Ann: This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg interviewing Mr. Joseph Cuba in his home on February 19, 1990. His home is located at 515 Mt. Vernon Highway, Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Cuba and I are going to begin at the beginning—as he said, “At bereshith.” It’s a good place to start. Will you tell me a little about how your family got to the United States, and the names of your parents and your predecessors in this country?

Joseph: I don’t really know too much about their coming.

Ann: You know where they came from?

Joseph: They came from Poland.

Ann: What town in Poland?

Joseph: Lomza.²

Ann: Spell it.

Joseph: Lomza, L-O-M-Z-A.

Ann: L-O-M-Z-A. Do you know where that’s near?

Joseph: No. I’ve never been there.

Ann: You could go.

¹ ‘Bereishit’ or ‘bereshith’ is a Hebrew word, which is the first word of the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). It literally means ‘at/in [the] head.’ and may be translated as the phrase ‘In the beginning...’
² Lomza (Polish: Łomza) is a city in northeastern Poland, approximately 150 kilometers (90 miles) from Warsaw and 80 kilometers (50 miles) from Bialystok.
Joseph: I wouldn’t give them the satisfaction.
Ann: You were born in the United States?
Joseph: I was born in Atlanta.
Ann: Your father and mother, were they born in Europe?
Joseph: Poland. Yes, they were born in Europe, [unintelligible].
Ann: What were their names?
Joseph: My mother’s name was Kaufman, Etta . . . E-T-T-A . . . Etta Kaufman. Of course, my father’s name was my name.
Ann: You were named for your father?
Joseph: Yes, because . . . you can’t be named after a living parent, but he died two weeks before I was born. That’s why they gave me his name . . . [unintelligible].
Ann: You were the youngest of how many?
Joseph: Seven. They lost one years and years ago [unintelligible].
Ann: Who was the oldest child in your family?
Joseph: Rae, Rae Lee.
Ann: Your sister?
Joseph: My sister Rae Lee, then my sister named Minnie, and a sister named Frances. I hope I don’t miss anyone . . . then Jean [Cuba] Ginsburg.
Ann: She’s still here in Atlanta?
Joseph: She’s still in Atlanta . . . then my sister Gussie. I’m the baby. I’m not sure they treated me like a baby or not. I guess maybe they did.
Ann: How many of you all . . .
Joseph: . . . all these girls around.
Ann: . . . I was going to say, you had a lot of sisters. How many of your siblings were born here in Atlanta, or were you the only one?
Joseph: [unintelligible].
Ann: Prior to your birth, how many of the girls and your brother . . . were they all born in Europe?
Joseph: Mostly. A couple of them were born in New York. I think Jean and Max were born in New York.
Ann: The family spent some time in New York before coming to Atlanta. Do you know how
long? Do you know what year they came?

**Joseph:** I know I was born in 1909, because they told me . . .

**Ann:** Do you know what year, for instance, your sister Jean was born? Can you kind of figure out from how many years older she is than you? We don’t want to embarrass her.

**Joseph:** She’s [unintelligible]. I’m not going to tell her age.

**Ann:** You don’t have to tell me how many years, but you can just kind of figure in your mind if she was born in New York, and if she was older than your brother.

**Joseph:** She was the youngest. I [unintelligible] . . .

**Ann:** . . . just got them out of order.

**Joseph:** She was youngest.

**Ann:** I was just trying to figure what year your family may have come from Europe. Maybe around 1900?

**Joseph:** Around 1900, 1910, or 1905.

**Ann:** Why did they end up in Atlanta?

**Joseph:** They come because of relatives. Somebody comes down here, and gets settled, and says, “You ought to come down here.” It’s a lot of talk. I think my grandfather came down first. We’re related to the Goldstein family, Marvin and Irving. They’ve got a big family, too. Their mother and my mother were sisters.

**Ann:** Their mother was a Kaufman.

**Joseph:** Right, they’re sisters.

**Ann:** They had come to Atlanta first, before your family?

**Joseph:** It’s my understanding they came first. We followed.

**Ann:** You said your grandfather, your grandparents, also came to the United States?

**Joseph:** Yes. Grandfather came to Atlanta.

**Ann:** This was your mother’s parents?

**Joseph:** My mother’s parents.

**Ann:** What was his name?

**Joseph:** His name was Feibel, spelled with an ‘F.’

**Ann:** Your grandmother, did she also come?

**Joseph:** Yes. She helped raise me.

**Ann:** What was her name?
Joseph: Sara Rebecca.³
Ann: Do you remember her maiden name? Did you ever hear it?
Joseph: That goes back too far.
Ann: Sometimes you do know these things.
Joseph: We called her ‘Sara Rebecca.’
Ann: Were they from the same shtetl⁴ originally? Your father’s family and your mother’s family?
Joseph: I don’t know.
Ann: Sometimes that’s a very logical . . .
Joseph: . . . our families were too busy trying to make a living.
Ann: What did they do to make a living?
Joseph: My father passed away.
Ann: What had he done?
Joseph: He was a teacher, Hebrew school and all that. When he passed away [unintelligible]. My father and my mother opened a grocery store, different than a [unintelligible].
Ann: Tell me the difference.
Joseph: Difference is the Jewish merchandise, kosher⁵ merchandise. You’re closed on Shabbos.⁶ From Friday night, the place is closed. They wouldn’t let you open on Sunday in those days, so you lost that business.
Ann: They were shomer Shabbat,⁷ in other words.
Joseph: Yes. That was very important to them. They worked together in the grocery store. My grandfather kept the books in Yiddish.⁸
Ann: Did he speak English though?

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³ The Breman Museum holds images of Feibel and Sara Kaufman at JCF 485.016 and JCF 485.107.
⁴ A shtetl is a small town, usually in eastern Europe, with a significant Jewish presence in it.
⁵ Kosher/Kashrut is the set of Jewish dietary laws. Food that may be consumed according to halakhah (Jewish law) is termed ‘kosher’ in English. Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law is called treif. The word ‘kosher’ has become English vernacular, a colloquialism meaning proper, legitimate, genuine, fair, or acceptable.
⁶ 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.
⁷ A person who observes commandments for the Jewish Sabbath from sundown Friday evening until sundown Saturday evening.
⁸ Yiddish is the common historical language of Ashkenazi Jews from Central and Eastern Europe. It is heavily Germanic based but uses the Hebrew alphabet. The language was spoken or understood as a common tongue for
Joseph: Very poorly. He tried very hard. He managed to [unintelligible], so many words.

Ann: Did you teach him. Did you ever . . .

Joseph: . . . not really. I would try. We’d sit there and talk about it, a word here and a word there. Nothing organized.

Ann: Could he write any English?

Joseph: The same way he speaks. My mother writes. I had some letters she’d written just like she talks, in broken Yiddish.

Ann: Did she write English words with Yiddish letters? Did she ever do that?

Joseph: Not that I know of.

Ann: Just sound them out phonetically?

Joseph: That’s how they were written [unintelligible] . . . written in English.

Ann: That’s what I wondered. My grandmother did that too.

Joseph: She did that . . . [unintelligible] written that way.

Ann: Were those letters to you, or letters to other people?

Joseph: Other people. She didn’t have any occasion to write me because I never went anywhere. In those days, if you could go . . . our big trip every year we would take ten days to Indian Springs [Georgia].

Ann: Toward Macon [Georgia], down south.

Joseph: That’s right. We’d take a big train, and go to Flovilla [Georgia]. From Flovilla, we’d take the ‘dummy’—what they’d call these little small trains—and go to Indian Springs. For ten days [unintelligible].

Ann: Where did you stay there?

Joseph: They had big hotels there, but we couldn’t stay in a hotel because they wasn’t kosher. We’d pack pots and pans. We’d get the farmhouse, where they’d let us a room with cooking privileges. There we are with our own pots and pans and the dishes. They didn’t have any paper plates in those days. We went every year, ten days, to Indian Springs for fishing.

Ann: What time of year did you go?

Joseph: In the summertime.
Ann: It is so hot in the middle of Georgia in the summer.
Joseph: We never noticed it. We were so excited about the train.
Ann: That’s wonderful. Did other Jewish families do that?
Joseph: Some [families].
Ann: You remember any other families that used to go with you?
Joseph: I don’t know. There were some. That was our . . .
Ann: . . . your big outing.
Joseph: . . . big trip. The thing I always keep thinking about [unintelligible], pots and pans and the dishes, and the arrangements of renting a room in a farmhouse.
Ann: What did you use for transportation when you got there? Did you walk to the springs from . . .
Joseph: We walked.
Ann: . . . you didn’t have a wagon, or they didn’t have a taxi or . . .
Joseph: They had a wagon, and I think they had a taxi. We were so excited. We’d just walk anywhere in them days. In those days, you did a lot of walking. Now you walk for sport. We used to walk because we had no other way to get anywhere. In fact, speaking of Indian Springs, we used to go every year. We went there one year, and they had this big store called ‘Wigwam.’ [unintelligible] were round and around up on the hill overlooking the springs. The springs are springs. They were very healthy. We were there when they had a big fire. The hotel burned. It was a chain motel, big one, but it burned. We were sitting . . . we were at a farmhouse on a hill overlooking it, right across. People were running away, trying to get out of town, and everything else.
Ann: Were there any bad injuries or just the building itself was destroyed?
Joseph: They must have gotten out. I don’t know anybody down there now. I do remember the fact that they took the piano out of the hotel. Some guy sat there and played it.
Ann: During the fire?
Joseph: Yes. You could hear it all around.
Ann: That’s amazing. Do you remember what year that was?

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10 The Wigwam Hotel was located on the ridge overlooking the mineral spring house at Indian Springs State Park in Flovilla, Georgia. The hotel was built in 1890 and stood until it was destroyed by fire in 1921. The hotel was four stories high, with piazzas, balconies, a palatial dining room, bath houses, a casino and bowling alleys. The Indian Springs Chapel (circa 1890) was constructed from left over lumber milled for the Wigwam Hotel.
Joseph: You can figure it out. I must have been nine, ten years old.
Ann: About 1918, 1920?
Joseph: Something like that. [NB: 1921.]
Ann: It’s amazing. It’s a wonderful story.
Joseph: My sister remembers a girl because she was out in the middle of the road trying to get a ride back to Atlanta.
Ann: Was she afraid?
Joseph: Afraid? Everybody was afraid. It sort of all . . .
Ann: . . . looked like the whole town was going to go.
Joseph: It looked like a big bonfire. When you got to the farmhouse, they were all . . .
Ann: Everything was made out of wood.
Joseph: Just drop a match and everything would go up.
Ann: What did you do for entertainment there? Did you swim?
Joseph: They had a pool. It wasn’t much of a pool. They had a bowling alley. Otherwise, you [unintelligible], and you ran around. You know kids. Mother had friends who played cards.
Ann: What kind of card games? Do you remember?
Joseph: I think they’re British.
Ann: What happened to the store while you all were down in Indian Springs?
Joseph: My grandfather took care of it.
Ann: He didn’t go with you?
Joseph: No, he didn’t go.
Ann: It was just the women and the children?
Joseph: He was a very Orthodox and religious person. He wore the long black coat [Hebrew: bekishe]. On Shabbos his [unintelligible] dressed up . . . [unintelligible] Shabbos, it meant something to him.
Ann: Did any of his other relatives come?
Joseph: Some came. His son came down and . . .
Ann: . . . what was his name?

11 Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written Torah and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.
12 A bekishe is a long coat usually worn by Hasidic Jew, mainly on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays or at weddings or other such events.
Joseph: That was my mother’s brother. His name was Wolf . . . Leiba Wolf [sp].

Ann: In Yiddish.

Joseph: He was Wolf Kaufman. His grandson is still living.

Ann: Can you give me their names, some of the Wolf Kaufman grandchildren?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Who are they? Is Gary Kaufman one of them?

Joseph: . . . Bessie Borstein. You know Bessie Borstein?

Ann: I know the name.

Joseph: All right. Paul Borstein. They’re active over at the Shearith Israel synagogue. He’s a shammash\textsuperscript{14} for the congregation. Jean Kaufman Sherman, her son is Dr. Stanley Sherman.

Ann: These are all your close relatives really.

Joseph: Dr. Sherman and his wife [Judy], his son [unintelligible].

Ann: All comes around?

Joseph: What comes around, goes around. Something like that.

Ann: What business was Wolf in? Was he also in the grocery business?

Joseph: He took over the grocery store. He came with us and took over the store. My mother had enough. My sisters were getting old enough to all go out to work. They all went to Commercial High School.\textsuperscript{15} In those days, that was the public school. How long have you been in Atlanta?

Ann: Seventeen years.

Joseph: [unintelligible] Commercial High School you wouldn’t remember.

Ann: I don’t remember it, but I’ve read about it.

Joseph: First high school. I went there too. Max went there. That’s the school you get all [unintelligible] and when you get out.

Ann: What did you study?

Joseph: In high school I studied bookkeeping. I passed shorthand. I promised the teacher I

\textsuperscript{13} Founded in 1904, Shearith Israel began as a congregation that met in the homes of congregants until 1906 when they began using a Methodist church on Hunter Street. After World War II, Rabbi Tobias Geffen moved the congregation to University Drive, where it became the first synagogue in DeKalb County. In the 1960s, they removed the barrier between the men’s and women’s sections in the sanctuary, and officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement in 2002.

\textsuperscript{14} An official acting as the sexton or caretaker of a synagogue.

\textsuperscript{15} Commercial High School began as a department of Girls High School in 1889 for girls who wanted to learn business skills. They taught bookkeeping, typing, math and history. It expanded to a four-story brick building on
wouldn’t take a job as a stenographer.

Ann: Why? That’s the logical question, if you took it. Did you do that poorly?

Joseph: Who was I to argue with her?

Ann: Especially when you didn’t want to be a stenographer anyway, right?

Joseph: That’s right. Mrs. Steinheimer.

Ann: Was she German or was she Jewish?

Joseph: I think she was both.

Ann: Steinheimer?

Joseph: Steinheimer. She said, “I’m going to pass you, but I want you to promise not to be a stenographer.”

Ann: Obviously you must have done fairly well in bookkeeping and accounting.

Joseph: I thought in those days, bookkeeping . . . I could probably get a job in bookkeeping, which I did. I made $12 a week.

Ann: How old were you? This is right out of high school?

Joseph: Right out of high school.

Ann: You’re 17, maybe 18?

Joseph: I was 17.

Ann: Where did you go to grade school?

Joseph: I started off at Crew Street School. That’s gone, I think . . . Crew Street School. Then we moved from Woodward Avenue. Our store was on Capitol Avenue. We lived on Woodward Avenue. It was about two blocks away . . .

Ann: Do you remember the address, by chance, where you lived? The number?

Joseph: It was 11.

Ann: Do you remember the number of the store on Capitol Avenue? You remember the streets it was between?

Joseph: It was between Woodward Avenue and Rawson Street. Across the street from us, there was the Taylor Baking Company.¹⁶ They’re not still around. Their family is still here. Stanford Makover was one of the grandchildren of the Taylor family. On Saturday afternoon, you could smell that bread all over the place.

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¹⁶ The Taylor Baking Company in Atlanta was owned by Charles Taylor, the father of Herbert Taylor. It was located at 351 Capitol Avenue. See the Herbert Taylor oral history, OHC XXXXX for a fuller description.
Ann: What other stores were right nearby that were owned by Jewish families? Do you remember?
Joseph: S.J. Gold opened up a store there. Later on, after Central Baking come in, it was on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Capitol Avenue. There was a kosher meat market across the street. I’m trying to remember. I don’t know the name of it. Don’t you know the memory is the first to go?
Ann: I think you’re doing very well.
Joseph: We had the Anshi S’fard Synagogue.17
Ann: Where was Anshi S’fard located in relation to your grocery?
Joseph: Across the street.
Ann: Right across the way?
Joseph: Across the street. Then they moved on Highland Avenue.
Ann: How large was that congregation? Can you remember? In those days?
Joseph: I don’t think it was very large.
Ann: Even then?
Joseph: We had [Congregation] Ahavath Achim18 in existence. Ahavath Achim started, I think, in 1880 something. They [unintelligible] type of thing. My grandfather, as religious as he was, that wasn’t his cup of tea, so to speak. My uncle came over, Wolf Kaufman. He was just as religious. He took over the store to make a living for their family. Like I said, my sisters went to work. Max went to work when he was old enough. When I was old enough, I went to work. We all made contributions to the pot.
Ann: That’s how the family got along?
Joseph: That’s how we made a living. That was how my mother was able to get out of the

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17 Congregation Anshi S’fard is an Orthodox synagogue located in Atlanta. It was founded in 1911 to provide a home for Hasidic worship and fellowship for Jews from Poland, Galicia and the Ukraine who had settled in Atlanta. At first the congregation met in the Red Men’s Hall on Central Avenue, but by the end of 1913 a wooden building at the corner of Woodward Avenue and King Street was secured. A few years later the congregation moved to the corner of Woodward and Capitol avenues. After 1945, the Southside settlement of Jews where Anshi S’fard was located disappeared. Anshi S’fard moved to its present location on North Highland, in the Morningside area. It is the oldest Orthodox congregation in Atlanta.

18 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. Rabbi Abraham Hirmes was the first rabbi of the then Orthodox congregation. In 1928 Rabbi Harry Epstein became the rabbi and the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they joined in 1952. The synagogue moved to its current location on Peachtree Battle Avenue in 1958. Cantor Isaac Goodfriend, a Holocaust survivor, joined the congregation in 1966 and remained until his retirement. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the
Ann: Did you work at the store at all as a kid?

Joseph: I remember riding on the wagon. We had a horse and wagon, and a buggy. They were all parked behind the house on Woodward Avenue. We had to feed them, take care of them, and all that.

Ann: Was that your job?

Joseph: I was too little for that. All the horses were named ‘Charlie’ for some reason. That first time I remember these two different horses. They were both named ‘Charlie.’

Ann: ‘Charlie I’ and ‘Charlie II.’

Joseph: They got a picture of Rocky I,19 so why not? The wagons would be used during the week to deliver groceries. My brother Max, he was three years older than me. He actually worked in the store and had a real job. He’d go ringing the doorbells and taking orders. All the housewives saw a cute little thing like that coming and taking an order. When you have to do it, you have to do it.

Ann: How old was he when he did that? What do you think, maybe 10?

Joseph: He was about 12.

Ann: He’d do this after school?

Joseph: After school. On Sundays, we would pick-up. On Sundays, we used to use the buggy. I’d use the buggy. My mother drove it. You go collecting. You got to collect money. They didn’t have this idea like the doctors do now, pay before you leave.

Ann: Everybody was getting credit during the week?

Joseph: Yes. Otherwise they wouldn’t buy. She’d go on Sunday in the buggy. She wouldn’t drive the wagon. I guess she would if she had to. She’d take the buggy and she’d go collecting on Sundays. On Sundays, she was a real lady.

Ann: She got dressed up to collect?

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19 The reference here is most likely to the American sports drama film Rocky, starring Sylvester Stallone as working class boxer Rocky Balboa. There were several sequels to the original 1975 film: Rocky II (1979), Rocky III (1982), Rocky IV (1985), Rocky V (1990), Rocky Balboa (2006) and Creed (2015).
Joseph: Yes... had the transportation... got some pictures here.20

Ann: That’s your mother?

Joseph: Yes. She was a great lady. She was from the old school. [unintelligible]. She was... *shtark* [Yiddish: strong]...

Ann: ... very distinguished-looking lady and *shtark*?

Joseph: That’s right.

Ann: Was she strong willed?

Joseph: Yes. She was strong.

Ann: When your father died, do you know what he died of? He obviously must have been fairly young.

Joseph: All I can tell was that he died of a busted appendix. Same old story. If you have no money, you got to take charity. If you gonna take charity, then [unintelligible] didn’t hand out. You go to a hospital, like Grady Hospital.21 It happened we had a hospital. Except don’t [unintelligible] like Grady. Grady hasn’t changed in all those years. They just misdiagnosed his case from what I can figure out. My sister, also. She was supposed to come home. She was always unwell, and they bring her home in a hearse.

Ann: How old was she when she died?

Joseph: She was about eight years old.

Ann: [Do] you know what she had, what disease or... ...

Joseph: It was an infection of some kind. That’s the type of subject that our family won’t talk about. She was next to me in age.

Ann: How old do you think your dad was when he died, just before you were born?

Joseph: We can find out from the tombstone. He was about 35.

Ann: Your mother had all these children, these seven children to raise.

Joseph: Yes. They tried to get her to put us in the Orphans’ Home.22 We had a Hebrew Orphans’ Home in Atlanta. The building is still in existence on Washington Street. Cold, and...

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20 The Breman Museum holds several images of
21 Grady Memorial Hospital, frequently referred to as Grady Hospital or simply Grady, was founded in 1890. It is the public hospital for the city of Atlanta, serving a large proportion of low-income patients. Grady is the largest hospital in Georgia and has come to be considered one of premier public hospitals in the Southeast. (2015)
22 The Hebrew Orphans’ Home was located at 478 Washington Street in Atlanta. The residence facility was open from 1876 to 1930. It was originally called the Hebrew Orphans' Asylum. In 1901, the name was changed to the Hebrew Orphans' Home. The service began to be used to place foster children in homes. In 1988, the organization’s mission changed and it became the Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF) with the goal of providing low-interest
I used to go up there and play ball up there.

**Ann:** It wasn’t very far from where everybody lived.

**Joseph:** We used to go play ball up there. It wasn’t the nicest place. It was cold and damp and dreary.

**Ann:** Do you remember how many children were there? Were there lots of children? You remember lots of children, or just a handful?

**Joseph:** They had a nice big Orphans’ Home. They had a hut . . . they built a hut in front on the lawn. That was our Scout troop.23

**Ann:** Boy Scouts?

**Joseph:** Boy Scouts.

**Ann:** Who sponsored you? The [Jewish Educational] Alliance?24

**Joseph:** Had to be sponsored?

**Ann:** They do now. I don’t know, maybe not then.

**Joseph:** We were not affiliated with the Alliance as far as that troop was concerned. One of the exciting memories of Scouts was a visit by Ben Lyon.25

**Ann:** The actor, Ben Lyon?

**Joseph:** The actor. You remember him?

**Ann:** He’s a silent movie26 star, sure.

**Joseph:** How can we have a talking movie star in those days?

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23 A youth organization in the United States founded in 1910 to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of outdoor activities, educational programs and at older age levels, career-oriented programs in partnership with community organizations. They wear a uniform and earn merit badges for achievements in sports, crafts, science, etc. The boys start as a Cub Scout until age 11 and can move up to be an Eagle Scout. (There is a similar organization for girls: the Girl Scouts.)

24 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 1940s, when it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.

25 Ben Lyon (1901 – 1979) was an American actor and a studio executive at 20th Century Fox. Born in Atlanta, Lyon entered films in 1918 and steadily developed into a leading man. By the mid-1940’s he was working for 20th Century Fox. In 1946 he met aspiring actress Norma Jeane Dougherty. Lyon organized a screen test for the actress, renamed her, and signed her as Marilyn Monroe to her first studio contract.

26 Silent films had no sound track and no spoken dialogue. They were made from 1894-1929 and included ‘intertitles’—or boxes with text in them explaining what the actors were saying or describing action. Sound was provided by the theater where the film was shown, usually organists or even ensembles of musicians to provide a suitable atmosphere.
Ann: What rank did you reach in the Boy Scouts?
Joseph: He came visiting us one time. I don’t remember the details. [Aaron] Lichtenstein was our scout master.
Ann: What was his first name, do you remember?
Joseph: Aaron [unintelligible]. Anyhow, he was the scout master. It was a nice troop. I didn’t get very far.
Ann: Were you a Tenderfoot?27
Joseph: I passed that stage.
Ann: What about First Class?28
Joseph: I probably got as far as First Class. I was handicapped because a lot of their things they did on Shabbos.
Ann: You couldn’t participate?
Joseph: No.
Ann: Did you spend all day in shul [Yiddish: synagogue] on Shabbat?
Joseph: No. [unintelligible].
Ann: Right. You went early in the morning on Shabbat, with your grandfather?
Joseph: Early years. I’ll give you a little story that I remember well. I must have been about three years old. I remember him taking me to [Ahavath Achim’s] Gilmer Street shul. Gilmer Street shul was on the corner of Gilmer [Street] and Piedmont [Avenue]?
Ann: . . .
Joseph: . . . anyhow . . .
Ann: . . . close to there, anyway.
Joseph: . . . it was in walking distance. I remember on yahrzeit29 . . . I guess that’s why yahrzeit means so much to me. [unintelligible]. He would have me stand up and he’d say to me, “Lerne noch, noch.”30
Ann: He was teaching it to you, even at age three.
Joseph: No, it was the service. It was on yahrzeit. He had me saying . . .

27 One of the ranks in the Boy Scouts of America.
28 First Class Scout is a rank in the Boy Scouts of America, the rank above Second Class and below Star Scout.
29 ‘Anniversary’ in Hebrew. Each year the anniversary of the death of a relative is observed by lighting a special yahrzeit candle and reciting the Kaddish. Memorial services for the dead are also held during the High Holy Days and the Festivals.
30 German for ‘learn more’ or ‘study more.’
Ann: The yahrzeit, the Kaddish.\textsuperscript{31}

Joseph: . . . the Kaddish. That’s right. That’s how I bonded with him. He had everybody wait. Like I was running to say Kaddish now, but as far as he’s concerned . . . I don’t think I’ll ever forget that.

Ann: Amazing.

Joseph: He was a great guy.

Ann: Did you have a lot of special time with him? I know he worked hard, but . . .

Joseph: . . . not really.

Ann: Did he seem to be partial to you, as opposed to some of the older children? Did he want to be with you more?

Joseph: [unintelligible]. He was busy and . . .

Ann: Who did you spend most of your time with?

Joseph: I had never thought about that. In my later years, most of my time was with Max. We were in business together.

