volunteer work has almost followed a pattern in Atlanta for women particularly. We noticed a sort of filtering in of one or two on the [Atlanta] Symphony board, not on the Junior League, but on the . . .

Ray Ann: There are a lot of Jewish Junior League members now.

Chippie: Yes, just some. This is a different thing. People, the [High] Museum, the symphony . . . what I’m saying . . . usually you will find them in the department of fundraising. You watch it. They’re hand-picked. They seem to serve one year, and they reach out for a new person who will give another large sum of money, which I find is perfectly alright. But I feel that there’s still a very strong invisible barrier there. People who accept this work, do it for their own personal fulfillment, and that’s the way I felt about my volunteer work. I worked, as I told you, in every organization. I didn’t just do one because I didn’t feel, at that time, that one was any more worthwhile than the other. When I went on the study missions to Israel, I made it my business to visit an art school. When I came back from there I was absolutely thrilled and smitten with the work that I saw that they did. I found that that was one of the most worthwhile organizations I had contact with. I visited the school in Paris, I visited the one in Tel Aviv, and I thought that there was no better way that you could train a person or to give of your time than to train a person. They say the motto is “Give a person a fish for a day, and he’ll have . . . even if you train him in a way of life, then he will always have a job.” They have done a marvelous job. During the years, Brandeis [University National Women’s Committee] came into being. Leah Janis, Dora Smith, and I started Brandeis. We all had little babies at the time. They would

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107 Junior Leagues are education and charitable women’s organizations aimed at improving their communities through voluntarism and building their members’ civil leadership skills through training. It is an international organization with 293 different chapters.

108 The Brandeis University National Women's Committee is the largest "friends of a library" group in the world with 48,000 members nationwide. A volunteer fundraising organization, it has contributed more than $58 million in support of the libraries of Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Chapters are located in more than 105 communities nationwide.

109 The Atlanta Chapter of the Brandeis University National Women's Committee was founded in 1949 with Leah Janis elected as its first president.

110 Dora Smith (1904 - 1975) was born in Ocilla, Georgia and moved to Atlanta after attending Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia. She was active in Atlanta's Jewish community including the Atlanta chapter of the Brandeis University National Women's Committee. She was one of the first Jewish realtors in Atlanta and was married to Dr. Simon H. Smith.
bring them from one way and we would stuff envelopes and get volunteers. Volunteers at that
time were anxious to participate. As I say, we all had help and then the children were in school.
It was like you were looking for a nice thing to do, rather than go to the movies and play cards all
the time. We had no trouble getting people organized. I attended the first Brandeis, what do you
call that?

Ray Ann: Conference and welcome.

Chippie: There was not a conference. There was not a graduation. What was the . . . a
dedication . . . I forget. Eleanor Roosevelt111 was there. She made a remarkable, inspiring
presentation. She spoke on behalf of the library. That was the original intent of the organization
for Brandeis women.

Ray Ann: Were you president of the group here?

Chippie: Never took a presidency. I was vice-president for a long time, but never took a
presidency. I did attend the convocation, is what they call it. I met Dr. Abram Leon Sachar,112
met Max Lerner,113 and that was the most thrilling thing for me. I was a much younger person at
the time, and I loved the campus. I loved knowing that there was a school sponsored by Jewish
people. I think it was a credit to Dr. Sachar, and those who worked for that university. It went
through a hard period when it became stamped as a radical . . . do you remember that . . . radical
type of place?

Ray Ann: I was involved with Brandeis during those years.

Chippie: Were you?

Ray Ann: I was on the committee in Memphis [Tennessee].

Chippie: You see? Anyway we had a lot of contact. Then they started the book sale here
which I helped to sponsor, and work in and worked on. Every time I worked in there I got sick
as a dog. I was allergic to the dust, but I didn’t care. I kept sick. I used to have to go to the
doctor after I finished. They’re still going, making money, and doing a good job. I was always a

111 Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) was the wife of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the President of the United States
from 1933 to 1945. She supported the New Deal policies of her husband and became an advocate for civil rights.
After her husband’s death in 1945, Eleanor continued to be an international author, speaker and politician and
activist.

112 Abram Leon Sachar (1899 – 1993) was an American historian and founding president of Brandeis University in
Waltham, Massachusetts.

113 Maxwell “Max” Alan Lerner (1902 – 1992) was an American journalist and educator known for his controversial
syndicated newspaper column. He earned a doctorate from the Brookings Institution in 1927 and began work as an
editor. Lerner's most influential book was America as a Civilization: Life and Thought in the United States Today
(1957).
member of every Jewish women’s organization. A dues paying member in some, but a working member in a great many of the others. I did everything from decorations to raising money. We had so many things to do and so many people to do it with. I find now that the whole philosophy of volunteer work has changed. In those years, when they were killing Jews, we appealed to people’s emotions. The young women today are very educated. They know how to present facts so that you can appreciate and respond to them. I find that to be a fact. I’m very cognizant of it and appreciative because I think that they are doing a magnificent job, really wonderful. I was on the board of the Community Center and one of the vice-presidents. I loved doing that kind of work because it encompassed every activity in the city. What I think was accomplished in Atlanta at an early time, and one of the most important accomplishments for the women . . . The men, I think, are doing the same thing. We had what we called an umbrella concept. I think I talked to you about it before. It’s difficult to take a woman who is attached to the umbilical cord of any organization and tell her that that should be a secondary thing to the overall picture of a community. People, particularly synagogue workers, even B’nai B’rith workers, all of them felt that autonomy of their organization was first. In Atlanta they finally accomplished, and I tell you how I think it was accomplished, status. It was considered status to be the head of the Women’s Division of the United Jewish Appeal Federation. As that, women were streaming to become active. I think even to this day, that to be part of the leadership of the Women’s Division in Atlanta is a status symbol. I think it’s important. Status, in its place, is important. To many women, that’s what they enjoyed. They do good work, absolutely wonderful.

Ray Ann: Actually, what they basically do is raise funds that support everything else.

Chippie: That’s right. This is what happened. We had to educate them to show them we allot to B’nai B’rith, we allot to the Hebrew Academy. We give to this. We give even to the school of the synagogue . . . gets funds from that. Everybody did participate. There was a wonderful accomplishment. The fact that it still stands today is a tribute to those people in those days, the leadership of that time. It stuck and it made its mark. I’ll tell you that the leadership of those

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114 B’nai B’rith International (Hebrew: ‘Children of the Covenant’) is the oldest Jewish service organization in the world. B’nai B’rith states that it is committed to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel and combating antisemitism and bigotry. Its mission is to unite persons of the Jewish faith and to enhance Jewish identity through strengthening Jewish family life, to provide broad-based services for the benefit of senior citizens, and to facilitate advocacy and action on behalf of Jews throughout the world.

115 The Katherine and Jacob Greenfield Hebrew Academy was the first Jewish day school in Atlanta, and was founded in 1953. As of mid-2014 the Greenfield Hebrew Academy (grades pre-K through 8) and Yeshiva High School (grades 9-12) merged into one college preparatory day school now called the Atlanta Jewish Academy.
years was the backbone to what’s going on in Atlanta today, without question. An interesting thing too, Ray . . .

Ray Ann: You mentioned some of those people in depth in our last interview. Was there anyone else that you think has been an outstanding?

Chippie: I’m sure there were many. I thought of the Elsas’s, Herbert Elsas.\textsuperscript{116} I think I mentioned Mr. Merlin from the Arbeiter Ring. They came together. Can you conceive of what else would have brought those diverse elements together? We sat around the table, everybody. There were German immigrants. Henry Birnbrey,\textsuperscript{117} today, who serves on every organizational board, came here as a child. He was seven or eight years old as an immigrant. He worked hard in the community and is so well respected. He’s just an unusual man. He must be 60 something today. His imprint has been felt in this community. It’s a getting together of minds, I think, that made Atlanta such a successful Jewish community. The thing that’s happened . . . I don’t know what caused it . . . I’m sure it happened in every community . . . the Standard Club\textsuperscript{118} or the German Jews, the Portuguese Jews, the Russian Jews, and the Spanish Jews have, for the lack of a better word, integrated and worked together.