Ann: I’m talking about as a young person. As a child growing up, did you spend time with your sister because she was closer in age to you? With your brother? With your grandmother?

Joseph: My grandmother was there taking care of the house and preparing the meals. I guess she really raised us up to a certain point.

Ann: Was she a real bubbe\textsuperscript{32} kind of grandmother, real loving kind of grandmother, affectionate, or not really?

Joseph: As far as I’m concerned, she was. I can’t speak for the rest of them.

Ann: You speak for yourself. You don’t have to speak for them. No, it’s just interesting to know the kind of relationship mainly because you were the youngest child.

Joseph: I think she did favor me.

Ann: You weren’t spoiled?

Joseph: I must not tell a lie. Those days . . . we made it.

Ann: Did the sisters give you special treats? Did your older sisters spoil you?

Joseph: I guess in a way they did. As they grew older, they had their own responsibilities and they were trying to help make a living for the family.

\textsuperscript{31} Also known as the Mourner’s Kaddish. The word Kaddish means sanctification, and the prayer is a sanctification of G-d’s name that is recited at funerals and by mourners.

\textsuperscript{32} Bubbe is a Yiddish nickname for ‘Grandmother.’
Ann: To go back to your Boy Scout troop, I want to be sure that we don’t forget to ask who else was in the troop. Can you remember some of the other scouts, just for history’s sake . . . the names of some of the other boys? Were any of your cousins, like the Goldstein boys, in that group?

Joseph: A number of them were.

Ann: Your brother?

Joseph: No. He was too old then.

Ann: Were they all Jewish?

Joseph: Yes. I guess we were sponsored by the Orphans’ Home, come to think of it.

Ann: [It’s] possible, since it was on the front yard.

Joseph: Otherwise, why would they do that? Most of the activities that I was involved in as a youngster were the Jewish [Educational] Alliance. Jewish Alliance was built the same year I was born. One had nothing to do with the other. It was a hangout place for the Jewish community. It went through trying times. I remember a picture of my mother wrapping bandages for World War I. They would all meet there and then they’d do it there. Everything was done at the Alliance. They had the problems of directors, and [how to] get rid of them.

Ann: You remember the names of any of the people who came and went?

Joseph: Directors? I know the one whose name was Hexter. H-E-X-T-E-R . . . Hexter.

Ann: That’s an interesting name. What was he like, do you remember?

Joseph: Not very good. You had . . . the one who really made the organization. For a while there, you had these bullies. You had boys that were bullies. They would always pick on everybody else. They’d pick on the director, too. Everybody [unintelligible] . . . until ‘Little Caesar’ came.

Ann: ‘Little Caesar’?

Joseph: That’s my name for Edward M. Kahn.33 Ed Kahn straightened that place up. He straightened the kids up. He worked on them. He really made them productive.

Ann: Why do you feel that, how do I phrase this . . . were these little hoodlums, these bullies, the boys that you said were really . . .

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33 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 *The Southern Israelite* as a
Joseph: ... they were hoodlums ...
Ann: ... out of control or whatever.
Joseph: They were hoodlums.
Ann: Was there that kind of an element in the Jewish community?
Joseph: There was then.
Ann: A sort of a criminal element, I guess, or borderline.
Joseph: We had one who went to jail.
Ann: Who was that?
Joseph: Kosnofsky. You know that name?
Ann: Kosnofsky? What was his first name, do you remember? Can’t come up with it? Do you remember what year approximately it was, how old you were, for instance?
Joseph: I must have been around 13 or 14.
Ann: Do you know what his crime was?
Joseph: Most of the crimes were stealing. Kosnofsky.
Ann: Bet you hadn’t thought about that in a while?
Joseph: He had a brother named Max [Kosnofsky]. He changed it to Max Knox.
Ann: That family still here in the city?
Joseph: Not that I know of. Meyer Balser used to live around there, hang around Alliance. He was a member of the Midgets [basketball team]. [unintelligible], raise funds, and built this big gymnasium, plain building—it wasn’t anything real structured—in the back of the Alliance. Basically, it was a basketball court. The kids used to go back behind the Alliance and shoot craps all day on Sunday. These were regular kids.
Ann: Sound like a pretty wild bunch to me.

writer and adviser.

34 He is speaking here of Harry Kosnofsky (1910 – 1967), later known as ‘Harry Knox.’ According to The Southern Israelite, he had been an insurance salesman for 13 years at the time of his death at the age of 57 and a member of Congregation Or VeShalom in Atlanta.

35 Atlanta native Meyer Balser (1908 -2004) was a business and civic leader. He served as chairman of the Red Cross and Community Chest (predecessor to United Way) campaigns. He was twice named Man of the Year of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company where he was a leading insurance agent for many years. He received numerous accolades and awards for his leadership in Atlanta’s Jewish community including the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and the Atlanta Jewish Federation. The Meyer Balser Naturally Occurring Retirement Community at the William Breman Jewish Home which offers services to help seniors live independently in their own homes is named in his honor. A book about his life by Vida Goldgar, A Goal Worth Shooting For, The Biography of Meyer Balser, was published in 1998.

36 Craps is a dice game in which the players make wagers on the outcome of the roll, or a series of rolls, of a pair of
Joseph: It was. I’ve seen them. This is what I’ve seen of my own knowledge. They’d sit back there and shoot craps. They’d have four or five crap games on the ground.

Ann: You’re only talking about kids. You’re not talking about the adults.

Joseph: No, maybe young teens. At my age at that time, I have a hard time remembering . . . adults, teenagers, and all that . . . but these were kids. I guess there were some older ones in there who had an older game.

Ann: They were playing for money?

Joseph: Yes, real money.

Ann: Big money?

Joseph: No, I didn’t say big money. They didn’t have . . .

Ann: . . . nobody had big money.

Joseph: . . . real money. I had forgotten about those crap games. I can’t describe the Alliance. The Alliance was built on Capitol Avenue. It served the purpose. It had a ballroom, it had a library, and it had meeting rooms. It was the only real ballroom as far as the Jews were concerned.

Ann: They built the athletic facility behind it in order to get rid of the . . .

Joseph: . . . to give the kids something to do, which was a smart move. They built it on, I guess . . . it had a wooden floor, and had a few benches around the side of the building. It was open on top, not the roof, from the sides. [It had] screen wire. It had an awning-type thing that comes down for when it rains. I guess they felt like they had to have an opening [unintelligible]. That was a big improvement. When Kahn came there, he stopped all that gambling. He got those kids and really [unintelligible] them. He did a great job for the kids. A lot of people didn’t like him. I liked him. I recognized the job he was doing for the community and for the kids. I was president of the struggling Young Judaea Association. He would go to the conventions with me. He’d participate, and he’d [unintelligible 17:57]. He was a big help to the kids in those days.

Ann: You were involved in Young Judaea, you just said?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: What years were those years that you were involved? Do you remember the time

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dice. Unlike casino craps, street craps, also known as shooting dice or shooting craps, is played in informal settings.

37 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
frame? Your age? That’s the way we can sort of tell.

**Joseph:** I was old enough to go to New York to the national convention, by myself. I must have been . . .

**Ann:** . . . my husband went to New York when he was 13, but you wouldn’t send a 13-year-old today, by himself.

**Joseph:** That was a *bar mitzvah.*[^38]

**Ann:** That’s right.

**Joseph:** I must have been around 15 or 16.

**Ann:** Who were some of the other . . .

**Joseph:** We had these clubs. The clubs were at the Alliance. You became affiliated with the Young Judaea. Basically, it was a [unintelligible 40:12] little club. The one that I belonged to was the Moseans. We had a basketball team and we played. Some of the fellows thought they were better basketball players than all of us. They separated and organized the Aaroneans. That’s how we played. We ran together in groups.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

**Ann:** Did you say Sidney Parks? You started to say . . .

**Joseph:** . . . he was active at that time. He was also a member of the Young Judaea Association, and became president. We had the Young Judaea Association, and we met. It was a very. . .

**Ann:** What were some of the other clubs? The Moseaens, the Aaroneans, or however you say it, the Aaroneans.

**Joseph:** The Aaroneans, Judaeans. The Midgets were the older ones.

**Ann:** Were they sort of by age as well as by . . .

**Joseph:** . . . mostly by age. They organized a club called the Coterie[^39] Club. The club is just like the name sounds. As far as I was concerned, we were the tops in clubs, and I was the leader.

**Ann:** You’re not prejudiced.

**Joseph:** No. I got to tell the truth.

**Ann:** Tell me who were some of your . . .

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[^38]: 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.
Joseph: I’ll tell you, Max Rittenbaum was a member of the Coterie Club. Sylvan Makover\textsuperscript{40} was a member of the Coterie Club.

Ann: That’s what I want. I want you to tell me who were in those clubs. I was just getting ready to ask you. Who else? Remember? You said Meyer Balser was in the Midgets.

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Who was in the Moseans?

Joseph: It’s been a long time.

Ann: Who was your star basketball player?

Joseph: Nathan Blass\textsuperscript{41} was in the Moseans. He and I were very close friends.

Ann: What about Barney Medintz?\textsuperscript{42} I know you were close to him.

Joseph: He came later. We were very close. Barney and Nathan and myself, the three of us . . .

Ann: Were the Goldstein boys involved in any of these clubs?

Joseph: I’m sure they were, but I don’t remember them. Irving [Goldstein]\textsuperscript{43} and Max [Cuba] were about the same age. They had some [unintelligible 21:56]. This game, you see . . . I’m trying to remember. The [Jewish] Progressive Club\textsuperscript{44} was built in 1915, I believe. Later on, they

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\textsuperscript{39} Coterie means a small group of people with similar interests.

\textsuperscript{40} 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).

\textsuperscript{41} Dr. Nathan Blass (1910-1964) was a prominent dentist, philanthropist, and community leader in the Atlanta Jewish community.

\textsuperscript{42} 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.

\textsuperscript{43} Dr. Irving Goldstein (1905-1979) was a prominent dentist, philanthropist and community leader of the Atlanta Jewish community. He founded a full-service dental clinic as part of the Morris Hirsch Clinic behind the Jewish Educational Alliance, then later on Pryor Street. He was also a major player in the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. As the owner of the Peachtree Manor Hotel, he agreed to integrate it so that Atlanta could secure a major baseball league team, at which the black members of the team or fans could stay.

\textsuperscript{44} 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
came and built the gymnasium, a real basketball court, solid walls, all weather. We had a good basketball team. That was with funds from [unintelligible 22:34]. We were all older then. You had clubs at that time too.

**Ann:** Did they have AZA [Aleph Zadik Aleph]\(^{45}\) and BBYO [B’nai B’rith Youth Organization]\(^{46}\) for the girls?

**Joseph:** Later. I missed it. I missed all of them.

**Ann:** Were there lots of members?

**Joseph:** The Young Judaea was active in my day.

**Ann:** Were there lots of members, though, of the Young Judaeans?

**Joseph:** Yes. We have . . . the Young Judaea Council which [unintelligible 23:05] organization. Somebody was president of it and you had a secretary. They met, discussed and talked. It had a lot to do with the development of these kids.

**Ann:** Did anybody ever go to Israel and come back? Did anybody ever come from Palestine to talk to you children? Young Judaea was about Palestine. Was it not Zionist?\(^{47}\)

**Joseph:** Young Judaea was a Zionist organization, but nobody ever thought about going to Israel then. It’s not the same as it is now. They’d like to have gone.

**Ann:** I just wondered if someone ever came to Atlanta who had actually had experience in Palestine in those early years. Not that you remember.

**Joseph:** No, not that I remember. You take these . . . we had a National Young Judaea . . . and had these regional . . . we were members of the Southeast Region. We weren’t happy with the National organization. We seceded from the national organization and called it the ‘Southern Interstate Young Judaea Association.’

**Ann:** Going to be independent. For how long?

**Joseph:** About a year or so. Then they came to see us. They sent Mrs. A. H. Vixman, who was

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\(^{45}\) The Grand Order of the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) is an international youth-led fraternal organization for Jewish teenagers, founded in 1924. It currently exists as the male wing of B’nai B’rith Youth Organization, an independent non-profit organization. AZA’s sister organization, for teenage girls, is the B’nai B’rith Girls.

\(^{46}\) B’nai B’rith Youth Organization (BBYO) is a Jewish youth movement for students in grades from 8 through 12. The organization emphasizes its youth leadership model in which teen leaders are elected by their peers on a local, regional and international level and are given the opportunity to make their own programmatic decisions.

\(^{47}\) Zionism is a movement which supports a Jewish national state in the territory defined as the Land of Israel. Although Zionism existed before the nineteenth century, in the 1890’s Theodor Herzl popularized it and gave it a new urgency, as he believed that Jewish life in Europe was threatened and a State of Israel was needed. The State of Israel was established in 1948 and Zionism today is expressed as support for the continued existence of Israel.
the national director. She came down to talk to us, to get us to come back in.

**Ann:** Were you the instigator of this?

**Joseph:** I refuse to comment on that.

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**Ann:** This is Side 2 of an interview with Joseph Cuba on February 19, 1990. The interviewer is Ann Schoenberg. We are in the throes of discussing the secession of the Southeastern Region of Young Judaea from the national organization. I had just asked Mr. Cuba, since he was involved in the organization quite intimately, if he was the instigator of that secession. He refuses to answer my question.

**Joseph:** I really was not. I played a little part in it, but I wasn’t the instigator.

**Ann:** Why did you decide they were not . . . what were they doing or not doing that . . .

**Joseph:** They weren’t doing anything, really. National offices have no backbone that I can tell what [unintelligible 0:50]. The national association was having its financial problems. They weren’t in a position to do a whole lot. I think we woke them up. We went to the National Convention in Long Island, New York.48

**Ann:** How large a delegation went from the Southeast? A large delegation?

**Joseph:** Not at that time. About the same time in comes the AZA and BBYO. All that kind of stuff. You had a new ballgame. I’d already graduated from Young Judaea.

**Ann:** Did Young Judaea remain? Obviously, it was an important organization for young people in your day. Did it remain important through the 1920’s and the 1930’s?

**Joseph:** I don’t know.

**Ann:** You sort of lost touch with it? Have you had any more recent contact with that organization?

**Joseph:** There was no organization to be loyal to. We were operating like [unintelligible 2:10] clubs. It was important for the kids that belonged to it. I think that it played an important part in my life, being a member of those types of groups. I learned how to preside over a meeting, how to [unintelligible 2:25], things like that. I had a chance to associate with a man like Ed Kahn. That wasn’t national. That was local.

**Ann:** The Young Judaea as an organization here in Atlanta played a role, and in the

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48 The Breman Museum holds an image of that convention on Long Island including Joe Cuba  JCF 485.122.
Southeast, played a role as a local organizational experience for young people. It didn’t have the same impact or influence your feelings about Palestine\(^49\) and Zionism\(^50\) as much as perhaps it might today?

**Joseph:** Not as much as [unintelligible 3:07]. It did some, but not as much.

**Ann:** Was there much discussion about Palestine in those days?

**Joseph:** Not a lot, [unintelligible 3:15].

**Ann:** Not here. Do you remember your parents ever talking about it or your grandparents?

**Joseph:** My grandfather sent off for a little package of sand of Israel to be included in his coffin.\(^51\)

**Ann:** That was in what year? When did he die? How old were you when he died?

**Joseph:** You need to give me these questions in [unintelligible 3:56] . . . got the answers. I could find it in an encyclopedia.

**Ann:** You must know whether you were a grown man or you were a young kid when he died.

**Joseph:** I was old enough to remember that.

**Ann:** I was just curious.

**Joseph:** He got hit by an automobile. No. My grandmother got hit by an automobile in front of our house.

**Ann:** Killed?

**Joseph:** Yes. It was probably driven by a Jewish boy. It happened on Washington Street. I changed the subject.

**Ann:** We’re talking about Israel and about the sand from Israel.

**Joseph:** That made an impression on me.

**Ann:** I bet it did.

**Joseph:** He [unintelligible 4:40].

**Ann:** Put it in a [unintelligible 4:44].

**Joseph:** Spread it in the coffin. Israel meant a lot to him. He really couldn’t get there. I’ve often

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\(^{49}\) ‘Palestine’ was the name of the area that is now Israel and Jordan. After World War I, the area came under the administration of the British and was called the “British Mandate.” After World War II, the states of Israel and Trans-Jordan (now Jordan) were established.

\(^{50}\) Zionism is a movement which supports a Jewish national state in the territory defined as the Land of Israel. Although Zionism existed before the nineteenth century, in the 1890’s Theodor Herzl popularized it and gave it a new urgency, as he believed that Jewish life in Europe was threatened and a State of Israel was needed. The State of Israel was established in 1948 and Zionism today is expressed as support for the continued existence of Israel.

\(^{51}\) The earth from Israel can be sprinkled in the grave or placed in the coffin under the deceased’s head symbolizing
thought how much it would have meant if they could have gone to Israel.

**Ann:** Did you go?

**Joseph:** I’ve been a couple of times. Sometime [unintelligible 5:00] studying Israel, and *Chumash* and *Talmud* and all that, and want to know why.

**Ann:** Especially as religious as they were. Are you religious?

**Joseph:** Not like they were. Not [unintelligible 5:13]. I’ve always believed in *Shabbos*. I had [unintelligible 5:19].

**Ann:** Did you go to college?

**Joseph:** I went in the army [during] World War II. I thought you may think World War I.

**Ann:** No, I didn’t think it was World War I. They didn’t take babies.

**Joseph:** I used to . . . they were serving us fish. I got by. It wasn’t too difficult. I talked [to] Rabbi Harry H. Epstein when I got ready to go to [unintelligible 6:56]. He gave me permission to eat. I got to eat.

**Ann:** Were there a lot of Jewish men in the service that you saw who were trying to observe some form of *kashrut* [kosher]?

**Joseph:** I have no idea.

**Ann:** You weren’t aware of it?

**Joseph:** No. It was a funny thing. Even in spite of what he said, there’s still the tendency not to eat *treif*.

**Ann:** That’s the way you’re raised.

**Joseph:** That’s right.

**Ann:** Do you keep kosher right now?

**Joseph:** In the house. We’ve always kept a kosher home.

**Ann:** And your children?

**Joseph:** My wife had very little knowledge of kosher, but she learned from my mother.

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*Chumash* is another word for *Torah* or the Five Books of Moses of the Hebrew *Bible*. Hebrew for ‘study.’ The legal code spanning a thousand years and based on the teachings of the Bible, the *Talmud* interprets biblical laws and commandments. It also contains a rich store of historic facts and traditions. It has two divisions: the *Mishnah* and the *Gemarah*. The *Mishnah* is the interpretation of Biblical law. The *Gemarah* is a commentary on the *Mishnah* by a group of later scholars.

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.

Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law such as pork or foods that are not prepared according to *kosher*. 
Ann: From your mother? What was her name, your wife’s name?
Joseph: Ida Pearle Miller Cuba.
Ann: Where was she raised?
Joseph: Cordele, Georgia. I know they don’t have any Jews . . . yiddishkeit in Cordele, Georgia.
Ann: They might.
Joseph: They had one family. At least, I know of one family. I can’t say that’s all they had. Ida Pearle’s grandfather was observant. He kept the Torah in his home. On High Holy Days he would bring it out and have services in his home with his [unintelligible].
Ann: Where did her family come from originally? Were they Polish? You don’t remember even, or they didn’t talk about it.
Joseph: They didn’t talk Polish in front of me.
Ann: Did she have brothers and sisters also?
Joseph: She had a sister. They grew up here in Atlanta. She married [unintelligible]. Gert Stein, but she’s passed away too.
Ann: Did they ever live here in Atlanta?
Joseph: The family moved here from Cordele.
Ann: Her family?
Joseph: Her mother passed away. When her mother passed, her father moved up here with the two girls, and got an apartment here in Atlanta.
Ann: What was his business? Do you remember?
Joseph: He was manager of a men’s clothing store.
Ann: He didn’t own it. He managed it for someone. Remember which one?
Joseph: I could tell you where he was.
Ann: Tell me. That will pinpoint it at least.
Joseph: It was on Peachtree Street.
Ann: Which part of Peachtree Street? Not Whitehall Street, on Peachtree Street. Up toward

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56 Yiddishkeit literally means ‘Jewishness’ or ‘a Jewish way of life’ in the Yiddish language. In a more general sense it is associated with the popular culture or folk practices of Yiddish-speaking Jews, such as religious traditions, food, humor, and music.

57 Hebrew for ‘teaching, Torah’ is a general term that covers all Jewish law including the vast mass of teachings recorded in the Talmud and other rabbinical works. ‘Sefer Torah’ refers to the sacred scroll on which the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) are written.
Davison’s or Paxon’s?

**Joseph:** No use getting into everybody all’s business. I know they had a business.

**Ann:** You remember his first name?

**Joseph:** Louis. Louis Miller. You’re talking about Ida Pearle’s father?

**Ann:** Right, exactly. We’re trying to get as many names of people and as many place names. Something intrigued me when you talked about your family’s grocery store that I’d like to know a little bit more about. Were there real segregated stores? Were there stores that only Jewish families patronized? For instance, you said your store was a Jewish grocery, or your mother’s and grandfather’s. Were there non-Jewish people who came to the store or bought groceries there, as well?

**Joseph:** The ones who observed kashrut wouldn’t go to some other non-Jewish store. They’d come here. It had only [unintelligible 10:30], kosher.

**Ann:** The non-Jews also came there?

**Joseph:** There was no law against them eating kosher food.

**Ann:** That’s what I wondered. I was curious because I didn’t know whether there was, so to speak, segregation between the Jews and the non-Jews within the neighborhood. Was the neighborhood basically a Jewish neighborhood?

**Joseph:** It was basically a Jewish neighborhood, the whole section around the Alliance. That’s why they built the Washington Street shul. You know where that was: Woodward Avenue and Washington Street. My family was in the same area. It went down Washington Street. An Orthodox Jew—observant—wouldn’t go into an unkosher grocery store. A kosher grocery store wouldn’t have ham or bacon, and all that kind of stuff on the shelves. They didn’t have it. That’s what I was trying to say.

**Ann:** I understood what you were saying. I was just curious if there were people outside the Jewish community who also patronized your family business.

**Joseph:** I don’t think they really did.

**Ann:** That was what I was aiming at. I wanted to know if the unknown quantities were also

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58 The two High Holy Days are Rosh Ha-Shanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).
59 Davison’s of Atlanta was a department store chain and an Atlanta shopping institution. Davison's first opened its doors in Atlanta in 1891 and had its origins in the Davison & Douglas Company. In 1901, the store changed its name to Davison-Paxon-Stokes after the retirement of E. Lee Douglas from the business and the appointment of Frederic John Paxon as treasurer. Davison-Paxon-Stokes sold out to R.H. Macy & Co. in 1925. By 1927, R.H. Macy built the Peachtree Street store that still stands today. That same year the company dropped the ‘Stokes’ to become Davison
treated the same way.

Joseph: I don’t think they did a Dun & Bradstreet⁶⁰ service.

Ann: Was there much interaction between Jews and non-Jews? You went to a grade school. That grade school was not all Jewish children, surely.

Joseph: No. I mostly associated with the Jewish kids. [unintelligible 12:08].

Ann: There were enough of you . . .

Joseph: . . . in the same neighborhood. We weren’t worried about whether they were integrated or not.

Ann: Did you have any relationship or association at all with black people?

Joseph: Little.

Ann: Really? You didn’t ever have black people working for you?

Joseph: The delivery man was black, the one that took care of the horse . . . Charlie’s helper.

Ann: What was his name?

Joseph: His name was . . . I got to be careful about that, because they get fired. Say something like [unintelligible 12:55].

Ann: Any more, on this you don’t have to worry about it. I would like to have strict, straight information for this because it’s historical. I think it’s important.

Joseph: I’m trying to remember.

Ann: Did you have any help in the house? Did you have black help in the house, or not really?

Joseph: Yes, we had an old ‘darkie.’⁶¹ Can I refer to her as a ‘darkie’? She was old. I don’t know how old she was, but I know she was decrepit.

Ann: Did she take care of you kids or something?

Joseph: She washed the clothes, things like that. She was with us a long time. Mostly she cleaned up and washed the clothes.

Ann: Didn’t do any of the cooking. Your grandmother cooked.

Joseph: Yes, that’s for sure. She participated in eating, but I remember her, [unintelligible 14:34]. Kind, good-hearted.

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Paxon Co. Davison’s took the Macy’s name in 1986.

⁶⁰ Dun & Bradstreet, Inc. is an American public company with offices around the world that provides commercial data to businesses on credit history, risk exposure, business-to-business sales and marketing, and supply chain management.
Ann: Did she have any children or grandchildren?
Joseph: No.
Ann: She never brought anybody with her?
Joseph: No. She was [an] old . . . old relic. Talk to my sister. She may know about her.
Ann: She’ll remember the name?
Joseph: She’s older than I. She’ll remember more.
Ann: There you go. I thought you told me she was younger, though.
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: You’re the youngest child. That makes it difficult, but nonetheless.
Joseph: She’s got it figured out [unintelligible 15:18]. You know Jean?
Ann: I know who she is.
Joseph: Her husband [Paul Ginsberg] was the national president of Jewish War Veterans.62
Ann: A distinguished family.
Joseph: That’s a distinguished position.
Ann: I’m talking about your family, generally.
Joseph: We’re here to serve or something.
Ann: Tell me about being in the army in World War II. Was that your first real experience? You went to New York, you said, when you were 15. Was that your first real experience outside of Georgia?
Joseph: Outside of Georgia. I’d been to Indian Springs.
Ann: That’s in Georgia. Indian Springs is still in Georgia. Was that the first time you really were out of the state and experiencing a different part of the country? Can you remember any of your impressions of New York?
Joseph: I had been to Florida. My sister got married. She moved to Florida, and was working in Florida when she got married. I went down and visited her. We had a Young Judaea convention in Jacksonville [Florida], for the region. That’s the first time I saw the ocean. That was exciting.
Ann: I bet. Did you immediately go in and taste it?

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61 A traditional term for a black person (the term is now considered to be offensive).
62 The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (also referred to as the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., the Jewish War Veterans, or the JWV) is an American Jewish veterans' organization, and the oldest veterans group in the United States. It has an estimated 37,000 members. (2015)
Joseph: Not really. Involvement in Young Judaea in the Southeast Region, going to conventions, gave you a chance to get out of your immediate surroundings. We’d go to New Orleans [Louisiana] for a convention, Jacksonville for a convention, and Miami [Florida] for a convention. Later on, United Synagogue picked the place. We went to the United Synagogue convention.

Ann: When did you become active in United Synagogue, or in synagogue activities? Were you even as a young boy?

Joseph: I was elected secretary of the congregation [Ahavath Achim], in 19... when was World War II over?

Ann: In 1945.

Joseph: In 1945. I was elected secretary of the congregation before I got out of the army. Max had something to do with that. Max had been secretary of the congregation for many years. They wanted to move him up, so they bumped him to president. They wanted somebody to take on a challenge, elections, and all of that. They elected me. They knew the war... at that time, the war was over, or it was going to be over. They elected me. That’s when I became active in synagogue. As far as being active in the synagogue, [unintelligible 18:36] been active in the synagogue now.

<End Tape 1, Side 2, Part 1>
<Start Tape 1, Side 2, Part 2>

Ann: What other roles have you played in the synagogue? You started as secretary, and then?

Joseph: I might tell you that you don’t play a role in the synagogue. If you take the job in the synagogue, it’s work. I moved up the ladder and became president of synagogue. I became Chairman of the Construction Committee for the synagogue on Peachtree Battle Avenue.

Ann: First of all, how long did it take to raise the money? Second of all, how much did you eventually have to raise to build the building?

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63 The Breman Museum holds images of these conventions at JCF 485.113, JCF 485.114, JCF 485.115, JCF 485.116 AND JCF 485.122.

64 United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is an organization that creates the spiritual, intellectual and managerial network that connects all of its communities with a common mission and purpose. It enables communities to create the conditions for a vibrant Jewish life, empowering Jews in North America to seek the presence of God, to seek meaning and purpose in Torah and mitzvot, to engage with Israel, and to be inspired by Judaism to improve the world and the Jewish people.
**Joseph:** We raised the money over a period of years before we even started the building. We knew that we had to. Our days were numbered mainly because they were going to tear the thing down because of the highways.\(^{65}\)

**Ann:** How much lead time did you have in order to do your planning and get your monies together?

**Joseph:** I went in to see the executive vice-president of C&S\(^{66}\) [National] Bank. Our office was upstairs in the building. I told him that we were going to need some money.

**Ann:** This was Mr. Lane’s bank, Mills Lane’s bank?\(^{67}\)

**Joseph:** It was Mills Lane’s bank, but it wasn’t Mills Lane I talked to. I talked to Charles [unintelligible 1:36]. He was executive vice-president. They didn’t want you to be older than Mills. If I hadn’t had any success with him, I was going to see Mills Lane. Anyhow, I told him we needed some money. He wanted to know how much. I said, “We’re going to need about $750,000.” We’re talking back now 1955, on [unintelligible 2:08] 1955. He said, “That’s no problem.” I said, “What are you going to need for collateral?” He said, “I don’t need any.” I said, “Are we going to have to sign notes?” He said, “Just the president. He signs as president of the congregation, nobody else.” I said. “Okay.” The interest rate I think was around four percent. “That’s fine.” I went back and told the board of my experience. They said, “What you got in writing?” I said, “It’s not in writing.” They said, “We got to have something in writing.” I went back to see him and I told him they wanted something in writing. No problem. He wrote a letter. It was written to the congregation. He was a young man. We got started on the building. That $750,000 became very, very small.

**Ann:** A drop in the bucket.

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\(^{65}\) The final service was held at the Ahavath Achim Synagogue on the corner of Gilmer Street and Piedmont Avenue in 1958 to make way for construction of the expressway that became known as the Downtown Connector. The Downtown Connector had its origins in the city's original system of expressways, construction of which began in the early 1950’s with the Northeast Expressway and the South Expressway. Construction of the ‘connector’ between the two was not completed until the early 1960’s. Initial construction of the highway displaced parts of Techwood Drive and Williams Street in Midtown Atlanta. It also destroyed street grids east and south of downtown leveling the northern part of the Washington-Rawson neighborhood.

\(^{66}\) Citizens and Southern National Bank (C&S) began as a Georgia institution that expanded into South Carolina, Florida and into other states. Headquartered in Atlanta; C&S merged with Sovran Bank in 1990. A year later, C&S/Sovran merged with NCNB to form NationsBank, now part of Bank of America.

\(^{67}\) Mills B. Lane began at Citizens Bank as a vice president and director in 1891. In 1901, Lane became president of Citizens Bank. In 1906, Lane and his associates purchased Southern Bank of Georgia enabling them to merge the two banks as the new C&S Bank. The newly merged banks were officially named the Citizens and Southern Bank of Georgia. His son, Mills B. Lane, Jr. (1912 – 1989), served as president, vice chairman and chairman between 1946 and 1973 and made C&S the South's largest bank as well as the most profitable of the 50 largest U.S. banks at the
Joseph: I went back to see the executive vice president. I told him we were going to need more money. “I need about $1,250,000.” I said, “Now listen. Don’t you worry about it because the First National Bank wants to participate in this loan.” He said, “We don’t need the First National Bank.”

Ann: [He] took it all?

Joseph: All. The whole loan [unintelligible 3:45].

Ann: That ran you on up to $2,000,000?

Joseph: No, that was not additional. That was $1,250,000.

Ann: That was total.

Joseph: No signatures, except the president of the congregation. That was it. That gave us enough money. We raised a lot of money. That building there cost us about $2,500,000.

Ann: I wonder how much it would cost today. Boy, the land alone.

Joseph: I want to tell you, the more I go in that building and the more I look at that building, the more I appreciate it. That building is a top building. It was a well-planned, beautiful, personal building for a synagogue.

Ann: Who designed AA [Ahavath Achim]?

Joseph: The AA was designed finally by . . . Robert and Company was the architect. I think it was . . . Steiner, Andre Steiner who worked for Robert and Company as an architect. They designed the building. Back up a little bit. I remember how Robert and Company got involved. I wasn’t president when they had Robert and Company . . .

Ann: . . . at that point.

68 Robert and Company is an architectural engineering firm based in Atlanta with multiple offices in the southern U.S. It was founded in 1917 by L.W. ‘Chip’ Robert, Jr. Projects in Atlanta include the Atlanta Civic Center, Grady Memorial Hospital, and the Ahavath Achim Synagogue on Peachtree Battle Avenue.

69 Andre Steiner (1908 – 2009) was a Czechoslovak and American architect. Steiner was born into a Jewish family in Dunajská Streda, Austria-Hungary (Czechoslovakia from 1918). After graduation from the German Technical University he worked for Ernst Wiesner and from 1934 he worked in his own atelier. During World War II he was an organizer and leader of the Working Group (Pracovna Skupina), an underground network that worked to save Jews from the Holocaust. The group saved nearly six times as many Jews as did Oskar Schindler. After the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948 he moved to Cuba, and then to the U.S. settling with relatives in Atlanta in 1950 where he renewed his career as a respected architect and city planner. He was senior architect for designs for Emory University, Georgia State University, Stone Mountain Park, and designed Ahavath Achim Synagogue. A film, Andre’s Lives, was made about his return with his sons to the scenes of his wartime experiences. Produced by Atlantan Brad Lichtenstein, the documentary was released in 1999. A video interview with Andrew Steiner is available online as part of the Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive here: http://www.ushmm.org/online/film/display/detail.php?file_num=4743.
Joseph: Anything I don’t like, I wasn’t president. [unintelligible 5:30] design of a building. I had a very active committee. We met regularly.

Ann: Who were some of the members? Do you remember?

Joseph: Herschell Hurwitz, Joe Zaglin, and Simon Mendel. I got a picture of them. You want to see a picture of the committee? I’ll get it for you later. Anyhow, the building looked like an airport.

Ann: The original design?

Joseph: Max got a hold of that plan. Max was on the committee. He and I worked together more on that than anything we’ve worked on. He got on a plane at his own expense and went to New York. He went to the United Synagogue of America and wanted them to recommend a synagogue architect. He wanted them to look over these plans. They didn’t like them any more than we did. [We] brought the man down here, let him meet with the architect, and let him meet with the committee. They went over it. They scrapped the whole thing and started over. That’s the thing. Most members don’t know what goes on behind the scenes.

Ann: Sure.

Joseph: There’s a difference between mediocre [unintelligible 7:02] and something very special. That plan that they had that we destroyed is out at the airport . . . Hartsfield Airport [unintelligible 17:14].

Ann: You recognized it? The first time you went to Hartsfield, you said, “That’s the old AA design?”

Joseph: That would have been AA. Thank God it wasn’t. I think AA’s got a pretty building.

Ann: It certainly has proven to be useful.

Joseph: Yes. Even the way the doors open up, you get back in the auditorium, and all that. We can take care of a lot of members. We’ve got over 2,000 families.

Ann: AA’s one of the largest Conservative congregations in the United States, isn’t it?

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70 The Breman Museum holds an image of the Building Committee at JCF 485.074.
71 Hartsfield Atlanta Airport is the predecessor of the current Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The airport was first developed in 1925 on an abandoned auto racetrack and was name Candler Field after its former owner’s family, including Coca-Cola magnate Asa Candler. In the 1940’s the airport’s name changed to the Atlanta Municipal Airport. Atlanta mayor William B. Hartsfield died on February 22, 1971 and on February 28, what would have been Hartsfield’s 81st birthday its name is changed to William B. Hartsfield Atlanta Airport. In 2003 to honor late Mayor Maynard H. Jackson, the Atlanta City Council legislated a name change to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in recognition of the leadership that both had for the airport.
72 A form of Judaism that seeks to preserve Jewish tradition and ritual but has a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the law than Orthodox Judaism. It attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture,
Joseph: I think so. It’s a good congregation overall. I think we got a good membership.

Ann: The fact that the Cuba family has been a little active in it doesn’t have a thing to do with it.

Joseph: The Goldstein family is active in it too.

Ann: Right, and a few other ones.

Joseph: That’s all part of the family.

Ann: I was going to say, you’re all interrelated.

Joseph: Max and I were past presidents. Irving Goldstein and Marvin Goldstein were past presidents. Their original roots were in Shearith Israel.

Ann: In where?

Joseph: Shearith Israel.

Ann: The little shul?

Joseph: [unintelligible 8:29]. That’s when they moved down the street from us. We built the one on Washington Street, and here they come, down the street.

Ann: Who were the founders of AA? Do you remember any of the . . . you wouldn’t remember the old time people, but who were . . .

Joseph: All I can tell you is that we had a president for 32 years: Joel Dorfan.73 Nice guy, Friendly. I knew him real well. We used to go . . . before Rosh Ha-Shanah74 and Yom Kippur75 High Holy Days we’d have a table at the synagogue so members can come, pay the dues, and get the tickets. You couldn’t get tickets otherwise. We’d sell tickets. If you weren’t on the table, we had Mr. Dorfan sitting there with a box selling tickets.

while preserving a commitment to Jewish observance. They also observe gender equality (mixed seating, women rabbis and bat mitzvahs).

73 Russian-born Joel Dorfan (1875 – 1948) was a founder and long-time president of Ahavath Achim Congregation. He was installed as for the second time in 1930. Previously, he served for nearly 30 years as head of the congregation, being succeeded by Joseph Goldberg, whom he succeeded in returning to the presidency. He was a life-long member of the Community Hebrew School board, serving at one time as its president. Dorfan was also a founder and long time director of the Free Loan Association which started in 1933 in Atlanta to provide interest-free loans.

74 Hebrew for ‘head of the year,’ i.e. New Year festival. The cycle of High Holidays begins with Rosh Ha-Shanah. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. On the tenth day is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The tradition is that on Rosh Ha-Shanah, God sits in judgment on humanity. Then the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. These decisions may be revoked by prayer and repentance before the sealing of the books on Yom Kippur.

75 Hebrew for ‘Day of Atonement.’ The most sacred day of the Jewish year. Yom Kippur is a 25 hour fast day. Most of the day is spent in prayer, reciting yizkor for deceased relatives, confessing sins, requesting divine forgiveness, and listening to Torah readings and sermons. People greet each other with the wish that they may be sealed in the heavenly book for a good year ahead. The day ends with the blowing of the shofar (a ram’s horn).
Ann: How much did they cost? Do you remember?

Joseph: Five dollars, $10. I forget . . .

Ann: Depending on . . .

Joseph: . . . I don’t think we had room.

Ann: I just wondered if you paid more if you sat up front? Do you know? Do you remember?

Joseph: No, I don’t think. The members got the best seats. We got those. We had assigned seats. Everybody had a place to sit.

Ann: Did you? Did you have little name tags on them or something?

Joseph: No, not really.

Ann: Everybody knew where their place was?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Did you all sell *aliyahs*?  

Joseph: We sure did. [That was] another part of our existence. I remember the *shammash* getting up there . . . cent, dollar [unintelligible 10:10].

Ann: They’d auction them off . . .

Joseph: . . . auction them off, and they would make some money. One time, the guys went to $65, I heard.

Ann: Good heavens.

Joseph: No, they would auction them off.

Ann: That’s a lot of money for an *aliyah*.

Joseph: In those days. Mr. [Morris] Srochi, the old man, would buy the *pesicha d'neilah*. Anybody has to be dedicated to buy that. I wouldn’t want them to pay me to stand up there for an hour. It’s one hour. The ark is open for an hour. You stand there for the whole hour. He would buy them. If he had any competition in the auction, he’d win it.

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76 *Aliyah* in Hebrew means ‘ascent’ or ‘going up.’ An *aliyah* is the calling of a member of a Jewish congregation to the *bimah* for a segment of reading from the *Torah*. The person who receives the *aliyah* goes up to the *bimah* before the reading and recites a blessing thanking God for giving the Torah to the Jewish nation. After the reading, the recipient then recites another concluding blessing.

77 A native of Poland, Morris Srochi (1868 - 1960) learned the baking trade before coming to the United States in 1883. He and his wife, Dora Srochi, founded the Atlanta Baking Company where they sold Sunbeam bread among other products. Srochi was active in B’nai B’rith, the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, and the Ahavath Achim Synagogue where he endowed the Educational Center’s auditorium in the former 10th Street location and the Assembly area in the current location on Peachtree Battle Avenue.

78 The honor of opening the Holy Ark (ornamental closet) in which the *Torah* scrolls are kept during the concluding service on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.
Ann: What was his business?

Joseph: Bread. He was a baker. Sunshine... some kind of a bakery. He had a big bakery.

Ann: A kosher bakery or...

Joseph: ...no, a big bakery.

Ann: A regular bakery.

Joseph: [unintelligible 11:18] That business was...

Ann: ...that was a good business.

Joseph: One of his sons is in it now. Ed Srochi was on our building committee.

Ann: The social hall is named for the old man, I assume.

Joseph: [unintelligible 11:42] He paid for it. They moved it from Washington Street. He even bought the one on Washington Street.

Ann: He must have been a wealthy man, even then.

Joseph: When we built it, we gave him some credit on his pledge for Washington Street.

Ann: The building was totally demolished by the highways, the old building. Most of the neighborhood was really destroyed, wasn’t it?

Joseph: There’s nothing there. Outside of where our grocery store was.

Ann: You got the stadium, and you got highways.

Joseph: Everything on Washington Street. You want the address? It was 672 Washington Street.


Joseph: I remember where we lived.

Ann: Do you remember the fire downtown when you were a kid? The big fire in downtown Atlanta, about 1917?

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79 He is talking here about Sunbeam Bread, a franchised brand of white bread, rolls, and other baked goods owned by the Quality Bakers of America cooperative. The bread products are produced and distributed by regional bakeries. The brand was launched in 1942. Its long-time mascot is called Little Miss Sunbeam.

80 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.

81 The Great Atlanta Fire of 1917 began just after noon on Monday, May 21, 1917. It blazed all day and was finally brought under control by 10 p.m. This fire started in a warehouse at Fort and Decatur Street and rapidly spread. It burned whole blocks of homes so quickly that people couldn't even get anything out of the buildings. Soldiers
Joseph: I remember that they had the fire and all the people were talking about it.

Ann: Did you see it?

Joseph: No. How would I get over there? I couldn’t take Charlie over there.

Ann: It wasn’t all that far. Surely, if it was as bad as everybody seems to say, you should have been able to see it from a long ways away.

Joseph: I remember the Winecoff [Hotel] fire. In the Winecoff fire, we lost some of our members . . . Constangy. They were killed at the Winecoff fire.

Ann: They belonged to AA?

Joseph: They belonged to AA. They belonged to the [Jewish] Progressive Club.

Ann: What did you do during the war when you went to the army?

Joseph: I went in the army and they assigned me to cryptography, code and cipher. They put me in the cryptography school.

Ann: Where was that? Where did they have it?

Joseph: That was at West Palm Beach [Florida]. I went first to the OTS, Officers’ Training School.

Ann: Where did you go?

Joseph: That was at Miami Beach [Florida]. I had a tough time.

Ann: I was going to say, didn’t you ever go anyplace hard?

Joseph: I was at the Roney Plaza, Miami Beach.

arrived to dynamite buildings to try to stop it. Fire fighters came from cities in Tennessee (Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville), Jacksonville, Florida, Greenville, South Carolina, and across Georgia including Rome, Augusta, Macon, Newnan, Marietta, Griffin, Gainesville, and Savannah. The area continued to burn and smolder for a week. 300 acres had been burned, 1,938 buildings were destroyed and 10,000 people were made homeless. Property loss was $5,500,000. See Atlanta and Environ, Franklin Garrett, Volume II, page 700 to 706 for details.

The Winecoff Hotel fire of December 7, 1946 killed 119 hotel occupants, including the hotel's owners. Located at 176 Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta, the Winecoff Hotel opened in 1913 and was advertised as “absolutely fireproof.” While the hotel's steel structure was protected against the effects of fire, the hotel's interior finishes were combustible, and the building's exit arrangements consisted of a single stairway serving all 15 floors. All of the hotel's occupants above the fire's origin on the third floor were trapped. The fire's survivors either were rescued from upper-story windows or jumped into nets held by firemen. It remains the deadliest hotel fire in U.S. history, and prompted many changes in building codes.

Three members of the Constangy family were killed in the fire: Frieda Constangy, 24; Joe Constangy, 28; and Morris Constangy, 55. Morris’ wife, Annie May, survived the fire. Joe and Frieda, who was three months pregnant with their first child, had just checked in the day before at the invitation of his mother, as the water had not been turned on yet in their new apartment. They intended to stay only overnight. Morris and Annie had lived at the hotel since September 1946. Morris died of smoke inhalation and suffocation in their 15th floor room, while Annie was pulled from the window of the room over a ladder propped against the building from the next door Mortgage Guarantee Building. The most informative book on this fire is The Winecoff Fire: The Untold Story of America’s Deadliest Hotel Fire by Sam Heys and Allen B. Goodwin (Longstreet Press, 1993).

The Breman Museum holds an image of Joseph Cuba’s cryptography class. JCF 485.043.
Ann: That’s the Officers Training School?
Joseph: OTS. That’s different than the OCS. OCS is Officers’ Candidate School. I had a direct commission as a second lieutenant in the army.
Ann: You were a little bit older, weren’t you?
Joseph: Than what?
Ann: Than most of the men who were going into the service. You were already 30?
Joseph: About 33, something like that.
Ann: Were you drafted or you enlisted?
Joseph: I volunteered.
Ann: I figured you must have.
Joseph: I volunteered. Actually, I volunteered in May. [They] turned me down because the pulse rate was too fast. I went back three times. Somehow—unfortunately or fortunately, I don’t know which—my pulse rate was all right. Max and I felt that one of us ought to go. I felt [unintelligible 15:34]. How do you not have some feeling? Afterward, I got through with my training in Miami Beach, and I got through my training as a cryptographer in West Palm [Beach] [Florida]. I was sent to Washington [District of Columbia] for one week to observe the cryptography room. Then I was sent back to Homestead, Florida.
Ann: For the whole war?
Joseph: No. I didn’t say that. Not much worse. I was down in Homestead, Florida, and they put me in the cryptography room. Next thing I know I get an order from the petty officer borrowing me from the cryptography room and putting me in charge of the Officers’ Club, the Officers’ Mess, and the Officers’ Barracks. They didn’t have anybody to take care of those things that knew anything about accounting.
Ann: You were the mayor, in other words?
Joseph: [unintelligible 16:51]. I took care of the food for the officers. I fed them, I clothed them, and I housed them. I stayed there until . . . his borrowing me, I couldn’t get out of it. I was told you can’t get out of the code and cipher room. It’s too confidential and too secret. Nobody is ever transferred away from there. The officer in charge of the cryptography, code and cipher,
came in one day and says, “Joe,” he says. I’m chuckling because you don’t say Joe in the army. He says, “It’s up.” The Captain comes into the room at that time. He says, “I’d like to take you back to the code and cipher room. We need you.” I figured, what am I going to say? I said, “You going to clear it with the commanding officer?” The commanding officer said to him in front of my presence, “He’s not going back to that code and cipher room now, or any other time.”

**Ann:** They were having an argument over your body?

**Joseph:** I was thrilled to death to be out of that code and cipher room. I didn’t want to walk around the room with a gun on my hip all day, sitting, being close to all that. That’s what you did. That’s the [unintelligible 18:14] part then. Anyhow, things happened. Sometimes you have to help them along a little bit. I get a call from the commanding officer. He asked me can I come down to his office. He says, “I got to ask you to do me a favor.” What kind of help is he going to ask another officer, for favors. He said, “We’re having a problem at the Personal Affairs Division.” Personal Affairs Division is the one that gives out grants, loans, army emergency aid programs, and things of that type. He said, “We think there’s a shortage. We’d like for you to make an audit.”

**Ann:** You went down there?

**Joseph:** I’m going to say no? In the meantime, two officers come down from Washington, from the Personal Affairs Division, and they were going to help me. I told the commanding officer, “The best way they can help me is to put them on a plane to Cuba.”

**Ann:** Send them anyplace but down to . . .

**Joseph:** Cuba’s the closest place. I said, “When they get back, I’ll have the report made.” Which is what happened. A week later I got a transfer on orders from Washington. I was being transferred from Homestead Air Base [Florida] to Washington, D.C., in the Personal Affairs Division. I’m going to tell you, that Homestead was nice. That’s where I spent the rest of the army.

**Ann:** In Washington D.C.

**Joseph:** Where they put me.

**Ann:** Did you ever get involved again in anything with the codes, and all of that . . .

**Joseph:** No.

**Ann:** . . . or they just kept you in accounting-related work?

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new Roney Plaza, which opened in 1971. It is now called the ‘Roney Place.’
Joseph: When the commanding officer said [I] wasn’t going to be transferred now or any . . .
Ann: He didn’t.
Joseph: They don’t want you after a while. You forget the codes. You wouldn’t know the numbers. It wouldn’t be of any value.
Ann: Were you married at the time? Did your wife follow you?
Joseph: Yes. After we got situated in Florida. I’m not talking about like going around in circles. Once I got to Homestead, she came down. We got an apartment in South Miami, because they had transportation from Miami to the Homestead Air Base then. I had my car, either way. I used a car.86
Ann: How in the world did you have gasoline for a car during the war?
Joseph: Let’s talk about some other subject.
Ann: That’s most unusual. Was it . . .
Joseph: Enough to drive to Homestead and back. It wasn’t very far, 20 miles.
Ann: Every day? That’s a lot of driving during the war.
Joseph: Sometimes I would ride the bus.
Ann: There are a lot of things you don’t want to talk about, aren’t there? Was there a lot of stuff going on, black market or sort of . . .
Joseph: . . . not that I know of . . . could be. I don’t know. This guy who I made the audit on in the Personal Affairs Division, we found him short. He was stealing money and running around with the head nurse.
Ann: What did they do to him? Court-martial?
Joseph: Court-martialed him. Nothing I can do about it. I had to report what I found, except they sure moved me up the street.
Ann: Your having done that sent you to Washington D.C.? Did your wife follow you to Washington D.C. also?
Joseph: She followed me to Washington D.C. There’s a little interesting sideline, if you want to hear it. Housing was a problem in Washington. I went up ahead and rented a room. She came up. She started looking for an apartment. They were hard to find, hard to come by. There was a new building going up in Alexandria [Virginia]. It wasn’t very far from the base where I was going to

86 The Breman Museum holds the personal letters between Joseph Cuba and his wife, Ida Pearle Miller Cuba, written during this time. Joseph Cuba Family Papers, Mss3.
be stationed. She went and talked to the owner. She said, “I’m sorry, but we don’t have any vacancies.” My wife started talking, and somehow she mentions antiques. She says, “My husband and I had to bring antiques up here, my antiques.” This woman says, “You like antiques?” That was it. Magic words. All of a sudden, she had an apartment for us. She had the nicest apartment in the building.

**Ann:** Wow. That was pure happenstance, though.

**Joseph:** It hadn’t been planned. It’s funny.

**Ann:** *Bashert.*[^87]

**Joseph:** That’s the word. That’s a good Jewish word . . . *bashert.*

**Ann:** You became friends, I assume, over the antiques, or your wife and the lady did.

**Joseph:** My wife is crazy about antiques . . . got them all over the house. [She’s] still quite a gal. There was an interesting side light of Washington D.C.

**Ann:** Washington D.C. must have been crazy during World War II.

**Joseph:** I didn’t like it . . . not at all. Going on the buses, crowded, and I hardly could stand. This wasn’t too far from where I’d go to work.

**Ann:** Where were you working? What was the name of the facility?

**Joseph:** They called it ‘Gravelly Point.’ It’s right there by the National Airport [now Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport].