Ray Ann: Do you think that was the reason for the fall of the Progressive Club and the Mayfair Club?\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{116}Herbert Rothschild Elsas (1910 – 1995) was an Atlanta attorney and philanthropist who was very active in the Jewish community. He was a graduate of Harvard Law School (Cambridge, Massachusetts) and served in the Air Force during World War II. He was awarded the Legion of Merit, one of the most valued awards for men in combat. Elsas served as chairman of the Atlanta Jewish Federation Campaign, the Jewish Welfare Fund, was active at the Temple, and was a senior partner at the law firm of Sutherland, Asbill, and Brennan LLP. His grandfather, Jacob Elsas, was the founder of Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills.

\textsuperscript{117}Henry Birnbrey is an Atlanta attorney and accountant who was active in the Jewish community. He was born in Dortmund, Germany in 1923. In 1938, the week Hitler invaded Austria, he received an emergency visa to come to the United States, without his parents as part of a special mission to rescue Jewish children. He settled in Atlanta where he was taken in by the Asman family. Most of his family died in concentration camps. During World War II he returned to Germany as an American GI, serving with the forces that stormed the beaches of Normandy. After the war Birnbrey opened an accounting firm in Atlanta and was able to go to law school on the GI Bill. Birnbrey became actively involved in Jewish community affairs, Zionist organizations, the Greenfield Hebrew Academy, and served on the board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta.

\textsuperscript{118}The Standard Club is a private, country club, with a Jewish heritage dating back to 1867. The club originated as Concordia Association in Downtown Atlanta. In 1905 it was reorganized as the Standard Club and moved into the former mansion of William C. Sanders near where Turner Field is now located. In the late 1920’s the club moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue in Midtown Atlanta. The club later moved to the Brookhaven area and opened in what is now the Lenox Park business park. It was located there until 1983 when the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta’s northern suburbs.

\textsuperscript{119}The Mayfair Club opened in 1938 at 1456 Spring Street in Midtown Atlanta. The two-story club was a focal point of Jewish life in the city for more than 25 years. The club was founded in 1930 and first met at the Biltmore Hotel. The club was visited by Eleanor Roosevelt, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, mayors Ivan Allen and William Berry Hartsfield, senators Herman Talmadge and Richard Russell, and Governor Carl Sanders. Fire destroyed the
Chippie: No I don’t. I think that the Progressive Club and the Mayfair Club each enjoyed a wonderful membership. Some crossed over and belonged to two clubs.

Ray Ann: How would you describe the difference in the memberships of those two clubs?

Chippie: One was 90 percent Russian.

Ray Ann: Which one?

Chippie: The Progressive Club. They made their club. [It] was a cross over from those who were aspiring to get to the Standard Club. At that time, the Standard Club was not accepting a big membership until they built their new club about 20 years ago. We always hated the fact that those clubs sort of disappeared. What happened was Atlanta, in those years, had very few good eating places. You could count them on your hand. The private clubs would get wonderful chefs. That was the place where you could eat, socialize, meet people, dance, and have a wonderful dinner. You didn’t have to go downtown. The town was changing. It was a reflection of the times. When Atlanta began to get a lot of eating places, of which there are not too many now that are that great, but better . . . much better than we had. We have a few good restaurants. That is the reflection of it. Ray Ann, when The Coach and Six [restaurant] opened, which was opened by Jewish people, Hank and Beverlee [Auerbach] Soloff . . . have you ever been there? You cannot imagine what went on there. You couldn’t get in. Saturday night you get a table, and if you were Beverlee’s pet she would put you right at that left table. When you came in, you could see everybody and everybody would speak to you . . . the other table on the other side. It was the club . . . then when the club came into being, that died out, mostly. We haven’t been there . . . we went for our occasion and I took somebody to lunch there. Beverlee has made a fabulous success of that place. It was unbelievable. It was a Jewish club of all. The Standard Club members were given priority, more or less, because they were the ones who frequented there the most. It was a type of social change, a real type of social change in the community. The clubs were no longer needed. People wouldn’t go there for dinner. The same thing as the Standard Club, now dying on its feet. They’re looking for members just to come eat. It’s going to cost the members an assessment, a tremendous assessment. They didn’t open up the golf membership, I don’t think, but opened up membership for people to come and eat. It’s interesting how the times reflect the change in Atlanta, as I’m sure it must in every city. To get back to organization work, Atlanta . . . I’m pretty sure, but I don’t know . . . I did know at one

Mayfair Club on December 4, 1964.
time, Atlanta is as well organized and as successful in its charity as any city, or more so than most cities its size. I think it’s a tribute, again, to its early organization and guidance.

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2>

**Ray Ann:** July 6, 1989. This is Ray Ann Kremer interviewing Chippie Alterman. Let’s go on where you were. We’re going through your organizational work, the things that you did. So far you’ve mentioned a lot of different organizations.

**Chippie:** Yes, I worked for every organization in Atlanta. I read braille. I studied braille, and read papers for the blind professor.

**Ray Ann:** Which organization did you do that for?

**Chippie:** I’m trying to think. It must have been UJA of Federation. I studied braille at the Temple. They had a class at the Temple.

**Ray Ann:** Temple Sisterhood [Braille Group] used to do braille work.

**Chippie:** That may be where I did it. I really don’t remember, Ray Ann. I think that must have been what it was. I still have my braille here.

**Ray Ann:** Do you still do it?

**Chippie:** I haven’t lately, no. I was not able to do it for a long time, but I had a wonderful experience with a young student at Agnes Scott College [Decatur, Georgia] who was blind. She was a brilliant, brilliant girl. I got to know her real well. I did some of her books for her testing. I read to her and I brought her over here one night for **Shabbos** dinner. It was the most inspiring thing to watch her as she made herself at home. My children were in awe of everything she did. It so happened . . . she must have been a very brilliant, brilliant girl. She was awarded scholarships and different things. She was grateful for our being able to help her. She said she couldn’t have afforded to buy these books or to have asked people to do it for her. That was a very thrilling experience for me. That was a personal experience for me that I enjoyed. I have just started to register for Literacy Action. I have my papers. I’m hoping I will be able to carry it through because my physical shape hasn’t been that good. If you mention another organization, I can tell you what I participated in there.

120 **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.

121 An organization founded in Atlanta in 1968 that teaches literacy, life and work skills to undereducated adults.
Ray Ann: Were you involved in your synagogue?

Chippie: Yes, but not to the degree of taking office. I participated in the study groups. I went to the rabbi’s lectures. I was on a lot of committees, but I found that it was not my niche. Somehow or another, it might have gone back to my childhood, I don’t know. I was not adverse to it, but it didn’t offer me as much. In my opinion, community service is a very selfish thing. If you go into it for what you’re going to get out of it, you’re wrong. If you want thanks from the community, you’re wrong. Anything that you do in the community, you are repaid, not double fold, but tenfold, because it’s a meaningful experience. There are a lot of people, women particularly, who get ornery. They want what you call recognition. But most women are good workers, and they enjoy this type of participation. Some of the best friends I have ever made have been through community service and through United Jewish Appeal. I have friends today that I met when I was serving on the national women’s board of United Jewish Appeal. I am still in contact with them. That’s been 40 something years ago. They have really made contributions all over the country to United Jewish Appeal, to Jewry, and to their communities. The Jewish woman in her own today, can stand tall and know that she has certainly done as much, or maybe more, than some of her non-Jewish people. I worked at Red Cross Blood Bank. There’s so many things, little things, collecting for the different drives.

Ray Ann: You were a Girl Scout leader.

Chippie: Yes.

Ray Ann: I know somebody in your troop.

Chippie: Yes, that’s right. I forgot that. Those are the kind of little things, at the time that we all did, as mothers. The biggest thrill that I had was participating in UJA because I saw the immediate response, the immediate fulfillment. When you meet a newcomer and you give them a dress or a suit or a book or a piece of furniture, or whatever, you feel like, you’re starting them on a course that will mean fulfillment for them. Every time I see this little blond lady here, I can’t tell you what it does to me. It’s a constant reminder that she survived and she’s making a way on her own here and others, too. I did so much work in the Community Center with the Holocaust, the studying and the different things. When I used to go to the observance at the cemetery, it was a magnificent thing to me to see, tragic, but magnificent. These people . . .

122 Founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Lowe, Girl Scouts of America is a youth organization that aims to empower girls and help teach values such as honesty, fairness, courage, compassion, character, and citizenship through various activities. Membership is organized by grade level.
really they were absorbed into this community 100 percent. They have turned back, as you say, and have given. The children of these people are a viable constituent of this community. Is that not magnificent? Saba Wise [Silverman], whose parents came here . . . they lost people in the Holocaust. Saba is one of the leaders in this community, and so is her husband [Victor]. Her name is Saba Silverman. I can’t explain to you how exquisite it is to see a new generation completely at home in Atlanta, giving leadership, furnishing what they can give to the city and to the Jews, not only to the Jewish community [but] to the city of Atlanta. What else could you expect? What else could you imagine? It’s a really marvelous thing.