**Ann:** You were close to Alexandria.

**Joseph:** Yes. Are you familiar with Washington D.C.?

**Ann:** I used to live there.

**Joseph:** You can substantiate what I’m saying.

[^87]: Bashert is a Yiddish word that means ‘destiny.’ It is often used in the context of one's divinely predestined spouse or soul mate. It can also be used to express the seeming destiny of an auspicious or important event, friendship, or happening.
just completed a bit of discussion about your service in World War II, in the army. We took a little break, walked around, and looked at some of the lovely things which your wife collected over the years. Why don’t you tell me a little something about Ida Pearle, about the kind of person she was, and how you met.

**Joseph:** Ida [unintelligible 1:06].

**Ann:** You don’t want to talk about what a wonderful person she was? Just tell me how you met. That you can do.

**Joseph:** The social life at that time revolved around the [Jewish] Progressive Club, as far as I was concerned. Except for the crowd at the Standard Club, that’s the only two places we had. Mayfair Club came later. [Unintelligible 1:37] there. After we’d have an affair at the Progressive Club—the dance was over—we would go to the little coffee shop on Pryor Street. Has no relationship to any of the coffee shops around town. That’s how we met. After the [unintelligible 2:00].

**Ann:** Was she the same age as you were?

**Joseph:** No. She was a few years younger. She was five or six years younger.

**Ann:** Had she been living in Atlanta very long when you met her?

**Joseph:** No, not too long. She was . . . I think she had a job at the dress shop, in dresses.

**Ann:** Which one?

**Joseph:** The dress shop’s gone. Which dress or which shop?

**Ann:** Which dress was she selling at the time? You remember what color dress she was wearing when you met her?

**Joseph:** I have no idea.

**Ann:** Here I was, giving you credit for being sentimental. I figured you would know.

Obviously, she had completed her schooling in Cordele before she came up to Atlanta? Had she

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88 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.

89 The Mayfair Club opened in 1938 at 1456 Spring Street in Midtown Atlanta and 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 Mayfair Club on December 4, 1964.
gone to high school down there?

**Joseph:** Yes, then she took some courses at Georgia State [University—Atlanta, Georgia]. At that time, it was known as . . . I think it was Georgia State then.

**Ann:** How old were you when you married? First of all, how long did you court before you asked this young lady to marry you?

**Joseph:** About five years.

**Ann:** Five years! You’re a slow mover. Five years, wow. How did you finally pop the question after five years, or did you?

**Joseph:** It just happened.

**Ann:** You never really formally asked her?

**Joseph:** I never got on my knees.

**Ann:** Did you give her a ring?

**Joseph:** She says I chased her. She chased me.

**Ann:** Until she caught you.

**Joseph:** Yes, until I caught her. Anyhow, it was a wonderful relationship. She’s gone.

**Ann:** In what year were you married? Remember? Was it 19 . . .

**Joseph:** . . . 1939.

**Ann:** You were a kid.

**Joseph:** I was.

**Ann:** Actually, you weren’t. You were what, 30 years old?

**Joseph:** An old man.

**Ann:** You have three wonderful children, whose pictures I have seen. Tell me about your children.

**Joseph:** You know Lana [Cuba Krebs].

**Ann:** The machine doesn’t know Lana.

**Joseph:** She’s a great one. She’s my joy. My boys are, too.

**Ann:** Daughters always have a special place in their daddy’s . . .

**Joseph:** . . . and she’s my first. The boys . . . Philip graduated [from] Auburn [University—Auburn, Alabama]. He’s a computer consultant. He has his own firm. Larry is . . .

**Ann:** Where does Philip live?

**Joseph:** In Atlanta, about ten minutes from here.
Ann: He just got married, you told me. What’s his . . .
Joseph: He got two daughters by getting married.
Ann: That’s called instant grandfatherhood, right?
Joseph: Larry’s out in Santa Cruz, California. He’s in the book publishing business. He seems to enjoy it.
Ann: What kind of books does he publish?
Joseph: I don’t know . . . any kind.
Ann: Are they textbooks, literature, or a variety?
Joseph: I think they’re a variety.
Ann: Is it a small publishing house?
Joseph: He and a couple others together.
Ann: I thought maybe he was with one of the big firms as a . . .
Joseph: . . . no. He took all the computer graphics as a hobby, more or less. He made some great films. Great films, as far as I’m concerned. If he made them, they’re great. He got some awards for his computer graphics work.
Ann: How long has he been out in California, a long time?
Joseph: He’s been out there about, maybe eight years, ten years.
Ann: I seem to remember when he got the awards. It was written up in the papers here.
Joseph: He did some good work.
Ann: Do you think that your own interest in accounting, numbers, and things mathematical influenced the boys? Was it a carryover into their interest and work with computers?
Joseph: It may have been a carryover there. They did not want to be public accountants. The reason for it is they said their father worked too hard, long hours, and all that kind of stuff. That’s a decision they had to make. They could have come right into the business, the practice. Max and they got along very well. They didn’t want to. I wasn’t going to force them. Maybe I was wrong.
Ann: Not necessarily . . .
Joseph: Maybe life would have been easier for them. They didn’t realize it. Public accounting is

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Larry Cuba is a computer-animation artist who became active in the late 1970’s. Born in 1950 in Atlanta to Joseph and Ida Pearle Cuba, he received A.B. from Washington University in St. Louis in 1972 and his Master's Degree from California Institute of the Arts. In 1975, John Whitney, Sr. invited Cuba to be the programmer on one of his films. The result of this collaboration was Arabesque. Subsequently, Cuba produced three more computer-animated films: 3/78 (Objects and Transformations), Two Space, and Calculated Movements. Cuba also provided computer graphics for Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope in 1977.
a profession. From where they sat and what they saw of my life, I guess it’s not [unintelligible 8:58]. They don’t have any.

Ann: You were in practice with your brother?

Joseph: Right.

Ann: Was it just the two of you in the firm initially, or were there others?

Joseph: Just the two of us. In fact, it started out I was running a bookkeeping service, write ups, if you’re familiar with them. It gradually got bigger, other clients, and we started hiring people.

Ann: Where were your offices?

Joseph: Our first office was in the dining room of our home on Washington Street, 627 Washington Street. I used to go out and do the work during the day and come home at night and type the reports.

Ann: You were a stenographer.

Joseph: I didn’t take notes. I didn’t take shorthand. I couldn’t. I’d have done it, but I had promised.

Ann: You promised. You promised Mrs. Steinheimer, or whatever her name was.

Joseph: Mrs. Steinheimer.

Ann: You started in the dining room and progressed to . . .

Joseph: . . . we bought a desk. I still got the desk downstairs, a steel desk with the typewriter pulled out. That was something new at that time. That’s probably [unintelligible 10:25] desk. We gradually built the thing up. We got an office in the Healey Building, one big office with a partition in the middle. There was a public stenographer who had to come to the office, that office we made. We hired her. She started typing the reports so I could go out and do more profitable work.

Ann: Who were some of your big clients, or your early clients, I guess I should say. Do you remember any of them? Did you have mostly Jewish clients to start with?

Joseph: Mostly Jewish clients, people we knew. In those days, we couldn’t advertise. They were very strict about that. We observed that rule . . .

Ann: How long was that?

Joseph: . . . even though we were a certified firm.

Ann: How long was that in effect, that you couldn’t advertise?

Joseph: That was quite a few years. It was only in the recent years that they allowed you to
advertise, like doctors advertise and lawyers advertise. In fact, I remember several times, I merely called some friends that said, “Joe, go by and see so-and-so. They need some accounting work.” I’d say, “How about doing me a favor. How about calling them and ask them to call me.”

Ann: Because it wasn’t proper for you to solicit them.

Joseph: He’s recommending us. We got a lot of clients through friends and through other accounts.

Ann: Who ended up being some of your big ones? Did you have some that would be familiar?

Joseph: Yes. I shouldn’t mention names [unintelligible 12:37].

Ann: Is that not proper? I didn’t know that . . .

Joseph: My competitors might find out.

Ann: At this point you’re going to worry about it, right? Eventually you were bought out by a big national firm, is that correct?

Joseph: Yes. We merged with Laventhol & Horwath.

Ann: What year was that?

Joseph: Nineteen sixty-nine.

Ann: It’s been 20 years.

Joseph: Sure has.

Ann: This is the 1990’s. It’s already 21 years.

Joseph: That’s right.

Ann: Amazing, isn’t it.

Joseph: Faster than you realize.

Ann: Your offices today are in the Cain Tower, is that right?

Joseph: No, in the South Tower.

Ann: South Tower of Peachtree Center?

Joseph: Peachtree Center. It’s a nice office in a whole floor.

Ann: You still go in every day?


Ann: It’s kind of them, since it was your firm.

Joseph: Yes, but it’s not mine now. It’s very nice. I go in every day and take care of personal matters. I’ve had too many personal matters to take of . . . like these estates—my mother’s
[estate], brother’s, two sisters’, and Ida Pearle’s. I’ve had to do that.

Ann: I’m sure. You’re lucky that you have what you have in the way of family, still. [It would] be pretty lonely if you didn’t have those three kids and those grandchildren. Tell me about your grandchildren. You were telling me about Michelle and . . . Jennifer? Tell me about them. I know how proud you are, and you want to include that surely. What did you feel like when you first saw Jennifer, the very first time you saw your first grandchild?

Joseph: I wasn’t [unintelligible 15:10].

Ann: That has to be a real excitement.

Joseph: It was. It was a great moment. [unintelligible 15:20] both of them.

Ann: Tell me about what they do. You told me a little bit before when you were showing me their pictures. Where does Jennifer go to school?

Joseph: She goes to Pace Academy [Atlanta, Georgia]. She’s a cheerleader. Michelle goes to Pace Academy. She’s not a cheerleader yet.

Ann: She would like to be?

Joseph: If it’s good enough for her sister, it’s good enough for her.

Ann: Is Jennifer a good student?

Joseph: Jennifer’s a good student. Michelle’s an excellent student. Michelle’s strictly an ‘A’ student.

Ann: Is she interested in math?

Joseph: She’s good at it. So is Jennifer.

Ann: You may end up with a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] yet.

Joseph: Maybe I’ll discourage them. Really, I can’t complain about my profession. It’s hard work, but everything is hard if you want to do your job right. I can’t complain about it. After I finished [Georgia Institution of] Tech[nology—Atlanta, Georgia], I went to Atlanta Law School [Atlanta, Georgia],91 and got a law degree. Max went to Woodrow Wilson Law School [Atlanta, Georgia],92 and got a law degree. Vernon [unintelligible 16:32] Moore who was in law at the

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91 Atlanta Law School was a private, night law school for working professionals and others seeking a legal education. The school's faculty members were practicing lawyers and judges from across Georgia. In 1890, Hamilton Douglas, Sr., Hooper Alexander, Archibald H. Davis and Charles A. Read, began night law classes for those who were unable to attend law classes during the day. The school closed its doors in 1994.

92 The Woodrow Wilson College of Law was founded in 1933 in Atlanta. In 1998 the State Bar of Georgia modified the requirements for bar admission allowing only ABA (American Bar Association) accredited law school graduates to take the bar exam. This rule change affected the three night law schools in Georgia, Woodrow Wilson, the Atlanta Law School and John Marshall Law School. The Woodrow Wilson College of Law (attempted to merge with
Woodrow Wilson, he [unintelligible 16:37] says to me, “The reason Max got his certificate, he walked out on me.” The reason there’s a Woodrow Wilson Law School is on account of Max, and indirectly on account of me.

Ann: Tell me. Explain that one.

Joseph: I’m glad you’re able to cut some of this stuff out that you don’t understand. I started to go into law school. Max decided that he’s got to do something about that. I took the CPA exam and passed it. Then he came along and took the CPA [unintelligible 17:22]. The same way with law school. After I started my law school, he decided he better go to Woodrow Wilson.

Ann: Go to law school, too.

Joseph: Yes. We were in the Healey Building, and they got this lawyer. I don’t remember his name. Sam Rothberg and Max were the two students. He started his own school. I can’t remember the man’s name. He started his own school, and taught Max and Sam Rothberg a couple nights a week and on Saturday afternoons.

Ann: They did it right there in the Healey Building?

Joseph: That’s right.

Ann: It shouldn’t be inconvenient for your brother.

Joseph: [unintelligible 18:26] out of his way. In those days, you didn’t have to take the bar exam. You got a degree in law. They studied. Wait a minute. I’m wrong about that. They had to take the bar exam.

Ann: You could read for the law?

Joseph: Yes. You had to take the bar exam. They came along, they took the bar exam, and passed it. [Dean Joseph] Kilbride was that lawyer’s name. They passed it, and they took the exam and passed it. He beat me to it.

Ann: He became a lawyer before you did?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Not fair.

Joseph: Neither one of us practiced law much. Just some . . .

Ann: . . . you used it as background for your . . .

Joseph: . . . accounting. We both preferred accounting.
Ann: Were your families always very close, your’s and Max’s?
Joseph: Max never was married.
Ann: He wasn’t?
Joseph: No. To Max, my children were like Max’s children. [unintelligible 19:39] No, he never married, but the family was together, our family.
Ann: The relationship between the two of you as the only boys in your family had to always have been very special. . .
Joseph: We were very close.
Ann: . . . then to have been professionally totally involved with one another too.
Joseph: We were very close to each other.
Ann: Were you alike in personality?
Joseph: I don’t think so. Max was, because of his situation in the family and all that . . . Max had found himself working hard. He never played sports. I always liked to play sports, because I had more time than him.
Ann: He was more responsible, or felt he was.
Joseph: He was. This is the thing he was concerned about. He was head of the family.
Ann: How many years older than you was he?
Joseph: Five or six.
Ann: Not a significant number of years, but he felt that responsibility.
Joseph: If he’s 15, and I’m 10, there’s a big difference.
Ann: Sure, you’re right. Did he . . .
Joseph: We all respected him as the head of the family. I had no opposition to that.
Ann: . . . did he have a chance to go to college . . . to high school and to college? He must have gone to high school.
Joseph: He went to Commercial High School. He went to . . . he worked his way through Georgia State [University—Atlanta, Georgia].
Ann: What became of Georgia State?
Joseph: What became Georgia State? At that time, it was . . . it changed several times.93 My

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93 Initially intended as a night school, Georgia State University was established in 1913 as the Georgia Institute of Technology's Evening School of Commerce. A reorganization of the University System of Georgia in the 1930’s led to the school becoming the Atlanta Extension Center of the University System of Georgia and allowed night students to earn degrees from several colleges in the University System. During this time, the school was divided
diploma, it was Georgia Tech. I graduated at the campus of Georgia Tech. I’m considered an alumnus of Georgia Tech, although Georgia State considers me an alumnus of Georgia State to the point that I was president of the Alumni Association.

**Ann:** At Georgia State.

**Joseph:** At Georgia State. I get excited about Georgia State’s basketball team, and Georgia State never had much of a team.

**Ann:** They’re not very . . .

**Joseph:** . . . in fact, I was invited to go to see Tech play, Georgia State play last week. I met the president, [John] Palms. Nice person. I enjoyed meeting him. He was cheering for his team, but it didn’t win. Noah Langdale is a good friend, and did a lot for that school. I think that Dr. Palms [unintelligible 22:28] picked up from it and carried it further.

**Ann:** They needed something different.

**Joseph:** Noah Langdale served his purpose. It’s just like Dean [George M.] Sparks taught me in Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce. That’s what’s on my diploma.

**Ann:** They needed something, a new kind of person.

**Joseph:** . . . Dean Sparks taught me a course in journalism. You know how much of a journalist I am.

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94 Georgia native Dr. Noah N. Langdale (1921 - 2008) was president of Georgia State University in Atlanta from 1957 to 1988. A one-time University of Alabama football star, he is credited with developing Georgia State from a two-building college to a major urban university in the heart of Atlanta. Langdale was 37 when he left his law practice in Valdosta, Georgia to head up Georgia State, then a college with 5,200 students offering only one degree, in business. When he retired, the university had more than 22,000 students and offered 50 degrees in more than 200 fields.

95 Dr. John Michael Palms was president of Georgia State University from 1989 to 1991. Before that he served for 23 years at Emory University in Atlanta, where his titles included chairman of the Department of Physics, dean of Arts and Sciences and vice president for Academic Affairs. Born in the Netherlands, Palms received his Bachelor of Science degree from the Citadel [Charleston, South Carolina] in 1958, a Master of Science degree from Emory University in 1959, and his PhD from the University of New Mexico in 1966. Palms left Georgia State to become president of University of South Carolina [Columbia, South Carolina], a position he held until 2002. He is currently the Distinguished President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. (2015)

96 Georgia native George M. Sparks (? - 1958) became director of the Georgia Tech Evening School of Commerce [Atlanta, Georgia] in 1928. A former war correspondent and city editor for the Macon Telegraph, Sparks taught journalism at Mercer University [Macon, Georgia] and Georgia Institute of Technology [Atlanta, Georgia]. During his tenure, Sparks expanded the curriculum, increased enrollment, and transformed the Evening School into a four-year college with graduate programs. Sparks retired as director and president of the growing Georgia State College of Business Administration in 1957, after 29 years.
Ann: Maybe you’re a good writer.

Joseph: He was interesting. He used to always use the expression “Willecoochee and Villa Rica.” That name was funny. He did a lot for the school. He started the thing off, and [along] comes a guy like Noah Langdale and gives it the push it needs. Just like Noah Langdale is outgoing, Dean Sparks was the exact opposite. Dean Sparks was very reserved, but he did his part. Noah Langdale . . .

Ann: He kind of laid the foundation and Noah Langdale gave it the name.

Joseph: We have a room at the school called Max M. Cuba room. It’s in Alumni Hall. A lot of meetings of the Alumni Association are there. It’s used for . . . just for little discussions. The other night, I went to the Georgia State basketball game as a guest of Dr. John Palms. They had little refreshments in the Max M. Cuba room. It was nice. I owe a lot to that school, whether we call it Georgia Tech, or anything else. That school I owe a lot to because that gave me an opportunity to get a college education which I couldn’t have gotten any other way. I certainly could not stop working to get one.

Ann: Was it the only place that one could get an evening education here?

Joseph: As far as accounting. Law, you could get. There was Atlanta Law School. John Marshall [Law School—Atlanta, Georgia] came later. To get a college degree, a recognized college degree—and they were pretty strict on their degrees—that’s the only one I knew of.

Ann: Certainly I think that Georgia State is a real asset to this community.

Joseph: We worked hard to get the law school approved. Why they didn’t want to approve it, I don’t know, except that it’s politics. Finally got it approved. They complement each other. The one in accounting complements the other one.

Ann: Not only that, but a great big community like this needs to have an accredited night law school, a place where people who are working like you worked all day, and had ambition to do something more than what you were doing. You had an opportunity to go to the Atlanta Law School, but it wasn’t an accredited law school in those days. For your purposes, it was fine, but today young . . .

Joseph: . . . it was that or nothing . . .

Ann: . . . today young people who really want to practice law need those credentials.

Joseph: Not only that.

Ann: This school has done exceptionally well for such a young school.
**Joseph:** It’s a good school. I think I’m indebted to Georgia State.

**Ann:** Were there many Jewish students at Georgia State, or whatever it was called, Georgia Tech’s Commercial Business School?

**Joseph:** We know it’s the same school we’re talking about.

**Ann:** Were there many other Jewish people there?

**Joseph:** Just a few. Who wants to work all day and go to school at night?

**Ann:** Not many were as ambitious as you.

**Joseph:** You said that, I didn’t. I enjoyed my experience at Georgia State as president of the alumni.

**Ann:** How long were you president?

**Joseph:** Two years. That’s all.

**Ann:** That’s the term.

**Joseph:** That’s enough. I had a chance to meet Noah Langdale and the other members of the faculty and all.

**Ann:** Do you know Dr. [William M.] Suttles\(^7\) well?

**Joseph:** Yes, I like him very much. Lana [Cuba Krebs] was responsible for the day school there. She helped the day care [center] start. They had one. They used to have to take the kids from church on the corner of Washington Street and Hunter [Street].

**Ann:** Was it Central Presbyterian [Church]?

**Joseph:** That’s where the day care center was. Lana wasn’t happy with it at all, and she created an issue.

**Ann:** Was she a student at that point?

**Joseph:** She was a student. She was lugging Jennifer over there and back. She made an issue of it. They have a real nice one now in the Alumni Hall building. You’ve seen it?

**Ann:** Yes.

**Joseph:** Lana did the fighting for it, but she hasn’t even seen it. You ought to bring these things out, I guess, otherwise they won’t get done.

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\(^7\) Georgia native William M. Suttles (1920 – 2003) served as acting president of George State University [Atlanta, Georgia] for two years until his retirement in 1989, after nearly 50 years of service to the university. He held numerous positions at Georgia State, including executive vice president and provost for 19 years, as well as professor and chair of the speech department, dean of students and vice president for academic affairs. Suttles first came to the school as an Evening College student in the 1930’s and financed his education with money loaned to him from then-president George M. Sparks. The university’s on-campus Lanette J. Suttles Child Development
Ann: Sometimes it just takes one person standing up on their hind legs and saying, “Hey.”
Joseph: I understand they’re naming it after Mrs. Suttles, which I think is real nice.
Ann: She was very active there.
Joseph: What’s your involvement in Georgia State?
Ann: My husband has been involved with Dr. William M. Suttles in several other ways. I’m trying to think how we have been over there so many times. I can’t tell you right now. My husband is on the board of Georgia College down in Milledgeville [Georgia]. He’s been on their board for several years now. Maybe there was some connection.
Joseph: What’s his name?
Ann: Irving Schoenberg.
Joseph: What does he do?
Ann: I think we’ve probably done enough for one night. Why don’t we stop here. I will review all this, decide what we have skipped, and come back, if I may.

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Ann: I’m introducing the second side of the second tape. This is a new session between Ann Hoffman Schoenberg, the interviewer, and the memoirist, Joseph Cuba. We are in his home, same place, at the dining room table. It is July 3, 1990. We are about to begin again to talk about Atlanta history and Cuba history. You started to tell me about Morris Lichtenstein. Why don’t you go ahead.
Joseph: If you’re going to have Cuba history, you’ve got to have [Fidel] Castro.
Ann: Right, exactly. That’s one thing that comes through in all your tapes, your sense of humor. Tell me about Mr. Morris Lichtenstein, though. You started to tell me and I said, “Don’t tell me until I turn the machine on.”
Joseph: He was one of the leaders in the Jewish community. He was very active in the building of the Jewish Educational Alliance, really the hub of the Orthodox Jews. There was no Conservative Jews at that time.

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Center was named after Suttles’ wife in honor of the couples’ contributions to Georgia State.
Ann: In those years.
Joseph: There was Orthodox and Reform. He was one of the leaders of the Orthodox group.
Ann: What years was he active? Do you remember?
Joseph: The Center was built in 1909. It was done in celebration of my birthday.
Ann: That was very nice of them.
Joseph: That’s when he was active. You got men like Abe Goldstein. He worked for years in the Jewish community. You want me to . . .
Ann: . . . were the vast majority of these people, who seemed to be so really active, members of the AA or of all the synagogues, and the Temple as well?
Joseph: The Temple has the richest members. They were able to do more financially than the AA members.
Ann: Who were some of the people that you remember, in those earlier years, as being particularly generous or active in the Jewish community?
Joseph: I don’t know. As far as AA is concerned, because I was closer to that . . .
Ann: Sure.
Joseph: . . . I was reared in AA. Men like Abe Goldstein, Joel Goldberg, and the president for quite a few years, Joel Dorfan. I could tell all kinds of stories about his being president for quite a few years.
Ann: Why did he stay president so many years?
Joseph: Nobody else, I guess, wanted it.
Ann: You don’t think it was because he wanted it that badly?
Joseph: He was a nice . . . all I remember is a nice old man. He was a real nice man. We all liked him. He created no problems.
Ann: Was he a really good leader, or was he just the kind of leader who didn’t make waves?
Joseph: I’m not going to pass judgment on him. I liked him.

98 A division within Judaism especially in North America and the United Kingdom. Historically it began in the nineteenth century. In general, the Reform movement maintains that Judaism and Jewish traditions should be modernized and compatible with participation in Western culture. While the Torah remains the law, in Reform Judaism women are included (mixed seating, bat mitzvah and women rabbis), music is allowed in the services and most of the service is in English.

99 The Temple, or Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, is Atlanta’s oldest Jewish congregation. The cornerstone was laid on the Temple on Garnett Street in 1875. The dedication was held in 1877 and the Temple was located there until 1902. The Temple’s next location on Pryor Street was dedicated in 1902. The Temple’s current location in Midtown on Peachtree Street was dedicated in 1931. The main sanctuary is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Reform congregation now totals approximately 1500 families (2015).
Ann: Seriously, it’s important. It’s not passing judgment. It’s interesting from a historical standpoint and you having been president of the congregation in later years yourself. Did he remain president for so many years because he was non-controversial?

Joseph: I imagine that has a lot to do with it. He didn’t get involved too much.

Ann: Did he do anything exceptional, or he just didn’t do anything unexceptional?

Joseph: I’ll say when a man’s president of a synagogue, or anything, and he has results. For example, he built . . . the synagogue grew. They built the building on Gilmer Street and they built the building on Washington Street.

Ann: He was the president in those years, when they built both Gilmer and Washington?

Joseph: I think he was president on Washington Street, too.

Ann: He must have had something . . .

Joseph: I can’t pass judgment on him. I can’t say he didn’t. I can say he showed results. He was an easygoing man. He was quiet. I liked him. Did I tell you how we used to collect money, sell tickets . . .

Ann: I think you started to, but I don’t think you really went much into it. Go ahead and tell it again. It’s fine.

Joseph: . . . the way we used to collect money [when] Max and I were secretary. He was the financial secretary. I was his assistant for a while. I became secretary and he became president. When he got tired of being president, I became president. The way we handled and collected money was before Rosh Ha-Shanah. We would have the tickets at the synagogue the week before Rosh Ha-Shanah, maybe a week or two before Rosh Ha-Shanah. In those days we had the tickets assigned. Everybody had seats assigned. They would come and pay their dues and get the ticket. That’s how we were able to collect the money.

Ann: How much dues? Was it the same amount for everybody, or was it a different amount for different people?

Joseph: Different amount for different people.

Ann: Who determined how much?

Joseph: I guess to a great extent we did.

Ann: The financial secretaries?

Joseph: If there was a question as to how, we’d discuss it. In those days, people had a different attitude about synagogue, I think.
Ann: Is it somewhat similar to the idea of fair share dues that is prevalent today in a lot of synagogues and temples, where according to your income, you pay a sort of a certain percentage of your income on dues?

Joseph: Always.

Ann: Obviously, you didn’t know exactly how much people’s income was, and neither do the people today. It’s a matter of honesty. It’s a matter of honor. Was it sort of that way?

Joseph: Somewhat like that.

Ann: Were there many families that couldn’t afford to pay anything?

Joseph: Those that couldn’t afford to pay anything didn’t have to pay anything.

Ann: That’s what I wondered. They were accepted. They got tickets?

Joseph: Sure.

Ann: They always had a place.

Joseph: I remember some instances, not a lot, but there were these little instances when a member . . . they remained a member . . . where an old woman—I guess she’d be a young woman today compared to me—would come and have money, silver, tied up in a handkerchief. She’d give us the silver, and we’d give her the ticket [unintelligible 7:08]. It’s not our job. It didn’t make any difference.

Ann: She paid what she could pay. She gave you what she felt she could afford.

Joseph: That’s right. That’s what it was.

Ann: Were there a lot of widowed women in those years, or women who were like very poor heads of families?

Joseph: I can’t recall.

Ann: I’m thinking in terms of today when there are so many single-parent families and when people died younger in those years, like your father dying so young and leaving your mother to raise all the children. I just wondered if there were many families like that.

Joseph: Good thing she was a member of the synagogue. That was the one thing had to be. Grandfather was the same way. Anyhow, that was the way we collected dues. Two weeks before Rosh Ha-Shanah, and the week between Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, we were on duty, so to speak, at the synagogue collecting the dues. Members of the congregation would come. The members lived in the same area, on Washington Street. A lot of them lived in that area, and they came and paid their dues.
Ann: Did anybody live outside that area? Jewish people?

Joseph: They gradually moved away from there.

Ann: Where did they drift to? Where was sort of the next settlement after Washington Street?

Joseph: In the Boulevard section.

Ann: Was it on Boulevard and Edgewood [Avenue], or further north?

Joseph: Maybe down near Ponce de Leon [Avenue].

Ann: Did any of the Jews live in Inman Park or in Grant Park areas? That was earlier, probably, before you were born. Were there Jews in Druid Hills?

Joseph: Not predominantly, not a whole lot. I’m sure there were some. Most of them lived . . . on Connally Street and Fraser Street, then it went to Washington Street and Capitol Avenue and Pulliam Street. After that, it went to Boulevard and Jackson Street.

Ann: Were there black families living there?

Joseph: No.

Ann: Not near Boulevard and Jackson?

Joseph: Not on the main street.

Ann: Because that’s really the old Fourth Ward, the old black Fourth Ward down in Jackson and Boulevard.

Joseph: [That] came later, after the Jews left.

Ann: How large was the Jewish population, do you think, around 1920 or 1925? What would you guess? How large was the synagogue? How many members?

Joseph: We must have had about 800.

Ann: That’s a lot. Are you talking about families or are you talking about individuals?

Joseph: I think it would be individuals. [unintelligible 10:30].

Ann: I’m sure of that.

Joseph: In the congregation.

Ann: Not like today.

Joseph: I’m just kidding you.

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100 The Old Fourth Ward is a neighborhood on the east side of Atlanta that stretches from Piedmont Avenue and Downtown Atlanta on the west to the BeltLine and the Poncey-Highland and Inman Park neighborhoods on the east. The area is best known as the location of the Martin Luther King, Jr. historic site.
Ann: Not everybody. That was another area I wanted to ask you about. I wanted to ask you about the early rabbis, before Rabbi [Harry] Epstein came. Who was the rabbi there? Who was the rabbi when you were a child, for instance?

Joseph: The rabbi when I was bar mitzvahed was a sweet man named Rabbi [Abraham] Hirmes. He couldn’t speak English too well, and they’d make fun of his speeches. His wife was very sweet, trying to make her husband succeed. She ran the Sunday school.

Ann: Was she an educated woman?

Joseph: Very educated, nice person. The congregation came to the point where they felt like they needed an English-speaking rabbi. He could make a good talk in Yiddish, I guess. He spoke in Yiddish well.

Ann: Why did they need an English-speaking rabbi?

Joseph: For the young people. That was all the theme. The young people got to have a youth meeting.

Ann: Were the young people beginning to fall away?

Joseph: Yes. During the Torah reading, on Washington Street—because most of my recollection goes to Washington Street—there’d be more people outside in front of the synagogue on the sidewalks than there were inside.

Ann: This is on a Shabbat [Hebrew: Sabbath], a regular Shabbat?

Joseph: Regular Shabbat. Even on Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, people just went out.

Ann: Did their parents not insist they sit with them?

Joseph: They tried. You’re going to sit [unintelligible12:38]. They’ll go away.

Ann: Was there much intermarriage in those years?

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101 Lithuanian-born Rabbi Abraham P. Hirmes (188? – 1946) led the Ahavath Achim Congregation from 1919 to 1928. Rabbi Hirmes originated the Sisterhood, whose immediate projects were focused on raising money for the building fund for the synagogue at the corner of Washington Street and Woodward Avenue. About this time, there was an official name change of the congregation from Ahawas Achim to Ahavath Achim. It was also during this period that Bible School, Junior Congregation, and late Friday night services developed. Rabbi Hermes studied at the Slobatska Yeshiva in Lithuania and pursued his rabbinical ordination at Yeshiva University-affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in New York.

102 Rebbetzin Frieda K. Hermes was a noted writer and lecturer. She was a member of the Speakers’ Bureau of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, executive member of the Yeshiva College Women’s Organization, and attended Emory University’s School of Journalism [Atlanta, Georgia]. She was the wife of Rabbi Abraham P. Hirmes, former Rabbi of Ahavath Achim (1919 – 1928) and with him founded the congregation’s Sisterhood. The Rebbetzin Frieda K. Hirmes Women’s Institute of Torah in Baltimore is named in her honor.
Joseph: Not very much. We have intermarriages now . . . the interesting thing that [Rabbi Arnold M.] Goodman, 103 I think, started. Last Sunday, for example, a couple was called up to the bimah 104 and [he] said the blessing over them. They are ‘Jews by choice.’

Ann: Both of them?


Ann: It’s a real dilemma nowadays. Again, just like the parents couldn’t make their children sit in shul during the Torah reading, parents today can no longer force the issue on their children either.

Joseph: What are you going to do? That’s why I say, if you can get them to even decide to convert, one or the other, I would convert. I think it’s good.

Ann: Has there been any . . .

Joseph: On Washington Street, every Saturday morning, they’re out in the front. I can’t remember Gilmer Street very well.

Ann: What was your attitude about Judaism and religion?

Joseph: As far as wanting it and . . .

Ann: . . . yes, as a kid. What did you . . .

Joseph: . . . I came from a home that was strictly Orthodox. I was raised by my grandfather and grandmother more than my mother. Everything was kosher and strictly . . . Shabbat was Shabbat. You don’t do anything on Shabbos [Yiddish: Sabbath].

Ann: No games?

Joseph: No. No TV.

Ann: You didn’t have TV in 1910 or 1920.

Joseph: You caught it.

Ann: Could you listen to a radio?

Joseph: No radios then either. You couldn’t listen to a radio. No music.

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103 Rabbi Arnold M. Goodman served as senior rabbi of Ahavath Achim Synagogue from 1982-2002. He currently serves as its senior rabbinic scholar. Upon his retirement, the Synagogue honored them by designating its adult education program as Beit Aharon: The Rabbi Arnold and Rae Goodman Learning Institute for adult studies.

104 Hebrew for ‘platform.’ The bimah is a raised structure in the synagogue from which the Torah is read and from
Ann: Did you study in the afternoons? What did you do? Did you just visit?

Joseph: That’s all you do. Get up on Saturday morning. Get dressed for shul. I walked to shul. Everybody walked. No riding. On Yom Kippur, we used to . . . I’d get the car and come pick us up. We’d go to shul. After shul was over, come back home and have the Shabbos dinner. That’s when you ate your Shabbos dinner, at noon.

Ann: Really?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Rather than on Friday night, like now.

Joseph: We had Shabbos on Friday night, too. We had the two meals.

Ann: Did somebody cook?

Joseph: In advance.

Ann: If you were shomer Shabbat, and your grandmother and mother were, then they didn’t cook.

Joseph: They didn’t cook. Everything was prepared for the Shabbat dinner Friday night and Saturday morning.

Ann: What did you do Saturday afternoon?

Joseph: Just lounged around, sit, and talk.

Ann: Visit with family?

Joseph: Everybody was in the same neighborhood. My experience was a lot different.

Ann: That’s fine. We want to know about your experience though. We’re not talking about everybody else right this second. What did you all do on Sunday? Your store wasn’t open. You said your mother went collecting on Sunday, I remember.

Joseph: She’d take that buggy, horse and buggy.

Ann: Did you ever take the buggy and go just for a ride, just for fun?

Joseph: Not me. I was too young. Mother would take us for a little ride. She’d get dressed up to go collecting from our customers. Mostly . . .

Ann: . . . what was, for instance, an average bill? Would you have any idea how much an average grocery bill for the week might be for a family of five or six people? Was that an average size family? Probably families were larger.

Joseph: Our family was seven.
Ann: Plus your mother, your grandfather, and your grandmother.

Joseph: I lost a sister. She was eight years old.

Ann: Were most families that large?

Joseph: My cousins’ [families] were that large.

Ann: Which cousins are we talking about here that you’re counting on your fingers?

Joseph: Irving Goldstein.

Ann: The Goldstein family.

Joseph: Yes. We were close at that time. We lived a couple blocks away.

Ann: They had how many children? They were seven children?

Joseph: That’s what I was counting. There’s Irving, Bessie, Marvin, Tina, Alan, and Janet.

Ann: Six.

Joseph: Hope I didn’t miss anybody. I don’t know if I did.

Ann: Couldn’t prove it by me. You don’t remember or have any idea how much groceries . . . do you remember how much anything cost in the store? You didn’t really work in there, you said.

Joseph: Chewing gum was a nickel a package.

Ann: What kind of chewing gum?

Joseph: Chewing gum.

Ann: The important things. You don’t remember how much milk cost, just out of curiosity?

Joseph: It would be interesting. Did I tell you the story how Max went to work for the Methodist newspaper?

Ann: No. The Methodist newspaper—what Methodist newspaper? Do you remember the name of it?

Joseph: Sure. Max was out of high school. He graduated in bookkeeping.

Ann: You remember what year he graduated? This was Commercial High. I remember you told me that.

Joseph: Commercial High. Think it must have been about 1926 [or] 1925.

Ann: The middle 1920’s.

Joseph: Something like that. You got out of high school, you had to work. If you go to college, college costs money, and [unintelligible 19:47]. He answered an ad to the Wesleyan Christian
Advocate, a Methodist newspaper. He went there, and he was interviewed by Reverend [L. J.] Ballard, Dr. Ballard.


Joseph: Yes. [His] office was in the Wesleyan Memorial Church building, which at that time was on the corner of Ivy Street and maybe Auburn Avenue. He goes there, and Dr. Ballard interviews him. He says, “You understand that you’re a Jew and you applied for a position with the Methodist newspaper.” Max tells him, “Dr. Ballard, you advertised for a bookkeeper. I’m a bookkeeper. I can do this job, and I’m here to take it.” The thing is, he advertised for a bookkeeper. He went to the members of the board of trustees. [They] called Reverend Ballard on the carpet. They wanted to know why he was hiring a Jewish boy to work in the office of the Wesleyan Advocate. Ballard’s answer was, “I’d rather have a Jew that can do the work than a Methodist that can’t.”

Ann: How long did he work there?

Joseph: Several years, and he ran for public office.

Ann: Ballard?

Joseph: No, Max.

Ann: Max did?

Joseph: He ran for city council. It was a ward election in those days, not citywide. They wrote a letter praising him, recommending him. [It was] signed by six ministers in the ward.

Ann: Did he win?

Joseph: Sure he won. [unintelligible 22:06]

Ann: He was on the Board of Alderman? Is that what it was called?

Joseph: City council.

Ann: When did he serve and how long? I didn’t even know that.

Joseph: He served for about two or three years and he was in [unintelligible 22:22].

Ann: This was in the 1930’s?

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105 The Wesleyan Christian Advocate was the newspaper of the North and South Georgia Methodist Conferences. This publication began in 1878 and ceased publication in 2009.

106 Wesley Memorial Methodist Church was built in 1910 under the direction of Bishop Warren A. Candler at the intersection of Auburn Avenue and Ivy Street in Atlanta. In 1964 the building and its land were sold. The stained glass windows were moved to the chapel of the Methodist Center on the corner of Piedmont and Ralph McGill Boulevard, and later moved again to the Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia.
Joseph: He served as Chairman for the Joint City and County Planning Board [Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board]. He served on that for many years. In fact, he was on it when he died.\textsuperscript{107}

<End Tape 2, Side 2, Part 1>
<Begin Tape 2, Side 2, Part 2>

Ann: Were there any other Jewish people active in politics in the city?

Joseph: Not at that time. [unintelligible 00:08]. There was another Jewish person, an incumbent, and he ran.

Ann: Who was the other Jewish person who ran for office?

Joseph: Charlie Markeles.\textsuperscript{108}

Ann: Markeles?

Joseph: Markeles.

Ann: M-A-R-K . . . ?

Joseph: . . . K-E-L-E-S. Tried to get him not to run, but he wouldn’t.

Ann: He split the vote.

Joseph: We thought he would. He had a right. That was some . . .

Ann: . . . campaign?

Joseph: Part of the campaign wasn’t too bad. They just went to the various schools and had meetings. They’d get quite a group in the meeting. They’d ask questions. Didn’t have TV [television]. They couldn’t have afforded it if they had it. I thought that story about Max getting a job at the Wesleyan Christian Advocate really was the beginning of our firm. He went to work for them and while he was employed there, he was able to get the work done in less time. As a result he was spending less and less time at the Wesley Memorial Church, \textit{Wesleyan Christian Advocate} office, than he was before. He gradually spent more time away with their permission. Everything was . . .

Ann: . . . as long as he finished the work.

Joseph: Yes. He started doing bookkeeping on the side, and accounting work on the side. The next thing I know we had an accounting office.

\textsuperscript{107} The Breman Museum holds an image of the Atlanta-Fulton County Joint Planning Board including Max Cuba. JCF 485.050.

\textsuperscript{108} Atlanta native attorney Charles E. Markeles (1902 – 1973) was the son of Lena Gitelson Markeles and Solomon Markeles. His uncle, Nehimah Gitelson, was the founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.
Ann: What was your first job out of school?

Joseph: My first job out of school was with National Grocery Company. You saw that picture of Alterman’s [L. Alterman & Son]? That was the wholesale grocery, Alterman’s. Two doors down the street was National Grocery Company—David Isenberg and Sam Krasner. I was hired as their bookkeeper. [They were] wholesale. They would sell retail too. They had a store front and sell retail too, but mostly wholesale. They’d go out and take orders. Sam Krasner would get up at two or three o’clock in the morning and go around to the grocery stores taking orders for their groceries. I was with them for a while. I got a job with the United Jewish Appeal. I figured if Max could work for a Methodist paper, I could work for the [United] Jewish Appeal. The United Jewish Appeal was in charge of the whole . . . we were region number ten. We had the whole southeast region. In those days, the campaigns weren’t like they are now. We were amateurs, but we would raise as much money as we could.

Ann: Do you remember, for instance, how much money got raised in a year’s time in those years?

Joseph: I think we got around $30,000 in the whole region.

Ann: In the region? Not just Atlanta? You’re talking about the whole southeast.

Joseph: The whole southeast region.

Ann: Including Miami? There probably weren’t that many Jews in Miami then.

Joseph: Not many. That’s what it was, about $30,000 for the whole region.

Ann: That’s amazing.

Joseph: The director of the region was Dr. Leo J. Frachtenberg.


Joseph: . . . - E-N-B-E-R-G.

Ann: Was he from the South? Or did he come here from New York?

Joseph: They brought him here. Leo J. Frachtenberg. He was a nice guy.

Ann: What was he like?

Markelles was a national officer of Nu Beta Epsilon, the national law fraternity.

109 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
Joseph: He was a nice man, good to me. Good speaker. He did a good job. That was the main thing.
Ann: Did he go around making the speeches to raise the money?
Joseph: Sometimes.
Ann: Or did they bring people?
Joseph: Probably couldn’t afford an expensive speaker.
Ann: That’s true.
Joseph: He could speak. He talked well.
Ann: Was he American-born?
Joseph: I don’t think so. Maybe. His wife was not Jewish. She was an Indian.
Ann: An American Indian or an Indian from India?
Joseph: I think she was an American Indian.
Ann: Had she converted?
Joseph: Not that I know of.
Ann: How long did they live here?
Joseph: It was several years. I worked at the National Grocery. When I got this job at United Jewish Appeal, I changed my hours at National Grocery. I did something like what Max did. I went to work at National Grocery seven o’clock in the morning. I worked until nine. Then I went to United Jewish Appeal and worked until six.
Ann: You went back to the grocery?
Joseph: I went back to the school.
Ann: That’s when you were at Georgia Tech?
Joseph: Yes. Georgia State, Georgia Tech. I had to seek education. Nobody handed it to me.
Ann: In those years, how old were you when you were doing all this, 19 or 20? You weren’t married, though?
Joseph: No.
Ann: You didn’t get married until you were 30.
Joseph: You’ve got a good memory. Then we had time for Young Judaea and basketball.
Ann: And girls? Did you date a lot?
Joseph: Not a lot. I didn’t have time.

(UJA), Council of Jewish Federations and United Israel Appeal, Inc.
Ann: Which girls did you go out with before you found Ida Pearle? It has nothing to do with her. Who did you date before Ida Pearle? Which young women in this community?
Joseph: There was a group, the group of us.
Ann: Who were some of the group? I remember you told me Nathan Blass. Was he part of that group?
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: Who else?
Joseph: The other person I don’t remember.
Ann: Come on, you got to remember. That’s the fun part, for people to make all the ties and the connections to who were friends. You don’t remember any of the girls? I bet you do. I bet you were a devil.
Ann: You were a good guy?
Joseph: A good devil.
Ann: Did you ever go out with non-Jewish girls? I know it was forbidden, but did you ever do it anyway?
Joseph: No.
Ann: You really didn’t. Can I ask you one other question? I don’t know whether I’m stomping on something or not, but why did Max never marry? Was he just too busy?
Joseph: [unintelligible 8:07]. He should have got married.
Ann: I thought maybe he had had an unhappy experience, or something. I didn’t know.
Joseph: I don’t think so. I think it was just all the responsibility he had, working late at night, building a practice. It was a lot of work.
Ann: He didn’t make the time for anything else, or didn’t have the time.
Joseph: All that, and he was doing civic work, public work of all kinds. When he was in city council, that was a long-hour job.
Ann: Did they get paid for being . . .
Joseph: . . . nominal salary. It wasn’t like now. Now they got big salaries. In those days they got a minimal salary.
Ann: Tell me what else you thought about while you were . . . when we haven’t been together. I’m sure you’ve thought of a lot of things that we could have talked about that night.
Joseph: You asked me about Ida Pearle.

Ann: I certainly did.

Joseph: I came across this yesterday.

Ann: That was hers?

Joseph: She was an unusual person.

Ann: You’re not going to tell me about it? I have to read it? The tape recorder can’t hear me when I’m reading it.

Joseph: It’s not easy for me to tell you about it.

Ann: I know it isn’t.

Joseph: She was a good mother, an excellent mother.

Ann: A perfectly wonderful wife, obviously. You had a great relationship.

Joseph: Yes, 47 years.

Ann: That’s a long time.

Joseph: How she put up with me, I never knew.

Ann: Maybe she felt the same thing.

Joseph: Very active in [the] Jewish community. She was a pusher. Had to get things done.

Ann: What was her educational background? She had gone to school in Cordele. I remember that.

Joseph: Cordele, Georgia. She was interested in education. She went to Georgia State evening school.

Ann: Did she? What did she study?

Joseph: English. Education.

Ann: Did she get a degree from the University or College, rather?

Joseph: She graduated.

Ann: Was that unusual for a woman in those years?

Joseph: There were quite a few there. It wasn’t as common as it is now.

Ann: Were there many Jewish women there though?

Joseph: Not too many, but she was determined.

Ann: Was this in the years when you all were dating, in that five year period when you courted her?

Joseph: Yes.
Ann: What did you used to do when you went out on dates? Where did you go?
Joseph: We went to the movies.
Ann: Who was your favorite movie star? Remember?
Joseph: William S. Hart.\textsuperscript{110}
Ann: You liked the cowboys. What about Ida Pearle?
Joseph: Tom Mix.\textsuperscript{111}
Ann: I bet she didn’t like the cowboys that much. Who’d she like? She probably liked somebody like Rudolph Valentino\textsuperscript{112} or some . . .
Joseph: Clark Gable.\textsuperscript{113}
Ann: Clark Gable. People like that. She was smart.
Joseph: They were no competition to me.
Ann: Where else did you . . .
Joseph: . . . she always liked dances and parties.
Ann: That’s what I wanted you to tell me.
Joseph: [unintelligible 12:26], and . . .
Ann: Did the clubs sponsor the parties? Did the Alliance itself sponsor them, or was it some of both?
Joseph: Alliance sponsored very little parties, as far as I remember. The individual clubs at the Alliance . . . for example, the Mosean Club. The main place where I took her was the Progressive Club. Some other people went to the Standard Club, but we were involved and active in the Progressive Club.

\begin{footnotes}
\item William Surrey Hart (1864 – 1946) was an American film actor, screenwriter, director and producer. He is remembered primarily as a western star of the silent film era.
\item Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix (born Thomas Hezikiah Mix; 1880 – 1940) was an American film actor and the star of many early Western movies. Mix appeared in 291 films, all but nine of which were silent movies. He was Hollywood's first Western megastar and is noted as having helped define the genre for all cowboy actors who followed.
\item Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filiberto Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguolla, professionally known as Rudolph Valentino (1895 – 1926), was an Italian-born American actor who starred in several well-known silent films including The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, The Sheik, Blood and Sand, The Eagle, and The Son of the Sheik. An early pop icon, a sex symbol of the 1920’s, he was known as the “Latin Lover” or simply as “Valentino.” He applied for American citizenship shortly before his death at age 31, causing mass hysteria among his female fans and further propelling him into iconic status.
\item Clark Gable (1901 – 1960) was an American film actor. He landed his first leading Hollywood role in 1932 and became a leading man in more than 60 motion pictures over the next three decades. Gable was best known for his role as Rhett Butler in Gone with the Wind (1939). Other films include: Mutiny on the Bounty (1935), It Happened One Night (1934), Manhattan Melodrama (1934), San Francisco (1936), Saratoga (1937) Boom Town (1940), The Hucksters (1947) Homecoming (1948), and The Misfits (1961).
\end{footnotes}
Ann: How old did you have to be to go to the Progressive Club?
Joseph: I think it was 18.
Ann: Were you a member?
Joseph: You could join at 18.
Ann: You remember how much you had to pay to join? Was it very much? Probably wasn’t.
Joseph: Couldn’t have been very much, or I couldn’t have gone.
Ann: Most everybody in the Orthodox community belonged to the Progressive Club? All the young people and the older people. . .
Joseph: That’s where the social life was.
Ann: . . . the older people also belonged?
Joseph: Yes, and at the Standard Club they had the young and old there.
Ann: Where was the Progressive Club located?
Joseph: The Progressive Club, when I joined, was on Pryor Street. Pryor [Street] and Rawson Street—I think—near Woodward Avenue. We weren’t too far from the Washington Street synagogue. We had a gym there at Pryor Street. We had an excellent basketball team, a championship team. We used to play the Atlanta Athletic Club\textsuperscript{114} and the YMCA.\textsuperscript{115} I don’t know if you knew, but we played 12 basketball teams in the other Jewish communities like Birmingham [Alabama] and Jacksonville [Florida]. They would come with dates, and all the shidduchs.\textsuperscript{116} Is that what you call them?
Ann: Yes, shidduchs . . .
Joseph: . . . was made at the Progressive Club.
Ann: Between kids who came for these get-togethers, these basketball games?
Joseph: After every basketball game, we’d have a dance. That was the social life at that time in Atlanta.

\textsuperscript{114} The Atlanta Athletic Club (AAC) was founded in 1898 as a private athletic club. The original home of the club was a 10-story building on Carnegie Way in downtown Atlanta. In 1904 a golf course was built on Atlanta's East Lake property. In 1967 the AAC sold both properties and moved to a big site in a then-unincorporated area of Fulton County that had a Duluth mailing address and would eventually become Johns Creek. The vacated golf course site became East Lake Golf Club and was refurbished during the 1990’s. It is now the home of The Tour Championship, currently the final event of the PGA Tour golf season.

\textsuperscript{115} The Young Men’s Christian Association, commonly known as the ‘YMCA’ or the ‘Y’ is a worldwide organization founded in 1844 that aims to put Christian principles into practice by developing a healthy body, mind and spirit. They offer recreational facilities, parent/child education programs, youth and teen development with after school programming, etc.

\textsuperscript{116} Shidduch is a system of matchmaking in which Jewish singles are introduced to each other in Orthodox Jewish communities for the purpose of marriage.
Ann: That was how . . .

Joseph: There wasn’t nothing wrong with it, either.

Ann: Did you go to Birmingham to play ball or did they always come to Atlanta?