**Ray Ann:** It is. Now, because I’m sure more of it will come out as we go on, I’d like to go back to the family business. You mentioned that a lot of these immigrants were put into the grocery business and that there were some problems. You say the community got them out of that neighborhood because of the problems?

**Chippie:** Some of them. Those that were complaining that they were being intimidated. A lot of them remained. I often wonder how they felt. There were a lot of different neighborhoods, but in these neighborhoods where the momentum of danger was building up it became a news item in the newspapers. The community got together and felt that they had to come to the aid, financially, of those that wanted to move out. This is inculcated in the history of Atlanta and the things that they did.

**Ray Ann:** What is the name of the group that got them out?

**Chippie:** The Federation.

**Ray Ann:** Federation did this.

**Chippie:** Sure. They were at the Alliance, I believe. No, they had moved on to Peachtree at the time, Federation. Yes, the Federation sponsored the money and helped get them new jobs if they didn’t want to go back in the grocery business. You’re speaking of the grocery business, of Sammy’s [Alterman] family. That was also a time. Sammy quit school to go to work and get into the business. It was the Jewish people, largely, who were in the business. Feldman’s and . . . there were so many of them at that time. Saul Feldman. Are you familiar with Snack ‘N’ Shop?

**Ray Ann:** Yes.

**Chippie:** Saul Feldman is the proprietor there. I mention this because he is one of the dearest
things in the world. His father [Sam Feldman] was in the grocery business, a gentleman and a wonderful man. He struggled and struggled, so hard, to educate his children, to make a little money. He was a decent, honest man. He used to bring Saul and Saul’s little sister, Pearl in, and he used to set them on the counter. We were in the wholesale grocery business at that time. He would bring in $1 a week to try to pay for the grocery order. They used to carry, what they called, “carry you on the books.” Have you ever heard that? This is what a lot of Jewish people had to go through to make a success. They couldn’t pay for the groceries at one time because they would have to take what they sold, put it back in the business, and buy more groceries.

Alterman, I think, was the one Jewish wholesale grocer at the time. Saul never tires of telling Sammy or me when I go in, “If it hadn’t been for you, my father would never have made it.” He is so grateful and he’s so appreciative and he’s so kind. He remembers those days. It is wonderful that I look at this young man, he works himself to death, and see what a success he has made. He’s educated all of his children. He has become a success. We feel that we played a part in a great many of those successes. Of course, we lost a lot of money on them because some of them couldn’t help it. They went broke. Some went bankrupt. Some didn’t want to pay, but . . .

**Ray Ann:** Did the business also have non-Jewish clients? I mean, all your clients weren’t Jewish?

**Chippie:** No, most of them were non-Jewish.

**Ray Ann:** Right.

**Chippie:** Yes, they had . . . they developed a concept of supermarkets. I think they opened one of the first supermarkets in Atlanta.

**Ray Ann:** What was it called?

**Chippie:** Food Giant. No, Big Apple. I forgot. Big Apple, then Food Giant. What was the other one called? Cub Store was the last. They had several groups of stores that they sponsored.

**Ray Ann:** Did it start out as a wholesale food?

**Chippie:** No.

**Ray Ann:** Who started it and how did it get . . .

**Chippie:** The father [Louis Alterman] started it when he came from New York.

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123 Sam Feldman (1897 – 1951) was in the grocery business in Atlanta and was a member of Congregation Shearith Israel. His son, Saul, was the owner of Snack ‘N’ Shop, a New York style delicatessen in Atlanta.
Ray Ann: When was that?

Chippie: That was, I imagine, early 1900’s. Sammy was born in Atlanta and he’s 73. It had to be 73 years ago in the early 1900’s. I think I mentioned to you before, a family was a necessary part of any business here. You had to have people who cleaned up the store. The mother was in the back of the store cooking, and waiting on a customer if somebody else . . . there was a Yiddish expression that everybody . . . give, “Achtung!” [German: attention]. Watch when you enter for pilferage. The little ones would stay around and watch to see if anybody came in to steal, which was prevalent. When I was little in Columbus, Georgia we used to go to the grocery store and try and pick up a jelly bean or something. Steal it. We didn’t know it was stealing. We went behind the counter and snitched it. Anyway, all the family had to be a part of it. They had a small grocery store from which they were able to eat. They didn’t have anything. I think that’s one reason why most Jewish people went into the grocery business. At least they knew they could eat. Wither the grocery business or the clothing business. You know, schmattes business. Have you ever heard that word? You do? Schmattes business. Anyway, they worked themselves to death. The mother died in childbirth with the last child. They moved from the grocery candy store, more or less type of thing, to Piedmont Avenue, where they went into the feed and grocery, candy, canned goods, and that type of thing.

Ray Ann: Where was the first store?

Chippie: Flat Shoals Avenue, which today is a black neighborhood. It’s where the ‘rockheads,’ what do you call those with the shaved heads? . . . all the hang outs. In that period, there were quite a few Jewish families there in the grocery business, too. Then they moved to Washington Street for their residence and [we] had good friends right at Washington Street. That’s the hub of the community where the synagogue was. They moved to Piedmont Avenue in their business and borrowed money from . . . Abe Goldstein used to lend them money to meet their payments. When I was working for Sammy, I used to go out and have dinner with them occasionally to collect from the grocery stores Saturday night. That was the time where if you didn’t collect, then you didn’t get it until the next week. It wasn’t a reprehensible thing. It was just that they wanted to hold onto the money so they could buy things, a little extra for their family and so forth. If Sammy didn’t get the money, then he couldn’t buy groceries and canned goods.

124 Schmatte (Yiddish: a rag, or an old, ragged garment) is a general term used to refer to the clothing trade, or ‘rag trade.’
goods to replenish his stock. I remember the times we used to, I think I told you, go for a sandwich. I know he wanted another sandwich, but we didn’t have the money. We struggled. It was a struggle. I look back and think that if we did not have the ability to deny themselves the material things that they wanted, they would not have been able to build up their stock and go further and expand the way they do. It was sheer hard work and denial, and success followed. All the boys were active, all of them. As our family grew, we married. The families grew larger. We became a fairly large family in Atlanta, now with children and the grandchildren and most everybody in the family, as time went by, participated. All the sisters-in-law, all except, my children were not particularly interested in participating. Most of them were. I think that we contributed to the community monetarily, physically, and spiritually. I enjoyed it more than I can tell you.

Ray Ann: Were you working? After you had children, you no longer worked in the store?
Chippie: No, I didn’t.

Ray Ann: When you got to Piedmont, was it wholesale?
Chippie: Yes, more or less wholesale. They didn’t have enough merchandise to make it a big business. They had one truck, one big truck they bought second hand. The people drove it, the boys had to drive it sometimes, called ‘Big Berry.’ I used to see them working down there. We’d work day and night. It was a struggle. I don’t know if you even can understand what a struggle is. Do you know what it is to struggle? I don’t know.

Ray Ann: I remember my grandparents.
Chippie: Yes, it’s not a pretty thing. They ran into a tremendous amount of union problems. At that time the union was strong. It was an intimidating thing.

Ray Ann: How many people did they have working for them that were in the union?
Chippie: Not too many. They had one warehouse supervisor, maybe ten. But you see, the young ones who went to school came down after school, loaded the trucks, unpacked the cases, and stamped the cigarettes. It was a continuous input.

Ray Ann: You mean the family?
Chippie: Yes, the boys, all the boys. All them up here came down and did all of that kind of work . . . worked sometimes until midnight. Then went home and did their lessons and went to school the next day. It was a tedious, hard road. I saw it grow from its infancy almost. We had an office later in the big warehouse on Spring Street, and to show you . . .
Ray Ann: Wait, you’re losing me. You were on Piedmont. About what year did you . . .

Chippie: It was before Sammy went in the service, which must have been 1940.

Ray Ann: When you were on Piedmont?

Chippie: Then we moved to Spring Street.

Ray Ann: When about was that?

Chippie: About 1940. Sammy went into the navy then. The interesting thing that I remember then was George did not go. Izzy [Isadore] didn’t go . . . all the rest of them. Did you see the picture? We have a navy picture here, but it’s in the other room. The warehouse was big, but the offices were so set up. This is the interesting thing, as I look back, Ray Ann. You could hear what was going on in this office because . . . on a telephone conversation. In other words, if Sammy was in his office, which he was before he went off, and George’s was back up to here, they had opened up glass there, and then Izzy’s was right next to his. No matter what was going on, you heard it. That was the intent because they didn’t have time to ask each other, “Did you send this over here today?” They had a pin hook on the wall for the bills. If a bill came in they stuck it . . . have you ever seen one of them? A pin hook. They didn’t have files. Any time they had to pay a bill, they’d go get it if they had the money. As I look back on it, one of the successes of that business was that they were able to hear each other. If Izzy had a date to go talk to the man at the bank about a loan, Sammy and George could hear him. They knew where he was. He didn’t even tell them when he went out the door. They knew where he had gone. If an order was coming in and they couldn’t pay for it, George was on the phone calling somebody to see if they could get the money. The big man there knew what was going on. That was at a time when the business was developing. There were the three of them. Three of them were in the service. Abe was in a [unintelligible]. There were only two of them left at home.

Ray Ann: Who went and who was left?

Chippie: Sam went, Dave went, Max went, and Abe went. George, the two older ones left, up there next to their father.

Ray Ann: Who are they?

Chippie: George and Isadore.

Ray Ann: Were the ones who stayed?

Chippie: Yes. It was, as I look back on it, almost a fairytale of a business. It was not intended that they succeed. I don’t think anything but hard work, sweat and perseverance . . . because the
war interfered at the time of their push forward, and it held them back. When they came from
the service they were missing four of their younger people who, and while they were gone, other
businesses were still here and they were progressing. When they came back, they had to start
fighting again, doing and growing. At that time, they had the concept of the Food Giant and Big
Apple.

Ray Ann: Which were the big stores?
Chippie: Yes.

Ray Ann: Then they went into the retail business too?
Chippie: Yes, that’s right.

Ray Ann: When did they go into the retail business?
Chippie: I think it must have been 1942. I have to tell you one interesting thing. Sammy was
a salesman on the street mostly. He would go out and sell, then come in at night and write up his
orders on the order book, and I would do it for him. We would add it up, and I tell you, we
worked sometimes all night long. Then we had to get them down to the warehouse so they could
ship them out. They had what you’d call, you ‘gather in the orders.’ In other words, if I call on
you, you order six bottles of catsup, a case of tomatoes, a box of candy, then [you] go over to the
warehouse and gather the orders, put them together, number them, have them loaded on the
truck, and delivered the next day. That was a process by which we almost died. If we hadn’t
been young, I don’t think anybody could have survived. But it was a successful endeavor, and
there were a lot of other businesses at the same time that were getting ahead. The new concept
was . . . they had to try to keep it a secret because, actually what it amounted to, was a
competition with your own customers. Wait a minute. Sammy had a wonderful customer. His
best customer was out there on Roswell Road, right there where Borders Book Store is, that
whole little center called Tuxedo Market. Sammy figured because he had been so loyal to him
that he wanted to explain it to him. He said, “Don’t you worry,” because they were going to
open one across the street from him on Marietta Highway. He said to him, “Mr. Auburn, don’t
you worry. You’ve been good to me.” Sammy put in the business, actually gave him his stock,
you know, and let him pay out on that. He said, “It’s not going to make a bit of difference. I’m
going to trade with you.” The store opened and, naturally, it took more than half of his business.
He was giving Sammy orders for a while. Then Sammy came in one day and he said, “Mr.
Sam,” he said, “I just have to tell you I’m not as liberal as I thought I was.” He said, “Ya’ll are
killing my business.” It wasn’t funny, but it was the truth. He said, “I’m just not as liberal as I thought I was.” What they had to do was do a transition of business. Rather, they took a chance on losing all of their customers. When you go into a business that’s in competition, then you take a chance of losing customers. They did it slowly, little by little. They were able to go into the supermarket business and still maintain what they had like a group of stores. I don’t remember the name of it, but like Associated Grocers, that type of thing. They kept the ABC Stores, and they traded with them because they gave them financial help. They gave them credit and so forth. It was like a tie in, but it was a real transitional movement.

**Ray Ann:** Did they still have their office on Spring Street, their warehouse and everything, at that point, or did they move?

**Chippie:** No, they had moved to Lee Street where they built their great big warehouse. They had other things. Manufacturing, jellies, and preserves.

**Ray Ann:** Under what label did they do that?

**Chippie:** Mrs. Bell’s.

**Ray Ann:** Any significance to that name?

**Chippie:** No, they bought the preserving plant from the person whose name was a recognized name in that business, peanut butter, preserves, and stuff. They took care of that. Let’s see. What else did they do? They did wholesale restaurant supplies. They did a big business in that.

**Ray Ann:** Who were the idea persons that started into all these different things?

**Chippie:** I would say Izzy, Mr. Alterman’s older brother. He was the idea person. When my husband got back he joined with Isadore in becoming the idea people. He was the executive type who dealt with the unions, who understood the business. But all of them were bright, hard-working young men. Dave loved charity work. He loved being at the synagogue. He was one of their, . . . what would you call him . . . arms or the shoulders of the synagogue. He loved it and participated in it. It’s interesting that Abe’s business . . . the one I told you who didn’t want to be in business with the boys . . . he wanted to be a writer instead. He married this girl from Columbus, Ohio. He went into the dog food business. He sold out about six years ago. The man who sold out his business sold it out for $20,000,000.

**Ray Ann:** Wait, you lost me.

**Chippie:** Abe Alterman was the one who went to college, to Duke.

**Ray Ann:** Right.
**Chippie:** Only one. He didn’t want to go into any kind of business, but he couldn’t find anything to do. When he married Miriam, he was working at the funeral parlor. He brought Miriam back to Atlanta, and he had to have something to do. They had a little manufacturing place they had bought that made Biltmore and Brunswick Stew. They said, “Abe if you want it, take it.” He didn’t have any choice. But to his credit, he took it, built it up into a very nice business, made a lot of money, and then he sold it to [Bennett] Oxman. Oxman just sold it for $20,000,000. Isn’t that interesting for a person who didn’t want to be in business? [He] turned out to be a good businessman. He was a scholar, though. I think if he would have had a choice, he would have been a teacher. In this family, you have a variety of people. Sammy’s sister [Tillie] in Birmingham [Alabama] is married to the [Sol] Kimerling family, [who] were very active in the Jewish community in Birmingham. She became . . . I forgot to tell you one of the most important things of this family is her influence. It is a remarkable thing. I’ve never seen it anywhere else. She kept those boys together. They adored their mother as did she, but she was about 17 at the time. She gave to these boys. I have to say it was her, because the mother died when Sammy was nine and the littlest ones were . . . she died in childbirth. She gave them a love for family and appreciation for each other that I’ve never seen. The fact that all of them were in business together was the talk of the country every time they went to any kind of grocery convention anywhere, all over. No one could understand how they stayed in business together, six brothers. They used to kill each other, but nobody better talk about either one of them. I’ll tell you the secret of their business. I think this should be in the file somewhere. They told each one of us as they got married, “You know how women do.” “She’s got a fur coat and I don’t have it.” “George came home at 8:00. Where were you? You were still working?” They told each one of us, “You have nothing to do with what we do as brothers.” We learned early that we were not to come between them. I’ll tell you that a business cannot suffer the interference of women. I think that was one of the main things that added to their success. We were never allowed to tell them, “She’s got this,” and “You didn’t come home.” That type of thing. They had a love for each other and they still do. It’s one of the most remarkable things I have been privileged to see. I have such respect for the love that they have for each other. It’s an enduring thing. I think a great deal of it was their sister. Anything that happened, she left Birmingham and came here to help. Such a remarkable thing. It’s a family. If I had the ability, I would write a book about this family. It was not all perfect. As I said, they used to kill each other, but the
depth of feelings I’ve never seen anywhere else, never.

Ray Ann: That’s amazing because when you’re in business like that, there’s so many things that can happen.

Chippie: It’s amazing. I tell you. It’s not a superficial caring. It is so deep, I can’t explain it. It’s something I’ve never read about and I’ve never seen. They just have that for each other.

Ray Ann: After they got into the Big Apple, then you said they went on to the Food Giant? Did they change the name, or just changed the concept?