Joseph: I was on the team. Our team would go to Birmingham, or they would come to Atlanta, and vice-versa. That was a good relationship really.

Ann: Were there a lot of marriages between the communities, or were most of the people your age married to people who were already in Atlanta? Did most young Jewish people find someone within their own community here in Atlanta to marry? Or did a lot of them marry people from other towns?

Joseph: Most of them married from Atlanta. There were quite a few who would meet somebody from out of town.

Ann: Like Ida Pearle, for instance, who really wasn’t from Atlanta originally, I guess. She was from Cordele.

Joseph: That’s right.

Ann: Couldn’t have been many people in Cordele. You told me there was one other Jewish family besides hers?

Joseph: Maybe three or four. Pearl Gratz . . . you know Pearl Gratz? That’s one of Ida Pearle’s close friends. [She] was from Cordele. There was a Roobin family there, but that’s about all. I don’t know if they’re there now.

Ann: What businesses were they in, do you think? Her father was in dry goods?¹¹⁷

Joseph: Dry goods. I think most of them were.

Ann: Had he started as a peddler?

Joseph: I don’t know . . . may have. Most of them do. H. [Hyman] Mendel¹¹⁸ would [unintelligible 16:58]. He started off many of them as peddlers. They’d come around and

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¹¹⁷ Dry goods are products such as textiles, clothing, personal care, and toiletry items. In U.S. retailing, a dry goods store carries consumer goods that are distinct from those carried by hardware stores and grocery stores.

¹¹⁸ Hyman Mendel (1872 – 1954) was a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania. He came to the United States at the age of 19 and established H. Mendel & Co., initially working as a peddler around Atlanta. Once he was able to purchase a horse and wagon, he was able to expand his business. In 1892 he opened his first store on Decatur Street in downtown Atlanta. By the turn of the twentieth century H. Mendel & Co. became the city’s biggest dry-goods wholesaler. In 1913 Mendel built his own 3-story building on Gilmer Street. In 1921, the business moved to Pryor Street where it remained for more than 40 years. Generations of merchants throughout the southeast trace their start to their relationship with H. Mendel & Co. and credit extended to them from Hyman Mendel. He was a founder and former president of Ahavath Achim Synagogue, a member of B’nai B’rith, and is counted as one of the businessmen who helped shape Atlanta.
[unintelligible 17:04] he’d give them merchandise on credit. Then they’d go in the country and sell it. That’s how you make a living. You make a living any way you can, honestly.

Ann: Honestly.

Joseph: They did.

Ann: How did he get started? Did he also get started that way?

Joseph: I don’t know.

Ann: That was years before you were born.

Joseph: I wasn’t born yet. He and Helen were both Mendels.

Ann: Two of his sons, Jerry and Don, aren’t those two of his sons? Mendel? I thought those were his sons, or maybe the grandsons.

Joseph: Simon Mendel was a son. 119

Ann: Maybe they’re grandsons.

Joseph: They’re grandsons. I know Simon Mendel was a son.

Ann: Is the Mendel family in Columbus related to them? There’s a big family over there.

Joseph: Most of them are related. I don’t know for sure.

Ann: Were there any other people from the same shtetl 120 other than the Goldsteins? Were there any other people from the part of Poland that your family came from here in Atlanta?

Joseph: I don’t know.

Ann: You don’t remember them having a society, a group from the old country? You know how they did in a lot of . . . when a lot of people came to this country and settled in the same place. I know they had the Vishay 121 society. The people from Vishay all grouped, and had a society. I just wondered if there was anything like that.

Joseph: I don’t know of any group like that. They gave [unintelligible 18:57]

Ann: Did you have anybody come and stay with you?

Joseph: [unintelligible: . . . 1906]

Ann: Did anyone ever go back?

Joseph: Not that I know of.

Ann: Have you ever wanted to go back and see where the family started?

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119 Hyman Mendel’s sons were Simon and Harry.
120 A shtetl is a small town, usually in eastern Europe, with a significant Jewish presence in it.
121 Possibly Veisiejai (Polish: Wiejsieje). A city in the Lazdijai district municipality in Lithuania located 18 km (11 mi) southeast of Lazdijai.
Joseph: All I heard about was how cold it was and how hard the ground was when they had to dig up potatoes. I didn’t want to go back.

Ann: What did they do there? What was their business there?

Joseph: They were merchants.

Ann: Groceries or textiles?

Joseph: Textiles. It was rough making a living over there because of the government.

Ann: Antisemitism?

Joseph: They’ve always had that over there. Very interesting, I think.

Ann: Was Ida Pearle’s family also Polish?

Joseph: I know very little about her family. They’re not Polish. Her uncle was Sam Miller. You know Sam Miller?

Ann: I know who he is, was.

Joseph: He’s still living. He’s a lawyer, kind person. Sam’s father was a peddler. I’m trying to think of what happened. I don’t know.

Ann: It’s been a few years ago too.

Joseph: Yes.

<End Tape 2, Side 2, Part 2>
<Begin Tape 3, Side 1, Part 1>

Ann: This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg. I’m doing an interview with Mr. Joseph Cuba in his home on July 3, 1990. His home is located at 515 Mount Vernon Highway, Atlanta, Georgia. It’s almost five o’clock in the afternoon. This is the third tape that we have done. It’s the first side of the third tape. We are about to plow into some more territory here. One of the things that I was curious about, and you sort of alluded to it as we’ve talked, is the relationship or lack thereof between the Orthodox community and the Reform Jewish community here in Atlanta. Would you talk a little bit about the relationship between those two communities?

Joseph: As far as I can remember, there was very little relationship between the two communities. The Reform group had the Temple and the Standard Club. The Orthodox group had the synagogues and the Progressive Club. They were more or less active within those boundaries. Things are a lot different today. I guess it would take quite a while before an Orthodox Jew would get in the Standard Club.

Ann: Who was the first one to ‘break the barrier?’ Do you remember?
Joseph: I don’t know. We had the same problem with the question of the Sephardic Jews getting into the Progressive Club. They got in, eventually. It may not seem like a problem now, but it was a problem then.

Ann: Why was it a problem?

Joseph: I don’t know.

Ann: What was there dividing you? Money?

Joseph: Could have been. [unintelligible 2:30] the powerful in the membership, they were discussing [unintelligible 2:40] had money. It couldn’t have been money. They get the same amount of money from them as they would from anyone else.

Ann: No. I don’t mean money as far as paying dues. I was thinking more in terms of whether they had money. They were affluent or they weren’t affluent.

Joseph: All I can say is the climate at that time was the Sephardic Jews were not able to get in. I think Morris Taranto was the first one.

Ann: Morris . . .

Joseph: . . . Taranto. Dr. Morris Taranto. He was the first one that finally got in. After you marry in, brothers can come in.

Ann: Was there much intermarriage between the various parts of the Jewish community at all? Do you remember any Sephardic Jewish men marrying any of the women at AA, for instance, or Shearith Israel?

Joseph: Shearith Israel and AA were . . .

Ann: . . . that was almost the same.

Joseph: . . . same. No problem there.

Ann: Why were there two of them then?

Joseph: You know the story about the [unintelligible, lawn keeper? 3:53] being found dead in that synagogue.

Ann: What did you just say? Why was there a big shul and a little shul? Was there a controversy and they broke away, or had they never been together?

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122 Sephardic Jews or Sephardim are the descendants of the Jews who left Spain or Portugal after their expulsion in 1492. The word comes from the Hebrew word for Spain. The Sephardic community scattered across Europe, the Mediterranean, and North Africa. Sephardic Jews use Ladino, a combination of Hebrew and Spanish, and a Sephardic style of liturgy. Many continue the customs and traditions that originated in the Iberian Peninsula.
Joseph: As far as I know, they had never been together. I may be wrong, but . . . the little *shul*, which was Shearith Israel, the first time I remember it, was on Hunter Street.

Ann: Where was it near? Was it near the Capitol?

Joseph: No, further out.

Ann: Was it to the east or west? Was it toward the commercial part of town or away?

Joseph: [It was] away from the commercial part of town. That’s where it was. I’m trying to think of the name of the street. Right there by the viaduct.

Ann: Like Hill [Street] maybe? Out that way?

Joseph: Yes, close to Hill Street. Anyhow, that’s my first experience with it. They had a clique of people with that synagogue in the neighborhood. We were on Decatur Street, over the records [store]. We were founded in a loft on Decatur Street.

Ann: That’s where AA was founded?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Was it above somebody’s store?

Joseph: They got some minutes. They’re gone now. I had them for a while. It tells the history of AA.¹²³

Ann: Whose store was it? Do you remember?

Joseph: [unintelligible 5:50]. They would penalize members for conduct.

Ann: You mean if they didn’t come to *shul* or if they . . .

Joseph: . . . made too much noise, stuff like that. The [Holy] Ark¹²⁴ was made by Georgia Tech.

Ann: You mean by students at Georgia Tech?

Joseph: Not only students, the faculty. Somebody made it. That’s what these minutes said. I guess we could get copies of those. From there, they built this nice building on Connally Street, Connally and Piedmont [Avenue]. [It] had a steeple, a Moorish-type building, as far as I recall it. From there we went to Washington Street, Woodward Avenue and Washington Street. Guess who was behind us? Shearith Israel came to Washington Street. They were on Pulliam Street, right

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¹²³ The Breman Museum holds the minutes about which Joseph Cuba is speaking. See Mss 21, Ahavath Achim Congregation Records. There are also additional records from Ahavath Achim in Mss 14, Ahavath Achim Congregation Sisterhood Records and further documents and a large collection of photographs in the Joseph Cuba Family Papers, Mss 3.

¹²⁴ The *Torah* Ark in a synagogue is known in Hebrew as the ‘Aron Kodesh.’ It is generally a receptacle, or ornamental closets, which contains each synagogue’s *Torah* scrolls. When possible, it is located on the wall of the synagogue closest to Jerusalem.
down the road, five or six blocks. They were a little more Orthodox than AA was, I think, later on. Rabbi [Tobias] Geffen\textsuperscript{125} was their rabbi for many years.

\textbf{Ann:} What was he like? He was sort of a patriarch, wasn’t he?

\textbf{Joseph:} Right. [He] wore a long frock coat, beard. I always liked him as far as I can remember, the little dealings I had with him, and his son Sam, and Louis. I remember their son was a doctor. I think Sam’s a rabbi.\textsuperscript{126} I don’t know if he’s still in it. They had about three girls . . . Lottie [Geffen Simon].\textsuperscript{127} Family becomes embedded in the community.

\textbf{Ann:} True, especially if he remained the rabbi of the synagogue for those long, long years. What was it, 50 years or something?

\textbf{Joseph:} Who are we talking about?


\textbf{Joseph:} Rabbi Geffen. He was rabbi for a very long time because [Rabbi Harry H.] Epstein was rabbi for 50 years.

\textbf{Ann:} You started to tell me about Rabbi [Abraham] Hirmes. You said that eventually the congregation decided they needed an English-speaking rabbi . . .

\textbf{Joseph:} . . . for the young people . . .

\textbf{Ann:} . . . to keep the young people. So they brought in . . .

\textbf{Joseph:} . . . Mrs. Hirmes. Max used to be superintendent of the Sunday school.

\textbf{Ann:} He was superintendent of the Sunday school too?

\textbf{Joseph:} Yes, young fellow. He was as young as some of the students. Mrs. Hirmes was the more or less supervisor of it. Max was superintendent before Rabbi Hirmes came.

\textbf{Ann:} Was there anything Max didn’t do? Not much.

\textbf{Joseph:} What’s missing in the community? Max was an unusual person. I had two unusual people in my life: Max and Ida Pearle. Now talk about my children. I don’t want to be accused of leaving anybody out.

\textbf{Ann:} Anyway, they decided that the time had come.

\textsuperscript{125} Rabbi Tobias Geffen (1870-1970) was an Orthodox rabbi and leader of Congregation 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.

\textsuperscript{126} Rabbi Samuel Geffen (1907 - 2002) grew up in Atlanta, the son of Sara and Rabbi Tobias Geffen. He attended Boys’ High and Emory University. He was a concert violinist and lawyer before becoming a Rabbi. Then he received two degrees, Rabbi and Master of Hebrew Literature from the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City. He was the spiritual leader for over 40 years of the Jewish Center of Forest Hills West in New York.

\textsuperscript{127} Rabbi Geffen and his wife Sara had four sons and four daughters: Joel, Samuel, Louis, Abraham, Lottie, Bessie,
Joseph: They were building a new building.
Ann: Where?
Joseph: The building was being built before [Rabbi Harry H.] Epstein came.
Ann: Which building are we talking about here?
Joseph: Washington Street. They felt a building like that—modern, tall—got to have a new rabbi who could speak English, represent the congregation, [and] raise money.
Ann: There’s the trick. Was Mr. Dorfan still president?
Joseph: I think he was president when Rabbi Epstein was still here. Rabbi Epstein came, and they liked him. He spoke well. He was a good speaker and makes a good impression. He was just what they wanted.
Ann: How did they tell Rabbi Hirmes?
Joseph: One thing I remember as a kid. I was at services that Sunday morning when he made his last . . . he cried.
Ann: Did the congregation cry with him?
Joseph: I don’t know, but he cried.
Ann: Where did he go?
Joseph: What I know is that the problem is that there’s not that big a demand . . . getting away from a strict Yiddish-speaking way of life and didn’t want any Yiddish-speaking rabbi.
Ann: How old a man was he when they retired him? Was he real old or not really?
Joseph: They didn’t retire him. They fired him.
Ann: They fired him. They didn’t give him a pension?
Joseph: They didn’t have that kind of money. I felt bad for him.
Ann: Was he in his forties or was he in his sixties? Can you remember that?
Joseph: I think he must have been in his forties.
Ann: He wasn’t really old.
Joseph: He wasn’t old enough to be ready for retirement. I’m sure he didn’t want to retire.
Ann: I just wonder where he went from here.
Joseph: I felt sorry for him. He may have found some synagogue.
Ann: Small community, maybe. Tell me about Rabbi Epstein. So Rabbi Epstein came . . .

Annette, and Helen.
Joseph: When you compared [Rabbi] Epstein with [Rabbi] Hirmes, it was the difference between day and night, a different type of leadership. Epstein took over, and he ran the show right up until recently.

Ann: How about his wife [Reva Cheshesman Epstein]? Was she a much different person from Mrs. Hirmes?

Joseph: In respect that Mrs. Hirmes was involved in Sunday school, more so than Mrs. Epstein [who] is more reserved. Even Rabbi Epstein is more reserved than, for example, Goodman. Rabbi [Alvin] Goodman was maybe closer to the congregation, and more friendly to the congregation.

Ann: There was more distance between them as a couple, as individuals, and the rest of the congregation?

Joseph: I think so. They had their friends, but they had their respect for their work, did the job. Off the record.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

Ann: Was Rabbi Epstein a lot more learned? Was he more educated? Did he seem to you more educated, or to the congregation, more educated than had been Rabbi Hirmes? I know he was more Americanized, but was he also more in depth?

Joseph: He was very knowledgeable. He had been in yeshiva\textsuperscript{128} in Israel. He was a brilliant man.

Ann: He obviously must have done something right because he stayed around an awfully long time.

Joseph: He did a lot of things right.

Ann: You were president of that shul, and your brother was president of the shul. You’ve been intimately involved in it for many years now. What do you think were some of the real strengths of his rabbinate?

Joseph: I don’t think he would agree with this next statement. I think he was very fortunate in the lay people he had then. That’s half the battle. Without the lay people, you couldn’t get the job done. He had some very conscientious lay people like I.J. Paradies, Mike Ellman, people like that. They did the job for the congregation.

\textsuperscript{128} Yeshiva (Hebrew for “sitting”) is a Jewish educational institution for religious instruction that is equivalent to high school. It also refers to a Talmudic college for unmarried male students from their teenage years to their early twenties.
Ann: Who were willing not only to give their money but also to give their time?

Joseph: Most of them worshipped him.

Ann: Interesting.

Joseph: That’s what it takes. When he left, it was a lot of problems about whether it was time for him to go, or not time for him to go.

Ann: How old was he when he retired, or became an emeritus? What would you say, maybe 70, 75?

Joseph: I think about 75.

Ann: Your impressions of Rabbi [Arnold] Goodman? Are you pleased with the choice?

Joseph: I think that he’s the right man at the right time. Maybe earlier, maybe later, he might not have been. I was a member of the search committee. I’m going to brag about it.

Ann: Why not?

Joseph: Herb Karp was chairman of the committee. He made a very good chairman. He made a very big study. It’s not easy to find the right people for a job. He’s a very friendly . . . I think he’s a friendly person. [unintelligible 17:02], you can’t tell. He’s that way to me. He’s doing a good job, I think. He’s bringing people there, and . . .

Ann: You said to me a minute ago, when we took a break, the young people of today don’t go outside during the Torah reading like they did back in the old days.

Joseph: That’s right. You have a man like Epstein . . . I come to recognize his strengths and what he did for the congregation. It took a man with some big shoes to fill his position. I think Goodman’s been here for several years now, and I think he’s done very well.

Ann: Was it difficult to get him to leave a pulpit that he’d been in for many years up in, where was it, St. Paul [Minnesota], or someplace like that?

Joseph: He was glad to come down.

Ann: Was he?

Joseph: We had no problem getting him down. This was a big congregation, one of the biggest in the country.

Ann: Of the Conservative movement?

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129 Rabbi Goodman came to Atlanta from Minnesota where he served as rabbi of Adath Jeshurun Congregation in Minnetonka from 1966 to 1982.
Joseph: Yes. I can’t talk about [the other movements]. I figured he was glad to come down. How he got along up there, I don’t know.

Ann: He must have done well up there.

Joseph: Must have done okay

Ann: He was there for several years, and he was the head of the Rabbinic Association, wasn’t he, at that time?

Joseph: He was president of the Rabbinic[al] Assembly.¹³⁰

Ann: He has obviously a good standing with his peers, or he wouldn’t have been elected to that job.

Joseph: They have a special Torah cover for the president of the Rabbinic[al] Assembly, and it’s sitting in this cabinet in the ark, for the president of the synagogue. ‘When one president leaves it goes to the next president. It passes along. Very interesting.

Ann: When did AA affiliate with the Conservative movement?

Joseph: I think Nathan Blass was president at the time.

Ann: When would that have been?

Joseph: Dr. Nathan Blass. That would have been . . . I was president in 1955, 1956, and he was president about four years ahead of me.

Ann: It was already Conservative by the time you became president?

Joseph: Yes. Nathan had quite a bit to do with it becoming Conservative.

Ann: Why do you think that change was made?

Joseph: We had a situation where you had membership which was already Conservative. There were quite a few. They were all riding, and in other ways they were Conservative. It almost fell in place.

Ann: Had there been a good deal of talk, or had you already integrated the seating? Were women already sitting with the men before it became a Conservative shul?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: From that aspect, there was no change.

Joseph: Right.

Ann: At what time did that take . . . was it still segregated seating when you were bar mitzvahed, for instance? Or was it already integrated?

¹³⁰ The Rabbinical Assembly is the membership organization for Conservative rabbis.
Joseph: I don’t know when we had it. I should have brought my calendar.

<Interviewer and memoirist laughing>

Ann: I was just curious. Usually that is sort of a demarcation in a congregation, the point at which the women object to sitting by themselves up in a balcony.

Joseph: That wasn’t a problem. They didn’t mind sitting up there. There weren’t any seats for them. That’s what created the problem. You had the situation . . . in those days, we assigned seats. Every seat has a number, and every member has his assigned seat. As the congregation was growing, where are you going to put them? You put them downstairs. We marked off a certain part, put a rope around it, and that’s where they sat. Women won’t stay put. You know that better than I do. You got a little bit here, they’re going to go a little bit more. Before we knew it, [the] so-called mechitza\[superscript 131\] was gone.

Ann: They were sitting anywhere and everywhere?

Joseph: They were going to sit wherever they want to sit. How are you going to stop them?

<End Tape 3, Side 1, Part 1>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 1, Part 2>

Ann: How long was it until women really participated in the service?

Joseph: That was fairly recent. I think Rabbi Epstein’s daughter was the first one to be bat mitzvahed.\[superscript 132\] That was on a Friday night.

Ann: When, in the 1940’s or the 1950’s?

Joseph: I’d say 1940’s because I was president in 1955.

Ann: It was before you were president?

Joseph: Yes. After that, others wanted to do the same thing. If you do for the rabbi’s daughter, you got to do for someone else. I think it was a very good move.

Ann: Women now read from the Torah and get called for aliyahs.

Joseph: You should have been there Sunday morning. Sunday morning we had, not a girl, but a woman with three or four children. I don’t know the people. She was never bat mitzvahed. She

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\[superscript 131\] In Orthodox synagogues men and women do not sit together and are separated by a mechitza (Hebrew: partition or division). Men and women are generally not separated in most Conservative synagogues, although it is a permissible option within Conservative Judaism. Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism, consistent with their view that traditional religious law is not mandatory in modern times, do not use mechitzot in their synagogues.

\[superscript 132\] Hebrew for ‘daughter of commandment.’ A rite of passage for Jewish girls aged 12 years and one day according to her Hebrew birthday. Many girls have their bat mitzvah around age 13, the same as boys who have their bar mitzvah at that age. She is now duty bound to keep the commandments. Synagogue ceremonies are held for bat mitzvah girls in Reform and Conservative communities, but it has not won the universal approval of Orthodox.
decided she wants to be *bat mitzvah*. She came in, had a big long *tallit*. She came up there and she read from the *Torah*. She sang the *Haftorah*, and she made a speech.

**Ann:** She was a fountain pen.

**Joseph:** She was a fountain pen. She did a beautiful job. I can’t think of the girl’s name. You ought to come over sometime for a *bat mitzvah* for somebody you may know. They won’t stop the kids running around, not make so much noise. He [Rabbi Goodman] encourages it. Rabbi Epstein couldn’t stand it.

**Ann:** He wanted decorum. He wanted it proper.

**Joseph:** Yes. ‘Decorum’ was the word, all the time. I tell you, every New Year’s we had a noisy situation.

**Ann:** Are you ready for a little looser rein right now

**Joseph:** We got it.

**Ann:** Were you involved in the founding of the Epstein School, or the Solomon Schechter School?

**Joseph:** I was involved with the Hebrew Academy [now Atlanta Jewish Academy].

**Ann:** Really? Did your children go there?

**Joseph:** My son Philip was in the first graduating class. That was Ida Pearle. She wanted them to . . . most of the parents at that time, we couldn’t get them to send their children to the Academy.

**Ann:** How many students were there to begin with?

**Joseph:** About ten.

**Ann:** What year was it founded, do you remember? Was it back in the 1950’s or 1960’s?

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133 A prayer shawl fringed at each of the four corners in accordance with biblical law. The wearing of *tallit* at worship is obligatory only for married men, but it is customarily worn also by males of *bar mitzvah* age and older.

134 The *haftorah* is a series of selections from the books of *Nevi'im* (“Prophets”) of the Hebrew Bible (*Tanach*) that is publicly read in synagogue as part of Jewish religious practice. The *haftorah* reading follows the *Torah* reading on each Sabbath and on Jewish festivals and fast days.

135 During the service, the *bar*/*bat mitzvah* delivers a speech, usually including a thank you to parents, siblings and teachers, and the declarative, “Today I am a man/woman.” In the past, a frequent gift to the *bar or bat mitzvah* was a fountain pen, signifying achievement and responsibility. It became a common joke in the speech to instead state, “Today I am a fountain pen.” The joke became so well-known it was incorporated into stories, plays, and TV shows.

136 The Epstein School (Solomon Schechter School of Atlanta) is a private Jewish day school in the Atlanta area located in the City of Sandy Springs. In 1973, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein and the leaders of Ahavath Achim Synagogue wanted to create a Conservative Jewish day school. The first campus was housed at the Synagogue. In 1987 the school moved to Sandy Springs.

137 Atlanta Jewish Academy was incorporated in 2014, as a result of the merger of Greenfield Hebrew Academy
Joseph: It must have been back in the 1950’s.

Ann: Ida Pearle was one of the movers and shakers?

Joseph: As far as my household was concerned.

Ann: Did Philip have a choice as to where he was going to go to school? Did he even get asked?

Joseph: I have an idea that he was a little torn, but it worked out all right.

Ann: Did you have a lot to do with the founding of the school financially as well?

Joseph: I didn’t give it any large sums of money, because in those days I didn’t have it. I’ll tell you I was not one of the big contributors.

Ann: Who were some of the people who . . .

Joseph: The one who really worked for that school more than anybody I can think of right now is Dr. Irving Greenberg.

Ann: Did he have children that age or he was . . .

Joseph: Yes. His son was in the same graduating class.

Ann: Do you remember any of the other children who were there early on?

Joseph: I don’t know.

Ann: If there were just ten children, there must have been just a few people doing all the work.

Joseph: That’s right. It wasn’t easy to get . . . Nathan Blass was one of the workers, and his children went. He was interested in the Academy.

Ann: Where was it located first of all—the [Greenfield] Hebrew Academy138—when it first came into existence?

Joseph: I think it was located next to the Shearith Israel synagogue.

Ann: The University [Drive] area?

Joseph: Yes. I think that’s where it was.

Ann: Were most of the children who went there in the early years from AA or Shearith Israel or . . . those were the congregations that probably . . .

Joseph: . . . they were from both.