Chippie: They changed the name. I don’t remember why. I’m just trying to think. I think the concept also might have been different. But it was supermarket, as such. They added a lot of different things to it, and they made them larger. Every time they had to make a decision about . . . I don’t know whether you’ve noticed or not, the grocery business as with many other things, concepts change. You want to know does a woman prefer shopping in a big store? I prefer shopping in a smaller store. I go out of my way to do it. They tried the big store. They had one of the biggest. It was the first big store. You walk yourself to death. They didn’t know whether it was going to go or not, or whether they should build smaller ones. They tried everything. Some they were successful in, some they were not. They had drug stores.

Ray Ann: In the grocery stores?

Chippie: No, attached.

Ray Ann: What were their names?

Chippie: It must have been Big A. I think it was Big A.

Ray Ann: Was this all going on in the Fifties?

Chippie: Sixties, Seventies, yes, as time went by. The drug stores were phenomenally successful. Then they decided they have to either . . . they wanted to go into Cub Foods. That was something, a new concept. They sold out. Gosh, has it been ten years? It must be. They sold out to the Belgians.

Ray Ann: The Belgians?

Chippie: Yes, they called it Delhaize-Leon.125 It’s a Belgian, big European type of operation. Sammy retired about seven or eight years ago.

Ray Ann: After they had sold out he retired?

125 Delhaize Group is a food retailer headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, and operating in seven countries and on three continents. The principal activity is the operation of food supermarkets.
Chippie: Yes. They didn’t . . .

Ray Ann: Are there other brothers still working in it?

Chippie: No, all of them are out now. Even the grandchildren are out now. Sammy didn’t like the way they were running the business. When you buy a business you have the right to run it the way . . . which is true of anybody. I’m sure you’ve heard that many times. Let me say this on his behalf. I think he has done a remarkable job of semi-retirement. He set up a real estate office, and he goes down every day. I think he’s pleased with his life accomplishment. I am pleased. You can’t ask too much more of life than to be able to enjoy your grandchildren, the fruits of your labor, to give to charity, to be a part of a community, and have accumulated lifelong friends of 50 to 60 years. Some of them are still living. I think it’s a wonderful thing to live in Atlanta and to see how it has grown.

Ray Ann: Tell me about how Atlanta’s grown. I’d love to get some of your feelings about how things have changed.

Chippie: Alright. First of all the change in the face of Atlanta. When I say face, geographically wouldn’t be the word. What would you use to say the rebuilding . . . the skyline. Where I used to live and where most of the Jewish people lived in Atlanta, is now the stadium, 126 the ball park, the hotel area, and the highways. The highways have changed the face of Atlanta. The neighborhoods have changed. Where they’re now going to build a new stadium [Turner Field], they’re going to dislocate a lot of the black and the poor. You’ll see another change.

Atlanta has become a convention city. That has had a big effect on Atlanta. One of our prominent citizens, John Portman, 127 who has built all over the world, had a great deal to do with changing the face of Atlanta. The growth of Atlanta into the suburb area has caused a change. I think the fleeing of white people from the city when the schools changed, a great number were scared to death. I just want to say this, when my daughter was about 12, I think was the time

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126 Atlanta–Fulton County Stadium, often referred to as ‘Fulton County Stadium’ and originally named ‘Atlanta Stadium,’ was built to attract a major league baseball team. In 1966 it succeeded when the Milwaukee Braves relocated to Atlanta. The stadium was built on the site of the cleared Washington-Rawson neighborhood, which had been a wealthy area and home to much of Atlanta’s Jewish community. The Braves continued to play at Fulton County Stadium until the end of the 1996 season, when they moved into Turner Field, the converted Centennial Olympic Stadium originally built for the 1996 Summer Olympics. The stadium was demolished in 1997. A parking lot for Turner Field now stands on the site.

127 John Calvin Portman, Jr., (b. 1924) is an American architect famous for buildings, especially hotels, with multi-storied interior atria. He grew up in Atlanta and had a very large impact on the city, specifically the Peachtree Center complex downtown. His buildings in Atlanta include the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, 230 Peachtree Building (formerly Peachtree Center Tower), AmericasMart (formerly Atlanta Market Center) and the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center.
when her school was beginning to integrate. We talked about it a lot, as we do in our house. I said to her, “This is what’s taking place. You’re going to enjoy it. You know how mother and dad feel, and there’s no problem.” When she came home, she said, “I don’t know what the problem was.” She said, “We had some nice kids in our school.” It was absolutely nothing. They didn’t even notice it. This is what was important to me. It was interesting. However, most people couldn’t run fast enough. It changed, I think, more than the face of the city, it changed attitudes of the lower class, of the very rich even some of the . . . a lot of the middle class.

Ray Ann: How?

Chippie: We saw a change of local government. We saw the last of the white mayors. We saw a definite realignment of power structure. And the effect of it . . . a lot of things that we hoped would happen didn’t happen.

Ray Ann: For instance.

Chippie: For instance, Maynard Jackson. I think I told you . . . had the wonderful opportunity. We were talking about this last week. All the Jewish people felt that it was good because the blacks should have a voice in the government. They were at that time . . . I don’t think they were 50 percent close to it. They’re over 60 percent now in the local Atlanta government. But at that time, they should have had a voice, and didn’t. In hoping that it would be the thing that we looked for, it didn’t happen. He became, in my opinion, racist. Since then, it’s been a different ball game. When something happened, for instance, in the white community and the politician was caught with his hands in the till, it was almost an accepted thing, the politicians. When the black people were being caught, they claimed, “The white people did it long enough. We’re entitled.” You have a lot of them. The black factions were then themselves . . . were fighting. As you know, if you’ve been there long enough to see that. Which I think is so unfortunate, just terrible. They have good leadership, but somehow or another they haven’t gotten it all together.

What I see now, is Gwinnett County is booming. Cobb County has boomed. What will be the result in Atlanta up the road, I cannot imagine. I’m not going to be here long enough to see that factual happening. I do know that there was an exodus, there is an exodus, and we are the generation that’s feeling it now. I think in the future, something is going to happen to get the black and white community more together. In the meantime, they’re building out of Atlanta. They’ve had a terrible time with the tax structure. They have had to offer such inducements to
keep people in the city, and still they flee.

**Ray Ann:** They don’t offer you good property tax here, that’s for sure.

**Chippie:** That’s right. I think growth always necessitates certain desirable and undesirable changes. I do think the best thing that happened to Atlanta, I reiterate, is the influx of people from all over. What we’re going to see now, and we’re seeing already, is the return in large numbers of black people to Atlanta. Don’t forget, the reason that they left was because they did not have equal opportunity anywhere, in the schools, in jobs, anywhere, in homes. Now that things are changed to the degree, they have a better opportunity here than anywhere. Would you agree?

**Ray Ann:** I do agree with that. If I were black, I would want to live in Atlanta.

**Chippie:** Sure. That’s an interesting thing [that] has come to pass. They left to go to Detroit, where they thought things were going to be great. Now the exodus of the return here. They would be crazy not to. I think that is going to have a profound effect on the future of Atlanta. That’s going to be the next change. I think the first big change was the fact that we had people come into Atlanta to add their strength, their knowledge, their liberal outlook, their gifts of all kinds, and their investments. At this point that made the change which brought building as such, jobs, and education. The museum blossomed. People who came here in executive positions wanted to be sure they had schools that were good for their children, which we don’t have too much of now, except for Cobb County . . . a little bit of that. They wanted to be sure that they had certain cultural activities. We have part of that now. It’s going to be interesting to see.

**Ray Ann:** What do you think this election is going to be, our mayor’s election?

**Chippie:** What is it going to be?

**Ray Ann:** Yes. What do you think is going to happen?

**Chippie:** I think Maynard will get in without a problem.

**Ray Ann:** Why?

**Chippie:** Why? Because I think that he relates to the blacks. [Michael] Lomax’s problem is that he doesn’t. Lomax is a smarter man. I think he would be a better man, in my opinion. But Maynard gives to the people a bunch of hot air. He represents to them . . . don’t forget his roots are in the south. I think his mother and father . . . his mother came from a white family generations ago. They were John Wesley [Dobbs].

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128 John Wesley Dobbs (1882-1961) was an African-American civic and political leader. In 1936, he founded the
Atlanta’s blacks. As such, he represents something to them, too. He’ll promise them anything. I don’t like him. I don’t. I think he’s too slick. I think Lomax has the better, more sincere, dedicated offer, but he’s not going to get anything near 30 percent. It’s a sad thing, but I guess they call it politics.