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138 The Katherine and Jacob Greenfield Hebrew Academy was the first Jewish day school in Atlanta, and was founded in 1953. In 2014 the Hebrew Academy and Atlanta Yeshiva High School merged into the Atlanta Jewish Academy.
Ann: No Temple children went there?
Joseph: I can’t say “none.” I can’t think of any. Maybe one or two sneaked in.
Ann: We started to talk about the relationship. I’m really quite interested in the relationship between the parts of the Jewish community in those early years and how they eventually did come together. The divisions today are much more blurred.
Joseph: I think that one of the things that helped bring them together—this is my opinion [and] I can give you other people who disagree with it—was the Mayfair Club. The Mayfair Club was organizing right in the middle.
Ann: What year was that?
Joseph: You’re asking me the dates?
Ann: Generally. I’m not asking specific dates.
Joseph: I don’t even remember when it burned down.\textsuperscript{139}
Ann: Was it in 1930’s or the 1940’s?
Joseph: It must have been in the 1940’s.
Ann: Where was it located?
Joseph: On Spring Street. You know the [Admiral] Benbow Inn?\textsuperscript{140}
Ann: Yes, Admiral Benbow.
Joseph: Admiral Benbow.
Ann: Behind Retail Credit there, Equifax?
Joseph: That’s where it was, in that area. It was more or less an in-between deal.
Ann: There were members of all the congregations who belonged?
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: Did the children intermingle more—and eventually some of them intermarry—within the Jewish community? I don’t mean with the non-Jewish community.
Joseph: I guess you could say they did that. Sure.
Ann: How long did the Mayfair Club last?
Joseph: I guess it must have been in business about 15 years in all.

\textsuperscript{139} Fire destroyed the Mayfair Club on December 4, 1964.
\textsuperscript{140} The Admiral Benbow Inn was a motel located at 1470 Spring Street NW in midtown Atlanta. Currently it is known as Spring House, and serves as a dormitory for SCAD (Savannah College of Art & Design) just a few blocks away. (2015)
Ann: You think that the Holocaust and all that went on in Europe in the 1930’s and the 1940’s also made a significant impact in jelling the community as a community?

Joseph: It could have had some, I think.

Ann: Do you remember . . .

Joseph: . . . the thing is during the war . . . if you come back to my dates that you’re so interested in . . . the Progressive Club opened up in 1941. The new one.

Ann: The one that was on Tenth [Street] and . . .

Joseph: . . . it was on Pryor Street.

Ann: . . . no, that wasn’t the new one though?

Joseph: No, the one that was on Pryor Street was the old one, and moved into the new one on Techwood Drive and Tenth [Street]. They had 30 acres there. We had a big softball field and could have a gym there. We were supposed to have had a gymnasium. They just never built the gymnasium. I think they might still be in business if it had a gymnasium. That’s just my opinion. It was a big club. You’ve got to see it.

Ann: The club, the building is still there. That’s what’s used by Ted Turner for TBS [Turner Broadcasting System].

Joseph: Yes. He bought it. First we sold off some land. They built the one on Moore’s Mill [Road]. It didn’t last too long. I don’t know why. The Techwood Drive facility was a real nice facility . . . big, beautiful ballroom. It didn’t last. I was surprised. It had a big swimming pool, tennis courts. If it was in business today, it would do well.

Ann: I’m still trying to find out why you think that those divisions existed, and why they no longer are so obvious. Was it because children intermarried? I think maybe that might have . . .

Joseph: In the first place, the Orthodox Jews had difficulty getting into the Standard Club.

Ann: Were they snobs? The Temple crowd?

Joseph: You said that, not me.

Ann: No, seriously. No, was that what it . . .

Joseph: . . . it depends on whether you’re on the outside or the inside.

Ann: If you were on the outside, did you think they were snubbing you?

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Joseph: I didn’t think they were snobs because I wasn’t interested. I think they could have been accused of being a little snobbish. I couldn’t put my finger on which ones, but . . .

Ann: . . . I’m not asking you to point a finger. In turn, you were a member of the Progressive Club. Were you being snobs toward the Sephardim?

Joseph: As far as I’m concerned, I didn’t care if they [let] them in.

Ann: You personally?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Don’t you think maybe some of the other members probably were?

Joseph: Some of them were snobs. I can’t deny that.

Ann: They maybe thought that those other folks weren’t good enough?

Joseph: They had their reasons I guess.

Ann: Were there many refugees who came to Atlanta that got away from Europe? Do you remember many of them or not really very many settling here?

Joseph: I’ll tell you one thing. Every Saturday morning at synagogue . . . see, everything happens at synagogue. They go back to their religion. Before the service was over, Rabbi Epstein asked all the Russians to stand up.

Ann: The Russians?

Joseph: Yes, [he asked] the Russians to stand up.

Ann: You’re talking about now.

Joseph: Now.

Ann: I was talking about from the World War II period.

Joseph: I’m talking about now. Which I think is a nice gesture.

Ann: All right. We’ll go into that because you brought it up. Are there a lot of Russian Jews who are members of AA now?

Joseph: Some are members of the AA, or they come to services.

Ann: They do come?

Joseph: Yes. “Stand up.” They give them *aliyahs*, which I think is nice. They recognize them. There is a *kiddush*™ after the service . . . encourage members to talk to them. You see them standing around in bunches.

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™ There is a Halachic principle known as *En Kiddush Ela Be’makom Se’uda*, which means one does not fulfill the obligation of *Kiddush* on *Shabbat* unless *Kiddush* is recited in the context of a meal. In many synagogues congregants gather for *Kiddush* reception after the Friday night or Saturday morning service to recite the blessing.
Ann: Can they communicate easily, or not really? Have most of them studied some English?
Joseph: Some have, some haven’t.
Ann: Do any of them speak Yiddish?
Joseph: No.
Ann: That’s what I wondered. I had a feeling it was gone.
Joseph: You speak Yiddish?
Ann: I just understand a little bit. I’m just curious how the communications are.
Joseph: Come to services. You’ll have a chance to talk to them, and you can have an answer.
I’m drumming up business.
Ann: There you are. That’s why Rabbi Goodman has such a good crowd. Since we’re talking about synagogue, another thing I was going to ask you about . . . I wanted to ask you about the chazzans.\(^{143}\) We talked about the rabbis. I know that AA had a long-time chazzan in Cantor [Joseph] Schwartzman.\(^{144}\) Was that his name?
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: You’ve got to remember him.
Joseph: Sure I remember Cantor Schwartzman. I was president when he was there.
Ann: What was he like? Did he have a gorgeous voice?
Joseph: He’d passed his heyday.
Ann: By the time he came?
Joseph: Yes. He was more of a tenor, but he was all grayed out.
Ann: How long was he here? Was he good with the kids? Did he teach the children for their bar mitzvahs? Was that one of his jobs or not?
Joseph: I don’t remember.
Ann: You don’t remember? Then Isaac Goodfriend\(^{145}\) came.

\(^{143}\) The *chazzan* (cantor) is the official in charge of music or chants and leads liturgical prayer and chanting in the synagogue.

\(^{144}\) Cantor Joseph Schwartzman (1902 – 1969) joined the clergy at Ahavath Achim in Atlanta in 1940 where he served until his retirement in 1966. Cantor Schwartzman’s career began at the age of eight when he sang as soloist in the male synagogue choir of Bender, Bassarabia, Russia. By the age of 17 he was officiating High Holy Day services. He began his American career in Hartford Connecticut, but later worked at synagogues in New York in Brooklyn and the Bronx, and in Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He came to the attention of Hyman Jacobs of Atlanta in 1940 at a Zionist Organization of America convention in Pittsburgh. He was eventually engaged to come to the AA.

\(^{145}\) Cantor Isaac Goodfriend (1924 – 2009) served at Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta from 1966 until his retirement in 1995 as Cantor Emeritus. Cantor Goodfriend was born into a Chassidic family in Poland. At the age
Joseph: Cantor Goodfriend was an unusual individual . . . friendly, warm. He had a good voice.

An ordinary expression is, “A chazzan is a naar.”

Ann: Is that ‘fool?’ A ‘naar’ is a fool.

Joseph: Yes. Had you ever heard that expression?

Ann: No, I really haven’t, but go ahead.

Joseph: Except this one’s not a naar.

Ann: Not by a long stretch of the imagination.

Joseph: We’ve had different experiences with chazzans. We had one young man here that all the women were crazy about. What was his name, Landau? When we were on Washington Street, the bimah was in the middle, and the chazzan would sing in the middle. You had a chance to see the chazzan being up in front. I think we’re lucky having a team like we have. He’s a good friend, good man. [Rabbi Marvin] Richardson\textsuperscript{146} is leaving.

Ann: Where is he going?

Joseph: On \textit{aliyah}\textsuperscript{147} to Israel. I don’t know why. We’re all crazy about him. We had a reception for him a couple of weeks ago. The place was packed.

Ann: They don’t have enough rabbis in Israel?

Joseph: To each his own. He can’t practice there.

Ann: That’s true. He’s a Conservative rabbi.

Joseph: That’s right. He’s \textit{tref}.

Ann: That’s awful. That’s unfair. What’s he going to do? Has he said?

Joseph: He’s going to Israel. Isn’t that funny how a man can be really loved but [unintelligible 16:19] his congregation. Rabbi Goodman doesn’t resent him. Some other rabbis resent him.

Ann: Rabbi Goodman is probably secure in himself. He knows himself. He knows he’s well liked.

\textsuperscript{146} Rabbi Marvin Richardson (1952 - 2014) served as Assistant Rabbi at Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta for six years. He moved to Israel from Atlanta where he worked with educational organizations sponsoring programs for American students in Israel. In 1996 he returned to the U.S. to accept a position as Associate Rabbi at the East Brunswick Jewish Center in New Jersey where he served for six years. From 2002 to 2013 he was the rabbi of Jericho Jewish Center in New York. He received his undergraduate degree in Physiological Psychology from Johns Hopkins University, and his M.A. in History and Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Aliyah} (Hebrew: “ascent”) is the immigration of Jews to Israel. It is one of the most basic tenets of Zionism.
Joseph: He’s not worried by it. I’d like to see him stay. I guess we tried.

Ann: Do you think that the role that Isaac Goodfriend has played nationally and internationally in being one of the leaders of the Holocaust survivors groups has been to the benefit of AA?

Joseph: I don’t think it’s . .

Ann: . . does it not really affect it one way or the other?

Joseph: It doesn’t affect it.

Ann: What is your own feeling about the emphasis on remembering the Holocaust? Do you think there’s too much emphasis put on that?

Joseph: I don’t think you can put too much emphasis on it. The [Ku Klux] Klan says it never took place, and the Klan can’t be wrong.

Ann: Of course not. J.B. Stoner, and friends.

Joseph: How do you put too much emphasis on a horrible thing like that? The thing I’m upset about is the fact that this country didn’t do anything about it. We worry about [Nelson] Mandela [unintelligible 18:00]. What happened when the Holocaust was going on?

Ann: Not as an excuse, but do you think maybe part of the reason that the problems were ignored—or what was going on certainly in the 1930’s, the beginnings of the persecution—was because of the [Great] Depression in this country and the fact that people were more concerned with making a living and putting food on the table?

Joseph: That’s as good excuse as any, I guess.

148 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 the 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.

149 Jesse Benjamin “J.B.” Stoner (1924 – 2005) was an American segregationalist convicted in 1980 of the 1958 bombing of the Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. He was the founder, and long-time chairman of the National States’ Rights Party, and the publisher of its newsletter, The Thunderbolt. Stoner unsuccessfully attempted to run for several political offices in order to promote his white supremacist agenda.

150 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918 – 2013) was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician and philanthropist who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was South Africa’s first black chief executive, and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election. Mandela served as President of the African National Congress party from 1991 to 1997. In 1962, he was arrested and convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the state, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Mandela served 27 years in prison. An international campaign lobbied for his release, which was granted in 1990 amid escalating civil strife.

151 The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930’s or early 1940’s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.
Ann: I’ve tried to rationalize it myself. I don’t know why.

Joseph: I don’t think that’s it. That doesn’t excuse them. That doesn’t excuse Franklin Delano Roosevelt.¹⁵² I never particularly had any real feelings for him.

Ann: Did you at the time?

Joseph: I never did care for him. I felt [that] about some of his social programs. Worrying about social programs and they were over there killing people in the streets. That’s a shame. He’s the president of a country. He’s supposed to know what’s going on. I think he did. I’m getting involved in politics.

Ann: I think it’s of interest, though. Why not?

Joseph: Why didn’t he intercept?

Ann: Why didn’t he let people in?

Joseph: There were articles in the paper, pictures of the people and kids picking up cigarette butts off the street. I remember that.

Ann: Was there no one in this country who was speaking out and saying, “Why aren’t we doing these things?”

Joseph: I don’t remember.

Ann: Where was the Jewish community?

Joseph: Good question.

Ann: Why weren’t they speaking out themselves? Were they afraid?

Joseph: Did they know?

Ann: If the picture was in the paper and you saw it . . .

Joseph: . . . if they didn’t know, why didn’t they know?

Ann: There was a youth aliyah movement in the 1930’s, to save the children. Somebody obviously knew that there was persecution going on . . . big time persecution.

Joseph: I don’t think they knew about the gas chambers.

Ann: That wasn’t until a little bit later. That was in the 1940’s. That was after the war began.

Joseph: If it wasn’t for Pearl Harbor,¹⁵³ we may have never gone to war.

¹⁵² Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882 – 1945) was the 32nd 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 World War II. He was a Democrat.

¹⁵³ Pearl Harbor is located on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, west of Honolulu. Much of the harbor and surrounding lands is a United States Navy deep-water naval base. It is also the headquarters of the United States Pacific Fleet.
Ann: You may be right.

Joseph: The Nazis . . . another 6,000,000 Jews killed, then Hitler would have succeeded.

Ann: What do you think the future of Jewish life is in the United States?

Joseph: I thought you were going to say Germany.

Ann: No. Really, I’m more concerned about here. What do you see? You’ve got perspective on it, more so than a lot of people. Are you hopeful?

Joseph: I’m hopeful. I’m hopeful that the Americans are made of different material than Germans. Yet when they put a man like [David] Duke in Congress . . . David Duke.154 How does he get into Congress? [unintelligible 21:53].

Ann: Do you think that the Jewish community in the United States is going to survive, or are we going to fade away?

Joseph: I think we’re going to survive.

Ann: Will it be because of the fabrenta,155 because of the Orthodox? There’s such a movement back to real Orthodoxy. You think it will be because of them that Judaism survives or because it conforms to more modern ways? Which way would you see it?

Joseph: I think it’s going to go down a Conservative path. I just don’t believe it’s going to go all the way back to Orthodoxy. I’m not satisfied with the ultra-Reform, because if you have a religion, you ought to have one.

Ann: I don’t think there are many ultra-Reform even anymore.

Joseph: I remember coming back on a plane with Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild.156 We had been to New York to attend the funeral of Sidney and Ellen Wien . . . and their daughter. They had a plane crash157 . . . [unintelligible 23:27].

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154 David Ernest Duke (born 1950) is an American white nationalist, antisemitic, conspiracy theorist, far-right 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 is a felon, having pleaded guilty to defrauding supporters by falsely claiming to have no money and being in danger of losing his home in order to solicit emergency donations. At the time, Duke was financially secure, and used the donations for recreational gambling.

155 Translated literally from Yiddish as ‘red hot,’ fabrenta means passionate, as in ‘fabrenta Zionists.’

156 Rabbi Jacob Rothschild 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.

157 On June 3, 1962 an Air France Boeing 707 crashed on takeoff from Orly Field near Paris. It was a charter flight carrying many of Atlanta’s civic and cultural leaders returning from a museum tour of Europe sponsored by the Atlanta Art Association. Only two flight attendants sitting in the back of the plane survived. Among the deceased
Ann: That was about 1962, back in there?

Joseph: Yes. I was very friendly with Sidney and Ellen . . . wonderful people. He was in my office the day before he left. He asked me, he says, “I want you to be my executor, and I want to give you all the information.” I said, “Sidney, get the hell out of here. You’re crazy. You’re coming back.” He said, “You never know.” I said, “You’re coming back.”

Joseph: He was right. He didn’t come back. I was up to the funeral. Coming back I was sitting next to Rabbi Rothschild. We got to talking about synagogue and movements, and naturally asked if I read . . . I said, “Why don’t you have bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs in your service?” He said, “As long as I’m rabbi of that congregation, there’ll never be a bar mitzvah in the service.” Never gave any reason why.

Ann: Didn’t say why, just said there wouldn’t be.

Joseph: He didn’t owe me any reason. I wasn’t a member.

Ann: He could have given one anyway. He was adamant.

Joseph: He was adamant. That was his privilege. Maybe if we had played a golf game . . . don’t quote me on that.

Ann: That’s a joke and everybody will know it.

Joseph: I liked Rabbi Rothschild, in spite of the fact that he was a Reform rabbi. I think he was a fine, sincere person. I think his wife . . .

Ann: . . . Janice . . . 158

Joseph: . . . Janice [Oettenger Rothschild Blumberg]. She made his [unintelligible 1:15].

Ann: He just died recently, just a few months ago.159

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158 Janice 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. She 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 2012 she returned to Atlanta to live.

159 They are talking here about David Blumberg (1911 - 1989), who married Janice Rothschild in 1975. He was a retired insurance agent who served as president of B’nai B’rith International from 1971 to 1978. He also was a national board member of Israel Bonds, and served as co-chairman of the World Conference of Jewish Organizations, and president of the National Association of Life Underwriters. From 1966 to 1972 he served on the Knoxville City Council in Tennessee. In 1973 Blumberg was recognized by the National Conference of Christians...
Joseph: That’s all she needed.

Ann: They were married for several years.

Joseph: They were both . . . to have matches like that, you’re lucky.

Ann: Do you remember the time—obviously you remember—when Rabbi Rothschild was involved in the Civil Rights Movement,\textsuperscript{160} in the support of black rights, supporting Dr. [Martin Luther] King,\textsuperscript{161} and all of that. What side were you on in that, or were you on the fence?

Joseph: I wouldn’t know how to describe it. I wasn’t a real follower of the movement. The popular thing for me to say now is that I was a supporter.

Ann: That’s not necessarily what we’re looking for. We’re looking for the truth.

Joseph: I may have felt like you ought to spend more time worrying about Jews.

Ann: That’s a legitimate response. Did you feel any particular affinity for the problems of the black people in this country because of your Jewishness and because Jews were put upon here and in other places? Or was that not really a . . .

Joseph: I don’t know. I really felt like . . . you see, I lived on Washington Street. All I remember is second base and third base. It was a nice street. In the alley, if I wanted to go to the back of the house, I had to go through the alley. That’s where the blacks, \textit{schwarzes},\textsuperscript{162} lived.

Ann: In the alley?

Joseph: In the alley. They had tumbledown shacks. They had these big old iron buckets full of

\textsuperscript{160} The American Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them. The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Noted legislative achievements during this phase of the Civil Rights Movement were passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

\textsuperscript{161} Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) is best known for his role as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement and the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs. A Baptist minister, King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, in 1962, and organized nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, that attracted national attention following television news coverage of the brutal police response. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. On October 14, 1964, King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. In 1965, he and the SCLC helped to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches and the following year, he took the movement north to Chicago to work on segregated housing. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many U.S. cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and as a U.S. federal holiday in 1986.
charcoal to heat the water to wash the clothes. Most of them took in washing for the neighborhood. They were in our back yard, so to speak. It was a horrible existence.

Ann: They had sheds, lean-to’s?

Joseph: No, they were shacks. They were maybe one or two room houses, if you want to call them that. They were really shacks.163

Ann: They lived right in close proximity?

Joseph: They lived in the backyard. You had a backyard and you had an alley, where they lived. That was routine. That was not something different. Most of them lived that way. They had other streets where they lived in houses on the street.

Ann: What year are we talking here? We’re talking in the 1930’s?

Joseph: The 1930’s.

Ann: When do you think there was a change in the attitude of the black person?

Joseph: I think that it was when they marched, when the march came through . . . it was the militant march . . . Kennedy.

Ann: Which one?

Joseph: [President John F.] Kennedy.164 President Kennedy approved the march,165 and the crowds from Birmingham [Alabama]. No one could interfere. I think that gave them more courage, the other [unintelligible 5:39]. There was something coming. It had to come sooner or later. It was a long time getting here. I hope it doesn’t go too far the other way.

Ann: Do you see that as a possibility?

Joseph: I think that some of these people talk too much, on both sides. These things have to be worked out together . . .

Ann: . . . rather than taking extreme positions.

Joseph: Yes. We had an extreme position this past week, I thought.

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162 Yiddish slang for ‘black people.’
163 The Breman Museum holds images of this slum area at JCF 485.054 to JCF 485.069.
164 Commonly known as ‘JFK,’ John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the 35th President of the U.S., serving from 1961 until November 22, 1963 when he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. He was a Democrat.
165 His may be speaking here about the 1963 March on Washington, one of the largest political rallies for human rights in United States history and called for civil and economic rights for African Americans. It took place in Washington, D.C. Thousands of Americans from around the country headed to Washington on Tuesday August 27, 1963. On Wednesday, August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, delivered his historic “I Have a Dream” speech in which he called for an end to racism. The march is credited with helping to pass the Civil Rights Act (1964) and preceded the Selma Voting Rights Movement which led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act (1965).
Ann: You’re talking about Nelson Mandela and those who spoke for him, and he who spoke for himself and his own causes.

Joseph: He was in jail for 28 years and that’s a long time. A couple days before that I saw on TV where a man was in jail for 28 years for a crime he didn’t commit. They let him go, finally, after 28 years. It’s horrible for anybody to be in jail that long, but to be there when you shouldn’t be there? I guess you’d have to live with it. The Jews were in the same position almost as the blacks. I’m glad to see it coming around like it is. Got to come.

Ann: When you say the Jews were in the same position, you’re talking that they were not given full rights as citizens?

Joseph: That’s right, in Germany. Russia never gave the Jews any rights. We never even got full rights in Egypt.

<memoirst and interview laugh>

Ann: Got the right to build pyramids.

Joseph: We weren’t supposed to have anything left. I guess the Jews did all right for themselves, in spite of everything.

Ann: What do you attribute that to? How come Jews keep bouncing back?

Joseph: They won’t quit. They won’t give up.

Ann: Is that unique to us?

Joseph: I think so. It must be.

Ann: Does it have something to do with our belief in God?

Joseph: I’d like to think that. It all started in the Garden [of Eden]. Do you know if Judaism started in the Garden?

Ann: I don’t know. I’m listening to you.

Joseph: I wish I knew. Something has to give them the strength to go on, like when they call on these kids, ‘Jews by choice.’ Whoever heard of anybody choosing Judaism?

Ann: Ruth did, in the Bible.

Joseph: Where did it get her? What did it get her?

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166 The *Book of Ruth* is a book of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. Ruth married into a Hebrew family and is celebrated as a convert to Judaism who accepted the God of the Israelites as her God and the Israelite people as her own. In *Ruth* 1:16 and 17, she tells Naomi, her Israelite mother-in-law, “Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” Ruth married Boaz and they had a son, named Obed. The genealogy in the book explains how Ruth became the great-grandmother of
Ann: What did it get her? It got her Boaz.

Joseph: That was an accomplishment.

Ann: We’ve been really serious here. Let me see if I can kind of turn this a bit. I had written myself a note here . . . I had thought about asking you about the Civil Rights Movement. Did many people pull their children out of school in those years? Do you remember a lot of that?

Joseph: The private school became popular as a result of the Civil Rights Movement.

Ann: Was that when the Hebrew Academy was founded, in those years? Or it was founded before?

Joseph: It was founded a little before. No, the Hebrew Academy was a legitimate effort to be a good Jewish education for the children.

Ann: Did it become more popular?

Joseph: I can’t say to you that the Civil Rights Movement didn’t help it.

Ann: That’s what I wondered.

Joseph: It did, yes. In fact, I had a difference of opinion with the administration over there. I felt like they wanted to give it a push, try to make the school succeed. If they take some of the kids in public schools that want to leave and haven’t all the Hebrew background that we think they ought to have. If they got enough, put them in special classes . . .

Ann: . . . like remedial Hebrew.

Joseph: English is going to be the same, arithmetic is going to be the same, and history is going to be the same. Except that you’ll have more history, a different kind. Why not do the same thing with Hebrew—a remedial class? They won’t become Hebrew scholars, but they’ll know a lot more Hebrew by going that way than they will if they don’t go.

Ann: That’s true.

Joseph: I lost out. How can I lose out on an argument like that? [It was] very discouraging.

Ann: Were there many others who were speaking along those lines with you? Or were you a lone voice there?

Joseph: I was a lone voice. I must have been a lone voice. I didn’t get very far. I still think I was right.

Ann: Who was the first headmaster or head of that school, the Hebrew Academy? Do you remember? It must have been a rabbi, I guess.

David. The book is held in esteem by many who are Jews by Choice.
Joseph: I don’t remember. Was it [Irving] Fried?\(^{167}\)
Ann: You don’t remember any more?
Joseph: I think it was Fried. That’s a good name, anyhow.
Ann: Why not. Is that the same Friedman who was at Shearith Israel later?
Joseph: No.
Ann: Or a different man? Let’s see. I started to ask you about the founding of the Epstein School, the Solomon Schechter School, at AA.
Joseph: I wasn’t involved in that. Arthur Goldstein, I think, was involved in it. At that time, I wasn’t sure we needed another day school. I wasn’t sure we needed it. I guess I was wrong. I’m ready to admit it. At that time, I thought I was right. I make a mistake sometimes by saying what I think, but I think they have a pretty good school.
Ann: Certainly served a need in the community, I guess.
Joseph: At that time, I wasn’t sure we needed it. I’m still not sure we needed it at that time. Today it’s fine. How many day schools are we going to have?
Ann: There are going to be several.
Joseph: As long as we can keep them going, I think they’re wonderful.
Ann: Did your grandchildren . . . no, your grandchildren haven’t participated in them have they?
Joseph: No.
Ann: Do you have other grandchildren besides the two little girls, Michelle and Jennifer? Do the boys have children?
Joseph: My son Philip married a girl with two girls.
Ann: Those are step-children?
Joseph: Yes. Two girls.
Ann: Is Larry married?
Joseph: No, Larry’s out in California. He’s not married. He’s not following my advice.
Ann: How old is he?
Joseph: Larry must be 41.
Ann: He’s still a single, eligible bachelor.