Ray Ann: What about the growth of the Jewish population and integrating the many unaffiliated Jews who . . .

Chippie: . . . Always been a problem. It’s still a problem today. I think I mentioned this before. At one time a Jew would never show his head in Stone Mountain. Now they’re building a synagogue at East Point which is the home of the . . . how would you express it . . . the redneck. You’ve got Jews there, too. Cobb County . . . you have such an explosion of young Jewish families that you wouldn’t believe it. Number one, supposedly they offer a better school system. I’m not privy to that. My kids live in Cobb County, all of them. You could get property. You could say a home of 3,000 to 4,000 square feet for half the price that you could get in the Buckhead area, or where I lived here. Even in this area. They went and left Atlanta. They don’t need Atlanta for anything. They have synagogues, shopping centers, everything, delicatessens. You’ve got a bagel factory on every corner. We never had a place for bagels. That was a big event in Atlanta . . . when we had a place that made bagels.

Ray Ann: When was that? When did that happen?

Chippie: I wish I could remember. It’s been maybe 1950 something. Then we had two. Now we have forty-two. One thing we have never been successful . . . you could get rich if you would go into a good Jewish restaurant.

Ray Ann: Today is July 6, 1989. This is tape 3, side 1 of an interview with Chippie Alterman

Atlanta Civic and Political League, and in 1946 he co-founded the Atlanta Negro Voters League. During those years, 20,000 African-Americans were registered to vote in Atlanta. John Wesley Dobbs died on August 30, 1961, the same week the Atlanta city schools desegregated. His family home still stands at 540 John Wesley Dobbs Avenue (formerly Houston Street). The street was renamed in Dobbs’ honor by Maynard Jackson in 1994. Jackson, the first African-American mayor of Atlanta, was Dobbs’ grandson.

A derogatory slang term referring to poor, uneducated white farmers deemed to be insufficiently liberal, especially from the Southern United States. Southern whites have reclaimed the world using it with pride and defiance as a self-identifier. Similar to ‘cracker’ and ‘hillbilly.’

An area located northwest of Downtown Atlanta with gracious homes, elegant hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, and high-rise condominium and office buildings. Buckhead is a major commercial and financial center of the Southeast, and it is the third-largest business district in Atlanta, behind Downtown and Midtown.
by Ray Ann Kremer for the Oral History Project sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Jewish Committee, and the Atlanta Jewish Federation.

**Ray Ann:** I just want to pick up several things that we were talking about. One was a restaurant you were telling me about that was a Jewish style restaurant. Tell me when that existed, and what happened with it.

**Chippie:** The years must have been around late Forties, early Fifties. It was called Leb’s [Restaurant],\(^{131}\) which was a Jewish type restaurant but served all other kinds of foods, too. It was a popular place. However, at that time, it was not integrated and the problems caused by the pressure . . . I guess you would say . . . some people would call it pressure . . . after a while forced the closing of the restaurant. The people, Mr. and Mrs. Leb . . .

**Ray Ann:** What do you mean by pressure? What kind of things happened?

**Chippie:** The people were not ready for integrated restaurants, and there was a type of a pressure.

**Ray Ann:** The black people or the white people?

**Chippie:** Yes, right. Somehow or another, it seems to me, labor unions figured in that too somehow. I don’t remember exactly. There was so much commotion, destruction, so to speak. There was always a fermenting of feelings that was expressed openly. The people who were running it just decided it would . . . they tried to open on Peachtree Street, and they did. They finally opened a little restaurant in the Piedmont Hospital area building. Leb’s closed, to the sorrow of many of the Jewish people of Atlanta. It was the first time that that type of restaurant was so eminently successful. Convenient, downtown . . . that was before Atlanta Jews were spread out way into the rural areas. I mean the big counties.

**Ray Ann:** It was a good social place to go?

**Chippie:** Yes, without a question. Not only the Jews loved it. The people there learned to love bagels and lox like you never saw, some of the fanciest people in town. It was natural.

**Ray Ann:** Who was the family that owned it?

**Chippie:** L-E-B-E-D-I-N. They mingled with the community. They were charitable. They enjoyed a most successful clientele, as I said not just Jewish people. But interestingly enough,

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\(^{131}\) Leb’s Restaurant was owned by Charlie Lebedin. It was at the corner of Forsyth and Luckie Streets across from the Rialto Theater. Lebedin was a well-known segregationist, and Leb’s, like most downtown restaurants in hotels, did not allow black customers. In the early 1960’s, protestors including students from Atlanta College, began to hold repeated pickets and sit-ins, and Leb’s was a frequent target. After a series of civil rights protests that were met with increasing violence, Leb’s and the other downtown restaurants were finally integrated on July 23, 1964.
no one since then has tried to open that type of restaurant. It was a big place, 120 percent location. People would come out of the movies and stand in line to get in that place. It was a tragedy that that had to . . .

<Interruption in tape>

**Chippie:** I’ll tell you about Head Start. I started with a few others at the very inception. It was not until I was about eight months or a year into the project . . . then the next year that I looked around. I don’t know when it happened. I said to myself, “90 percent of these people are Jewish. I have not seen a black woman around.”

**Ray Ann:** When was this, when you were involved?

**Chippie:** This was when the years of Head Start . . . I don’t recall right now. It must have been . . . was it the 1960’s or early 1970’s? I knew that there were wealthy blacks. I knew that they should be participating. I began to build up such a resentment. I should be ashamed to say this, but I’m not. I know that the Jewish people supported this project sincerely and steadily. I couldn’t imagine why this was located adjacent and into a black neighborhood. I would drive from my house here, all the way across town.

**Ray Ann:** Where was it?

**Chippie:** I think it was West End Avenue off of Northside Drive, going toward the airport . . . on the way to the Jewish cemetery, actually. We had to pass that. The neighborhood of the blacks, a rich neighborhood, leaves nothing to be desired . . . pools. They earned it. They should have it, but I don’t know the figure. One day I’m going to find out how much they contribute to charity for black people. It should be available through the Community Chest. If you are interviewing further, I would like for you to find out. I think it would be an interesting thing, don’t you? We have two of the wealthiest black millionaires in the country here in Atlanta. One, [Herman J.] Russell, who is at the height of politics in Atlanta. And what’s his name? The

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132 Head Start is a program of the Department of Health and Human Services that provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.

133 Herman Jerome Russell (1930-2014) was born in Atlanta. He was the founder and former chief executive officer of H. J. Russell and Company and a nationally recognized entrepreneur and philanthropist, as well as an influential leader in Atlanta. In 1957 he inherited his father’s business and turned the small plastering company into a construction and real estate conglomerate. Some of the construction projects H. J. Russell and Company were a part of include Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the Georgia Dome, Philips Arena, and Turner Field. Russell became the first black member of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in the 1960’s, and later became the second black president of the chamber. When Russell stepped down in 2004 as head of the company, he handed leadership over to his two sons and daughter.
one who runs the newspaper [Atlanta Daily World]. It begins with a W.... owns all the property stuff on Auburn Avenue, all that, a multi-millionaire. That you should take a little bit of time out really for your historic evaluation of Atlanta. You must see it. It’s a marvelous thing. It’s, I think, an unbelievable and marvelous thing, and I just wonder. I quit Head Start. I must say that after a year and a half it just bothered me. I finally asked one of the social workers. She had no answer. I don’t know why I was so stupid.

Ray Ann: Do you think that because there’s some black antisemitism, and probably some Jewish-black racial dislikes? I think it goes both ways.

Chippie: Sure.

Ray Ann: Do you think that makes a difference in our community and our relations? There’s always been this thing, sort of a ‘come together, push apart’ in Jewish-black relations.

Chippie: I don’t think there’s any question. I think to ignore it makes you foolish. To understand it gives you a better chance to work it out. To ignore it is absolutely foolish. It’s there.

Ray Ann: In the Jewish community, what’s going on to help it other than AJC [American Jewish Committee] Black-Jewish Coalition?

Chippie: I don’t know of anything else that’s going on. They have had talks. They have had community dinners, which doesn’t establish a thing when you have incidents like [Louis] Farrakhan, and all of this other stuff that’s obviously there. The Jews, I think, have done more than most people to overcome the problems there. The three people who were murdered in Mississippi, and all the rabbi’s who marched. It’s more than a lot of other people did. Why

134 Atlanta Daily World was the first black daily newspaper published in the 20th century. It was founded as the weekly Atlanta World in 1928, by William Alexander Scott II. Currently owned by Real Times Inc., it publishes daily online and weekly in print. (2016)
135 Chippie is referring here to William Alexander Scott II (1902-1934), founded the Atlanta Daily World, the first successful African American daily newspaper in the United States. Scott was born in Edwards, Mississippi and was educated at Morehouse College in Atlanta. He was interested in sparking conversation and interaction in Atlanta’s back community and began to publish the Atlanta Daily World when he was 26. In 1934 Scott was shot and killed while walking from his garage. No one was ever convicted of his murder. His brother, Cornelius Adolphus Scott, then became the head of the newspaper until he retired in 1997 at the age of 89.
136 An Atlanta-based initiative of the American Jewish Committee founded in 1982 with the purpose of growing understanding and interaction between Jews and Blacks.
137 Louis Farrakhan, Sr. (born Louis Eugene Wolcott, 1933) is the leader of the religious group Nation of Islam ( NOI). He has been criticized for remarks that have been perceived as antisemitic and anti-white. Farrakhan disputes this view of his ideology.
138 On the night of June 21–22, 1964, three civil rights workers were abducted and murdered in Neshoba County, Mississippi, an event which has since been called the Freedom Summer Murders. The civil rights workers were James Earl Chaney of Mississippi, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner of New York, and were associated
blame the Jews? That’s the whole thing.

**Ray Ann:** What do you mean? Where does this resentment come from?

**Chippie:** That’s right. I don’t know. I’m sure it has valid [unintelligible] . . . but so do the Jews have resentment . . . ideals.

**Ray Ann:** That could go back to the grocery stores having problems because they were . . .

**Chippie:** That’s a small percentage. That’s no excuse.

**Ray Ann:** There’s lots of Jewish-black landlords. You know, Jewish landlords and . . .

**Chippie:** Right, but they’ve got Christian landlords and they have black landlords. Did you know that?

**Ray Ann:** Yes.

**Chippie:** One shouldn’t distinguish itself. I want to get back to this thing with Head Start and the rich black people. I actually resent, because just as no one would touch [Reverend] Jesse Jackson, and question him. They don’t touch these people, as they give to help your people. For the first time, I see the positive. Bill Cosby gave millions. Oprah Winfrey gave millions. I think it’s marvelous. I think that’s exciting, but up to now, where has it been? You’ve had that kind of money for years and years. They didn’t even embarrass their people into giving like some of us Jewish people do. You know. I mean, what do you call it? ‘Coerce’ is a nice word. This is a thing that’s not brought up. You wouldn’t believe what I did one time. I think this is interesting for your stuff here. A few years ago when Jesse Jackson first started his push and his ideas on education for children, that the parents should study with them, there should be four hours of study and all this wonderful stuff, I got so enamored. I called him long distance. This has been how long ago? I don’t know, maybe 10 or 12 twelve years ago.

**Ray Ann:** At least.

**Chippie:** I called him long distance, and God was on my side. He was in the hospital for that

with the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) and its member organization, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). They had been working on a campaign to prepare and register African Americans to vote after they had been disenfranchised since 1890.

139 Jesse Louis Jackson, Sr. (born Jesse Louis Burns; 1941) is an American civil rights activist, Baptist minister, and politician. He was a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988 and served as a shadow United States Senator for the District of Columbia from 1991 to 1997. He is the founder of the organizations that merged to form Rainbow/PUSH pursue social justice, civil rights and political activism.

140 William Henry “Bill” Cosby, Jr. (b. 1937) is an American comedian, actor, and author.

141 Oprah Gail Winfrey (b. 1954) is an American media proprietor, talk show host, actress, producer, and philanthropist. She has been ranked the richest African-American of the 20th century and the greatest black philanthropist in American history. (2016)
couple of days. I left a message to have him call me, that I would love to volunteer in Atlanta to help promote his program. Never heard from him. Today I would have killed him. I have his book in my room that I picked up. I can’t wait to read.

Ray Ann: I have one other question that you touched on, but I didn’t quite understand. I’d like to know more about the labor unions that you talked about, and the Arbeiter Ring.

Chippie: The Arbeiter Ring first represented a complete segment of different-thinking Jews in Atlanta. The Arbeiter Ring was a school. A schule [German: school], they called it. A ‘little school’ to which their children went. They established a school for them to learn. They wanted to be sure that their children . . . They weren’t satisfied with the Yiddish education or the Hebrew education or the regular education that their children were getting. Interestingly enough, they seemed to represent the smartest kids in the city. Every one of us knew which one of the kids went to the schule. Their parents were the, I guess you would call . . .

Ray Ann: Who were some of the kids?

Chippie: Dorothy Sablosky . . . Dorothy Medintz, Becky Cenker, Israel Katz, Kuniansky’s . . . they were almost non-religious. When I say non-religious, [I mean] non-observant, but they were Jewish to the core. My father could have been part of that, but he didn’t want to belong to anything. You understand? That would be the type. They believed in Russia as the exemplary type of thinking. They held to that for so long.

Ray Ann: Were they sort of socialist?

Chippie: Yes, I would say so.

Ray Ann: Communist?

Chippie: Some, yes. I used to think my daddy was a communist, but he said he never joined the party. Yes, I would definitely say so, but their broad-minded intellectualism was drafted into the regular Jewish community. They were on the boards of all the organizations. Isn’t it interesting?

Ray Ann: Who was the prime mover in that group?

Chippie: Mr. Merlin and his wife, and Dorothy Medintz’s father, D. Davis. Let’s see . . . who else were some of them? They had a whole group.

Ray Ann: When was their prime event?

Chippie: In the Forties and Fifties. The children didn’t want to go back to the schule. Once you’re here and you want to socialize . . . they almost didn’t like the connotation. It definitely
had a connotation.

Ray Ann: Who would be somebody good to talk to about that?

Chippie: Becky Cenker. She is Mrs. Levy now.

Ray Ann: Mrs.’ who’ Levy?

Chippie: Walter, I believe. Or Annette Lashner, who’s Dorothy Davis’ sister, Dorothy Medintz’s sister. Or [Ida] Glustrom. She’s wonderful. Ida Glustrom, married to . . . I can’t think of his name [Solomon Glustrom]. I’m doing pretty good with names.

Ray Ann: You’re doing very well.

Chippie: That whole group. Smart, smart.

Ray Ann: We’ll have to find out who they are. That would be interesting to find out.

Chippie: Yes, you have to take one of them. I gave you the names of a couple of them and you call for an appointment. They will give you a complete side of Atlanta that I don’t think you’ve heard. I think it’s important.

Ray Ann: When did it fade? Do you know?

Chippie: Yes, when that generation, Becky Cenker, Ida Glustrom, and Sylvia Glustrom . . . some of them lived on my street when I lived on Summer Drive. My father was friends with a lot of them, my family, my mother and father. They began to grow up. It’s interesting. They all tended to join the Temple, which I think constricted them the least as far as religious observance. That’s my point of view. I don’t know that it’s true. Anyway, this is my observation. I had a meeting over here one morning for the Auxiliary of the Hebrew Academy, to form that. We tried to get, as you always do, a composite of active people in different groups from the Temple, from the shul, from B’nai B’rith, and so forth. One of them who attended was Becky Cenker. God, they’re going to blackmail me if they ever see this. Anyway, she’s a smart person. She was my neighbor two doors down the road. We had the head of [National] Linen Supply, Milton Weinstein’s mother [Isadore M. Weinstein], Leah Janis, and a lot of different people. Each organization was supposed to send somebody. However, Leah Janis and I were co-chairing the meeting. We asked, “Who will represent the Temple?” Guess who said they would? Becky Cenker. We had other representatives from that group who would have been representatives. It’s interesting. You live long enough to hear and to see so much. But all of it was for the good and welfare of the community. That’s why I say I look around and I’m proud to see the melding of the Jewish community.
Ray Ann:  We’ll have some more groups to meld in. We’ll have all the new Russians who are . . .

Chippie:  I hope that the day will come when we can meld more closely with the blacks. We don’t have a choice. I think at that time that you’ll begin to see an easier living, not as fraught with tension. Do you know, I must tell you that I am afraid to go to downtown Atlanta. I’m one of those older people who hasn’t been to downtown Atlanta [since] I can’t remember when.

Ray Ann:  During the day, it’s fun.

Chippie:  I understand it is. I’m really anxious to go.

Ray Ann: I think that Atlanta has got a great . . . it can show the rest of the country terrific things.

Chippie:  I don’t think there’s any question. But what remains to be seen, I’m afraid, is how the tremendous influx of population will affect Atlanta. Atlanta did become . . . I don’t know if it is now, through Andrew Young, a center for African culture. Have you noticed it? A magnificent accomplishment. Opened up certain embassies, and so forth. I would really honestly hate to see the pendulum swing to where Atlanta will be known just as a black city. I would hate that. We need someone whose talent is better than Jesse Jackson. I think Lomax could have handled it. Do you see where I’m coming from?

Ray Ann:  You mean better than Maynard Jackson?

Chippie:  Yes, that’s what I mean when I say that I don’t favor Jackson. I don’t think he’s got the right direction. I think he’s full of himself. He’s gotten very rich, which is his privilege, but he has planned it. He said he was going to come back and be mayor. The blacks of Atlanta will vote for him overwhelmingly, which is their privilege.

Ray Ann:  This has been delightful. I thank you so much for your time.

Chippie:  My pleasure.

Ray Ann:  Just one more thing. If you know any other people that you think would be good to interview, do you want to tell me who?

Chippie:  Right off now I could give you a hundred, but I would rather take five minutes and think about it and phone you in a list of five people. That makes more sense than just off the top.

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142 Andrew Jackson Young (b. 1932) is an American politician, diplomat, activist and pastor from Georgia. He has served as a Congressman from Georgia's 5th congressional district, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mayor of Atlanta. He served as President of the National Council of Churches USA, was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) during the 1960’s Civil Rights Movement, and was a supporter and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
of my head to give you lots of names. I would think you would want to take one from this Arbeiter Ring group. I would think you would want to take one from the old Standard Club group.

Ray Ann: Who would that be?

Chippie: I’m going to think of who that would be. Dorothy Joel\textsuperscript{143} comes to mind. She’s from one of the old illustrious families. Also, you might want to interview, between the two, her dearest childhood friend, Alene [Fox] Uhry.\textsuperscript{144}

Ray Ann: She’s been done.

Chippie: Has she been done?

Ray Ann: In fact, do you remember the times . . . I mean have you seen \textit{Driving Miss Daisy}?\textsuperscript{145}

Chippie: Not yet. I’m looking forward. There was too much crowd before.

Ray Ann: I’d be curious to hear your opinion of it. I mean, you were here during those years. You knew those folks. Was their life much different from your life?

Chippie: Yes.

Ray Ann: How?

Chippie: We didn’t mix in the same element at all. As I said, when I first became active in Federation, I was about 18 years old. The first time I ever saw a person from the so-called Standard [Club] group element was at the city meeting when Dorothy Oberdorfer was the woman chairman of the division. I found her to be so lovely. She was an inspiration to me. I knew that she was representative of established, what you would call ‘genteel Jewry.’ She was the nicest, kindest . . . she was a Goucher [College; Baltimore, Maryland] graduate. In those years, she was one of the only people that I ever knew who went to Goucher. She was an unusually nice person. That was my introduction into Atlanta Jewry as a composite group. We

\textsuperscript{143} Dorothy May Selig Joel (1910 – 1998) was the daughter of Simon S. Selig and Emma Printz Selig and was active in Atlanta’s Jewish community including the Brandeis National Women’s Committee and the Temple, where she was a member. She married Lyons Barnette Joel II in 1931 in the first wedding and event held at the Temple on Peachtree Street.

\textsuperscript{144} Alene Fox Uhry (1909 - 2002) was the mother of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Alfred Uhry. She was a social worker and was active in Atlanta’s civic and Jewish life. She was a life-time director of the board of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and a prominent supporter of the High Museum. She appeared in the movie \textit{Driving Miss Daisy} which was written by her son. Her mother, Lena Guthman Fox, was the model for the character Miss Daisy.

\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Driving Miss Daisy} (1987) is the first in what is known as Alfred Uhry’s Atlanta trilogy of plays which earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Uhry adapted it into the screenplay for the 1989 Academy Award winning film of the same name. The film starred Jessica Tandy (Daisy Werthan), Morgan Freeman (Hoke Colburn), and Dan Aykroyd (Boolie Werthan). The story of ‘Miss Daisy,’ a Southern Jewish widow and Hoke, her black chauffeur, is set in Atlanta between 1948 and 1973 as their 25-year friendship reflects the social changes in the American South.
always kept to our own, so to speak.

**Ray Ann:** How would their life have been different than yours, actually?

**Chippie:** Money, for one thing.

**Ray Ann:** They were more comfortable.

**Chippie:** That’s all. I think that that is all that there was. They were not any more observant. They might have been less so.

**Ray Ann:** Were they more involved in the gentile community?

**Chippie:** I would say they didn’t care. A lot of them used to make statements that it wouldn’t bother them at all if their children married non-Jewish people. It just so happened they were lucky they married Jewish people. It was different, in so far as their interests that they pursued. They had the money at that time to take cruises, to play golf, to belong to private clubs. Limited funds affected those of us, and our parents who were working all day to make a crust of bread. That naturally limited people.

**Ray Ann:** Really, it was more of an economic thing than . . . and a little bit ‘socio’ in that maybe the customs were a little bit different from where . . .

**Chippie:** Don’t forget the history of the Jewish people in this country was such that the Germans didn’t want the Russian Jews in here. They didn’t want to have to take care of them. They were embarrassed by the influx of Russian Jews. The same was true in this community, too. Economics separated us more, I think, than anything else. By the same token, Federation brought us together more than anything else. I think that’s important, not only through giving, but it threw people together socially. If you attended a luncheon, you might not see that person after lunch until the next year. But we sat down together, we discussed certain mechanics of fundraising together, and that automatically brought people together. Now I don’t see any line between any of them, the Spanish, the German, or the Russian.

**Ray Ann:** Who else do you think would be a good representative of people to talk to?

**Chippie:** You mean of the different groups?

**Ray Ann:** Yes.

**Chippie:** Young or old?

**Ray Ann:** Let’s concentrate on old, because we want to get the older people first.

**Chippie:** Ray Ann, let me give it a thought. You talked to Leah Janis? She’s marvelous. I have such admiration for that person. She loves her husband. At times I just wanted to kill her,
but I never lost respect for her knowledge, and her ability as a human being and as a Jew. She was very big in all local things, Jewish and non-Jewish. I’m glad that you had a chance to interview her. You know what would be interesting? To interview Jean [Aronstam] Cohen, but I don’t know if Herbie [Herbert Cohen] would let her do it. She would be thrilled and she offers a way back history. Her father was Louis Aronstam. Have you heard that [name] mentioned? He owned GF Iron Works [Southern General Fireproofing Company] down there across from Grady Hospital. Her father was the first Jew who gave a six figure contribution to Piedmont Hospital. At the same time, I don’t want to say it on the tape, but I’ll tell you I think it would be interesting if Jean would do it. I believe she would. She would give you a picture of Atlanta going back to the [Henry Aaron] Alexander home, right there at Phipps Plaza. All of that and the life on Lullwater Road. I think it’s very necessary. At the same time, I’m trying to think. If you could get her to do it, Ed Kahn’s wife, Helen [Schulman] Kahn is a resident of Jewish Tower. Her husband is the one I’ve been telling you about . . .

Ray Ann: . . . Right, I have that.

Chippie: . . . who was so extraordinary. You must interview her.

Ray Ann: Alright.

Chippie: That will be a feather in the cap of the history of Atlanta, definitely. Put that on your list. I’m trying to think of a different kind of a group.

INTERVIEW ENDS

146 Jean Aronstam Cohen (1922 – 1998) was born in Atlanta. She was active in the Red Cross Motor Corps in War II, during which time she met and married Herbert Cohen. They married in 1945 and had three children. She was the first chairman of the Junior Division of the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund. She was active in the Temple Sisterhood and Vice-President of the National Council of Jewish Women.
147 Henry Aaron Alexander, Sr. (1874-1967) was born in Atlanta and 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. He was a member of the defense team in the trial of Leo Frank. 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.
148 Phipps Plaza is an upscale shopping mall on Peachtree Road in Atlanta’s Buckhead neighborhood. In 1969, Phipps Plaza opened as the first multi-level mall in Atlanta.
149 A street lined with historic mansions in the affluent Druid Hills neighborhood in northeast Atlanta.