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\(^{167}\) Dr. Irving Fried served as Director of the Hebrew Academy of Atlanta until 1959 when he took a position at the then newly formed Columbus Torah Academy in Columbus, Ohio.
Joseph: I’m not sure he’s 41, 39. He’s eligible.
Ann: How often does he get home?
Joseph: He was home for Pesach.\footnote{Passover (Hebrew: Pesach) is 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 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 matzot 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.} 168
Ann: You just saw him not too long ago?
Joseph: Yes. He calls every time I turn around. I’m glad.
Ann: That’s great.
Joseph: He’ll be home for the next Passover.
Ann: Do you ever go out to California to see him?
Joseph: Once Ida Pearle and I went out there.
Ann: That’s been a while.
Joseph: Yes, but I’m not interested in traveling alone.
Ann: Maybe one of the kids will go with you.
Ann: If you play your cards right. Promise a trip to Disney World,\footnote{Disney World is in Florida, so Ann may have meant to say “Disneyland,” instead. Disneyland Park (originally Disneyland) is the first of two theme parks built at the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, California and opened in 1955. It is the only Disney theme park designed and built under the direct supervision of cartoonist, animator, voice actor, and film producer Walt Disney.} or something like that.
Joseph: Little Michelle—that’s the youngest—is at Camp Barney Medintz. She sent me a postcard and says it’s nice. First year at Medintz. She went to . . .
Ann: . . . at the [Jewish Community Center].\footnote{The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta is the primary Jewish community center in Atlanta. It is located in Dunwoody, north of the city, and offers family-centric programs and events with programs, events, and classes that enrich the quality of family life. Their programs include preschool, camping, fitness and sports, Jewish life and learning, arts and culture and social and educational programs. It was named in honor of Bernard Marcus, one of the co-founders of Home Depot, who gave a major gift to the capital campaign. It was preceded by the Atlanta Jewish Community Center (AJCC) on Peachtree Road Midtown.}
Joseph: Yes. Jennifer has grown old enough to have a driver’s license. She drives a car. She got a job. I thought she was going back to Camp Barney Medintz. She’s been there for several years. Got a job working at Lettuce Surprise You—the restaurant. A friend of hers got a job there, so
she decided she wanted a job there. Besides, she didn’t want to go back to any camp. Jennifer is 18. She’s slinging hash.171

Ann: Did you ever sling hash? That was a job you never had?

Joseph: I was [unintelligible 16:26]. I was officer in charge of the mess in the army.

Ann: You told me that. I forgot. I should have remembered.

Joseph: If you don’t think that’s slinging hash . . .

Ann: . . . probably that SOS172 stuff too, for breakfast . . . that nasty looking stuff.

Joseph: That’s an old expression, ‘slinging hash.’ At least I remembered it.

Ann: What was your favorite job? Favorite thing of all the jobs you had? Did you like when you had your own firm the best?

Joseph: Yes. Accounting. Tax work.

Ann: You like the challenge?

Joseph: Yes. I liked to argue with the revenue agents. They got to argue.

Ann: You must have done well. You must have won the arguments, or you wouldn’t have enjoyed them. Did you win more than you lost?

Joseph: I think I had my share of victories.

Ann: Good.

Joseph: [unintelligible 17:42] roll, which is less. In compromise, if you get a good settlement, you’ve won I think. I guess that was a good experience.

Ann: How did you and Max work together? Did he do a certain part of the business and you did something else? Did he do client relations and you do most of the real work, or did you share both things, or . . .

Joseph: We shared the whole responsibility of the office. He had his clients and I had mine. As we grew, we took in more clients, and we needed people.

Ann: Partners.

Joseph: Partners and . . .

Ann: . . . or associates.

Joseph: He was popular with certain clients in one department and I was in another department. We got along pretty good. We were on speaking terms.

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171 An American idiomatic expression meaning ‘working in a restaurant.’
172 ‘SOS’ is short for ‘shit on a shingle,’ a classic American military dish made with creamed chipped beef on toast.
Ann: That’s good.

Joseph: He was great.

Ann: What were his strengths as compared to you, and what were his weaknesses?

Joseph: Compared to me, he had all kinds of strength. He was just great. He was smart . . .

Ann: . . . you’re smart.

Joseph: . . . sharp. I don’t know.


Joseph: That’s for the other people to say. He was a great fellow. He was always my friend and all that, and a great fellow.

Ann: Did you ever have any real bad arguments?

Joseph: I never walked out of the office, because I was afraid he wouldn’t let me back in.

Ann: Did you have some disagreements?

Joseph: You don’t have a successful practice if you don’t have some disagreements. Nothing major. We’d discuss it, fence, and he’d agree with me or disagree with me.

Ann: Nobody always got their way. Was it usually a compromise?

Joseph: Compromised deal.

Ann: You saw most things alike?

Joseph: I think we did. The responsibilities were there, and we both recognized them.

<End Tape 3, Side 2, Part 1>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 2, Part 2>

Ann: Did your sisters ever work?

Joseph: My sisters worked all the time.

Ann: Even after they were married?

Joseph: Two of them are married. Two of them never got married. My sister Rae, who was the oldest in the family, went to work even while she was in high school. Same old story. We all went to Commercial [High School].

Ann: Was she taking bookkeeping too?

Joseph: She was a crackerjack. She passed the CPA\textsuperscript{173} exam.

Ann: Were there women CPA’s?

Joseph: She was one.

\textsuperscript{173} Certified Public Accountant.
Ann: Did she work for you?
Joseph: Yes. She had clients, too. Before she worked for us she worked for different companies in Atlanta.
Ann: Do you remember the names of any of them?
Joseph: One of them was Loeb-Apte Company. A-P-T.
Ann: Was it a Jewish firm? Loeb-Apte?
Joseph: Yes. They were farmers.
Ann: They were from the Temple.
Joseph: Loeb-Apte.
Ann: What kind of a business?
Joseph: Food brokers on a street called Produce Row which is right there where the [Atlanta] Underground was ... Produce Row. She worked there for a few years. Then she came and worked for us. She did a great job, and passed the CPA exam. My sister Minnie came and worked for us, but she worked for the government for a long time.
Ann: What department?
Joseph: Veterans Administration.
Ann: Did she do bookkeeping work, too?
Joseph: More stenographic. Minnie also passed the bar.
Ann: She was an attorney? Did she ever practice law?
Joseph: Most of the time. Old business law [unintelligible 2:18].
Ann: She used it as a background for the accounting?
Joseph: Yes. Max and I both passed it.
Ann: Like you all did.

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174 This was the Loeb-Apte Produce Co. located at 15 Produce Row in Atlanta founded by Day J. Apte and J.C. Loeb.
175 Produce Row was an area in downtown Atlanta where Underground Atlanta is now located. It was the heart of the wholesale food market for the South through the early twentieth century.
176 Underground Atlanta is a shopping and entertainment district in the Five Points district of Atlanta. During the 1920's, construction of concrete viaducts intended to relieve traffic congestion in downtown Atlanta elevated the street system one level. Merchants moved their operations to the second floor of their buildings, leaving the old fronts for storage and service. As Atlanta continued to grow above the viaducts, the original street level was raised by one and a half stories, and a five-block area was completely covered up. The lower facades of historic buildings constructed during the city's post-Civil War Reconstruction Era boom remained relatively untouched until the area was rediscovered and opened as a tourist attraction in 1969.
177 The United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) operates and administers hospitals for Americans that have served in the active military, naval or air service and separated under any condition other than dishonorable.
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: Was your mother living when any of this was going on? Did she live long enough to see the three of you, really, as such a success?
Joseph: Yes.
Ann: That had to be very gratifying.
Joseph: She died in 1938.
Ann: You founded your firm in what year?
Joseph: I came back from the army in 1945. We were already practicing. In fact, [when] I came back from the army, Western Georgia had a . . . I hadn’t taken the CPA exam. I hadn’t gotten around to taking it. Too busy to take it. I came back from the army. I decided I’d go ahead and take the exam. I figured if I’m going to take the exam and I’ve been away from it for four or five years, I’d better review. I took a review course at Georgia Tech. I took the exam, and I passed it. Max hadn’t taken the exam either. Since I passed it, he decided he’d better take it.
Ann: He couldn’t be outdone.
Joseph: That’s the kind of relationship we had. He passed it. We both passed it. Rae passed it.
[unintelligible 4:05] She’s the oldest and she had . . .
Ann: . . . good for her.
Joseph: That was an interesting experience, a tough exam.
Ann: That’s unusual for somebody who’s been away from it as long as you were to be able to jump right in the first time out.
Joseph: I think that review course helped me a whole lot.
Ann: Plus your own motivation.
Joseph: What choice did I have? I wasn’t going to let Max do it first.
Ann: It’s tough to be your brother. I can see that. Did you crack jokes in the office all the time, too? I bet you had your own personal secretary for many years. Did you keep the same person for a long time?
Joseph: Yes, but I had several. I should mention an interesting experience I had as I would see these machines—electric adding machines, typewriters, computers, and all that. It reminds me of one day I came across an IBM electric typewriter. We didn’t have any electric typewriters at the office. We had long carriage manual machines to do those big reports on. We had them. Mrs. O’Kelly [sp], she banged away on that old thing. I picked up one, IBM electric typewriter, and I
bring it to the office. Mrs. O’Kelly—she’d been with me for a couple years, elderly woman—she sees that electric typewriter. She says, “I’m not going to use it! I’m not going to use it! I like my typewriter. I’m not going to change.” I said, “Mrs. O’Kelly, I didn’t bring this up here for you. You do a great job on your manual typewriter. Why would you want to change? I just thought maybe some of these young people might like to try it.” Two days later I couldn’t get her away from it.

Ann: Smart.

Joseph: Not smart, just common sense.

Ann: You knew how to deal with people.

Joseph: Yes. Mrs. O’Kelly. Her last days were over here at the old Hebrew Orphans’ Home which was . . .

Ann: . . . or really Our Lady of Perpetual Help, or whatever it is?

Joseph: . . . yes. I went to see her a few times. . . sad . . . nice person.

Ann: What else did you think about that I haven’t talked about? There’s so much stuff. What do you think about the growth of the city, the way it’s changed? You’ve seen it . . .

Joseph: I think it’s wonderful.

Ann: . . . all these years.

Joseph: Wonderful.

Ann: You like it?

Joseph: I think it’s because of the leadership. We’ve been very fortunate to have competent leadership. We had a lot of competent professionals like Edward Kahn, who I think did a great deal for this community. He’s forgotten.

Ann: Not totally.

Joseph: In a way.

Ann: He came here with the [Jewish Educational] Alliance. That was his first job in the community. You told me about the kids playing in the back, shooting craps, and gambling. He built the gymnasium, got them up off the ground, and got them playing ball. What did he do from that point?

Joseph: He took over the [Jewish] Federation [of Greater Atlanta].

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178 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).
Ann: Will you talk a little bit about when he took over Federation? Obviously you greatly admired the man.

Joseph: He had a lot to be admired. He took over the Federation. He had delegated someone else in charge of the Alliance.

Ann: What did he take over? Was there much there to take over?

Joseph: There was the campaign, which is a very important part.

Ann: Was it very well done? It wasn’t very well done at the time?

Joseph: He picked it up. He really worked on that Federation, because you can’t do much without money.

Ann: Was he responsible for establishing the [Jewish] Children and Family Services, or some of these other organizations, or were they already in existence?

Joseph: I don’t know. If they were there, he’d get them bigger or better.

Ann: Do you really think he’s a forgotten person in the community? You do? Why do you think that he’s been overridden, or his name was sort of lost?

Joseph: You have a new man. New men come in and make a big splash.

Ann: Who do you think made a big splash?

Joseph: When I say big splash I don’t mean it bad, unworthy . . .

Ann: Who do you think?

Joseph: David Sarnat, for example, has done a great job. He’s done a very good job in the community. When he came . . . he had trouble to work with, because of Ed. We had Mike [Max] Gettinger. You forget these people.

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179 Jewish Family and Career Services (JF&CS Atlanta) is a group of professionals and volunteers offering programs, and resources for individuals and families of all faiths, cultures and ages. Services include counseling, tools for employment, and support for people with developmental disabilities. JF&CS is a result of the merging of two separate organizations, both of which started as committees of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. The first, Jewish Family Services was founded around 1890. The agency became an autonomous organization in 1982. In 1979, Jewish Vocational Services was started and became independent in 1985. The two agencies merged in 1997. JF&CS is a member organization of the Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agencies (AJFCA).

180 David Sarnat was hired to be executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in 1978. He succeeded Max C. (Mike) Gettinger who retired. Sarnat was the third director of the Federation and served until 2000. He was also the U.S. Representative to the Federation System for the Jewish Agency for Israel. Sarnat developed the Jewish Community Legacy Project (JCLP) to preserve the history, artifacts, and accomplishments of generations of Jews in communities where the population is eroding and is president of the organization. Before coming to Atlanta, Sarnat was the Director for Planning at the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation. The Breman Museum holds his papers, MSS 328.

181 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
Ann: Part of that may be too that the old Atlanta community—the people whose families have been here—are sort of outnumbered now.

Joseph: They’re gone.

Ann: What do you think that’s done to the Jewish community?

Joseph: I think the Jewish community is stronger than they’ve ever been. You had Jack Chilnick\(^\text{182}\) who took over the Federation. Ed Kahn brought Barney Medintz down from Chicago. Barney Medintz made a big contribution to the Jewish community.

Ann: What did he do specifically?

Joseph: He came here with the title of ‘boy’s worker . . . ’

Ann: ‘. . . boy’s worker . . . ’ [11:40]

Joseph: . . . at the Jewish Educational Alliance.

Ann: Interesting.

Joseph: I was there working on the books when he first came. He was very smart, and very competent. He made a real contribution to the community.

Ann: Was he sort of charismatic? Did he attract the kids?

Joseph: He knew how to handle them. They all liked him. He was an athlete. He played for the University of . . . he played ball.

Ann: Basketball?

Joseph: [He was] a college basketball player. That appealed to the youngsters. He knew basketball and he coached it out there. He did a lot for the Alliance, and the kids who came around the Alliance. As I said, Ed Kahn brought him.

Ann: Had Ed Kahn known him someplace else, or he just knew of him?

Joseph: He interviewed him . . . went to Chicago, interviewed him, and hired him. Barney Medintz was a great boy. We were good friends.

Ann: What happened to him?

Joseph: He passed away.

Ann: He died relatively young?

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\(^{182}\) Jack Chilnick (1917 – 1983) was an educator and Jewish community leader. He came to Atlanta in 1949 as director of the Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA). During his tenure, he oversaw the development of the JEA to Atlanta’s then new Jewish Community Center. Chilnick resigned the post in 1957 to become executive director of the Lynn Jewish Community Center in Massachusetts. Before coming to Atlanta he was the director of the JEA in
Joseph: Yes. He died of a heart attack, I guess. It was a shock to the community [unintelligible 13:19]. Some say that he was the administrator for the professional leadership.

Ann: What do you think about the proliferation of synagogues that’s taken place here since the 1960’s? Do you think that’s been good or bad for the community?

Joseph: I’m not going to change [synagogues].

Ann: What do you think? Do you think it’s healthy, or not healthy?

Joseph: I don’t really know. I’m not certain why we need all those. When you start off with two or three, and all of a sudden you got how many, 21?

Ann: A whole bunch.

Joseph: If they can keep them full, if they can keep them educated . . . [it would be] wonderful if they can keep them.

Ann: I can’t think, really, of any total failures of the recently founded *shuls* and temples.

Joseph: That’s a good sign. They seem to have good, competent rabbis.

Ann: I think that what you find in a big city like this, with people so spread out, it’s awfully hard not to provide services closer to where they live. A lot of those people live a long ways from AA. Some of them do drive in from Roswell [Georgia] and Alpharetta [Georgia].

Joseph: I’m sure I would always drive a long piece.

Ann: There are a lot of other people who would refuse to do so. It’s better that they have something close to them than that they have nothing.

Joseph: I didn’t think there were many who didn’t drive, except for those that live around Beth Jacob.¹⁸³

Ann: I didn’t mean not drive because of *Shabbat*. Rather, that it was such a long way to drive that they would not join because it was too far.

Joseph: I guess the same ones that belong to the . . .

Ann: . . . the reason that the AJCC has branches now in the suburbs. A lot of the families don’t want to drive all the way to Peachtree Street anymore.

Joseph: I see the reason. I don’t know whether you have to have a community center in everybody’s backyard, but I think it’s important to have a few.

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¹⁸³ Beth Jacob is an Orthodox synagogue on LaVista Road in Atlanta founded in 1942 by former members of Ahavath Achim who were looking for a more Orthodox congregation. Beth Jacob is now Atlanta’s largest Orthodox congregation. The first location was a converted house on Boulevard.
Ann: I tell you what. I’m going to get off this whole topic altogether.

<End Tape 3, Side 2, Part 2>

<Begin Tape 4, Side 1>

Ann: This is an introduction to the fourth tape that we have made together. This is an interview with the memoirist Joseph Cuba. The interviewer is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg. The other voice that you may hear is Mr. Cuba’s daughter, Lana Krebs. The date today is July 3, 1990. This is the first side, the fourth tape, being made at this point at 7:20 p.m. We took a break. We were in the kitchen and you started to tell me about the purchase of the land for the AJCC [Atlanta Jewish Community Center]. I noticed that they’re talking about selling the land for the AJCC, and the Federation next door down on Peachtree Street. Go ahead and tell the tape recording what you started to tell me about the difficulty you had in buying the land, and all.

Joseph: It took many meetings and much discussion before the land was bought. I’m not familiar with the details surrounding the purchase of the AJCC property. The property next to where the Federation building is was the [Atlanta] Historical Society.184 The question was whether we should put the Federation building there, or put it behind the Community Center which was advocated by many people. After much discussion and arguments, we finally decided to buy the property from the Historical Society, which turned out to be a very wise move.

Ann: What was the rationale behind putting it behind the building, the Center, as opposed to next door?

Joseph: The main argument was that they already owned that property.

Ann: Were they using it for the ball fields?

Joseph: They had enough room.

Ann: They could still have . . .

Joseph: . . . yes. They contended that there was enough room to build the Federation building and still have the ball field. They never had a chance to find out.

Ann: Right now, when you think about it, there probably wouldn’t have been enough room for parking, tennis courts, and the ball fields. They’ve virtually used it all, haven’t they, behind there?

Joseph: Just about.

184 The Atlanta Historical Society was founded in 1926. In 1990 it was renamed the Atlanta History Center and is currently located on a campus with 7 permanent exhibitions, a library, and gardens which link the Swan House and the Tullie Smith Farm.
Ann: Probably, it was a darn good move. Certainly financially, I think, there was no question.
Joseph: It was a very wise move. Otherwise they wouldn’t have had that corner property. Think what it’s worth today. You see, in all these things behind the scenes that . . .
Ann: . . . who were the movers and shakers in that property acquisition? Not just the corner property, but that whole complex there.
Joseph: I think Ben Massell\footnote{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.”} had a pretty important part in the purchase of that piece of property. He and Barney Medintz were very close friends. I think Barney used to always call him ‘Uncle Ben.’ I think he handled that. It was something I wasn’t involved in.
Ann: It’s one of the few things you weren’t intimately involved in.
Joseph: I had enough.
Ann: We’re going to get more personal. I want to hear more about your relationships with your own personal family. I asked you something about your relationship with your brother already. Lana will have to hear that at some future date. I want to know something about your relationship with your grandfather and your grandmother. You said they pretty much raised you, along with your mother. What was it like being the youngest child in that family, with three adults . . .
Joseph: . . . and the first boy for a long time [after] Max came along. I don’t have anything to compare it with. My grandfather was very Orthodox, very religious, and very observant. He was a member of AA. At that time, AA was very Orthodox. My grandmother ran the house. It was a very kosher home. My mother spent a lot of her time in the grocery store . . . she and my grandfather. Considering what we didn’t have, we got along very well.
Ann: I guess if you had a grocery store, you always had something to eat.
Joseph: That’s right. They’d catch me going back there behind the counter where the candy was.
Ann: The candy? You wouldn’t do that, would you? Did you get away with it?
Joseph: Sometimes.
Ann: What was your favorite kind of candy?
Joseph: Any kind of chocolate candy. I don’t eat chocolate any more.
Ann: Never? Maybe if somebody brought you a piece of Godiva?[^186]
Joseph: That’s a different story. That’s an andermayse.[^187]
Ann: What was your house like? How many rooms were in the house?
Joseph: One thing about that house was on Friday afternoon, you could tell it was Friday afternoon. Everything shined. Everything was spotless. Everything was ready for Shabbat. The floors were wooden floors. I think they must have been pine. They were scrubbed. You could really just feel it was Shabbos, or getting ready for Shabbos.
Ann: How many rooms?
Joseph: Which house? We lived on Fraser Street . . .
Ann: Start at the beginning.
Joseph: I don’t remember the place . . .
Ann: You don’t remember that first house. You were too little?
Joseph: . . . too young.
Ann: You were too young. Sorry. The next house . . .
Joseph: . . . was Woodward Avenue. Woodward Avenue was a two-story house. I don’t have any idea how many rooms were upstairs. That’s where we had the bedrooms, upstairs.
Ann: Those were bedrooms.
Joseph: Downstairs there was a dining room and kitchen. I think there was one bedroom downstairs.
Ann: Maybe your grandparents stayed downstairs?
Joseph: Yes, maybe. I just don’t remember much about Woodward Avenue.
Ann: Did you all share rooms upstairs, though? Did you share with Max?
Joseph: Yes. I must have been seven or eight years old.
Ann: Did you have indoor plumbing, or did you have an outhouse?
Joseph: We had a . . . it was not indoor. It was off the back porch.
Ann: Close to the house.
Joseph: Close to it, on the back porch. Is that indoor or outdoor?

[^186]: Godiva Chocolatier is a manufacturer of premium chocolates and related products. Godiva, founded in Belgium in 1926, was purchased by the Turkish Yıldız Holding, owner of the Ülker Group, in 2007. Godiva owns and operates retail boutiques and shops in the U.S, Canada, Europe, and Asia and is available from specialty retailers.

[^187]: Yiddish for ‘another story.’
Ann: I’m not sure. Did you have running water in the house, or did you have to bring in water?

Joseph: Had to go to that back porch.

Ann: The water source was out there.

Joseph: The next house. . .

Ann: Did you have a well outside? Is that what you had?

Joseph: No, but we had the horses and the cow.

Ann: The horses and the cow lived in the backyard?

Joseph: Where else you going to have them? We couldn’t have them live with us in the house.

Ann: It sounds to me like they’re living with you if they’re in your backyard.

Joseph: We had a stable back there with a horse. That was Charlie. The cow was . . .

Ann: . . . was it ‘Charlie I’ or ‘Charlie II’?

Joseph: We did not move the cow over to Woodward Avenue. The cow we left at Fraser Street.

Ann: You really did have your own cow?

Joseph: How else are you going to feed all these kids milk? They used to milk the cow and serve the milk.

Ann: Did you have chickens?

Joseph: I don’t remember chickens, but everybody had chickens.

Ann: I know one thing you didn’t have was pigs. Not in your house.

Joseph: You’re right. You ought to be a detective. We left the cow on Fraser Street. They got rid of her. When we moved to Woodward Avenue, we had a horse, a buggy, and a wagon. They had a stable right there. That was . . .

Ann: That was that house. Where did you live after Woodward Avenue?

Joseph: On Washington Street. That’s the first time I was able to press a button and see the light go on. I just couldn’t believe it. I just had to prove it.

Ann: That was the first house with electricity?

Joseph: We had gas.

Ann: Did it have indoor plumbing, or outside?

Joseph: Washington Street had indoor plumbing. We didn’t have any shower facilities downstairs. We had to make some. We bought this stove, I remember. It was something new—a combination stove, wood and coal.
Ann: Did you have a refrigerator or an icebox?
Joseph: Icebox.
Ann: Was your job to empty the water? Didn’t somebody have to empty the water in an icebox?
Joseph: Yes, if you want to get rid of the water. I didn’t have to do that.
Ann: That was not your job. What kind of jobs did you have to do? Everybody always had jobs.
Joseph: As little as possible.
Ann: You were a bum, even then?
Joseph: Once a bum, always a bum.
Ann: What were your chores? You had to have some kind. You had so many sisters you probably didn’t have to do setting the table.
Joseph: No, I wouldn’t. That’s lady’s work. That’s girl’s work.
Ann: I hear you. Did you ever empty the trash? Feed the horse?
Joseph: Feeding the horse was no problem. Just fill the thing with oats.
Ann: Where did . . .
Joseph: . . . that’s so far back on Woodward Avenue, I just can’t . . .
Ann: You can’t remember that. Let me ask you this. You told me that the name of the man who delivered for the store was Amos. Is that right?
Joseph: Yes, Amos.
Ann: Where did he live? Did he live nearby? You said a lot of the black people were right there in the neighborhood. You think he was there, too?
Joseph: I don’t know where Amos lived.
Ann: Did he work for you a long time?
Joseph: I guess it was quite a while. I’m trying to think . . . can’t think. Let’s see. This was between Washington Street and Fraser . . . Woodward Avenue and Fraser Street.
Ann: Yes, in that time.
Joseph: In that time period.
Ann: You were pretty little then. I’m going back too far in your memory, probably, to get that.
Joseph: I guess you could say that.
Lana: Which was the house where you slept on the porch?

Joseph: That was on Washington Street. On Washington Street we had to try to make ends meet. We would rent out all of the house. Upstairs we rented out three rooms [that] ran together on one side. On the other side, there were two rooms. We used to rent them out. I would grab a place to sleep. Max and I would have a folding cot in a little narrow hallway on the back porch. That cot would just fit that little narrow hallway. He would sleep at one end and I would sleep at the other end. I thought nothing of it at the time. Now I may.

Ann: In retrospect? What about the sisters? Did they get to sleep in real beds?

Joseph: Yes, but they slept with each other. They had the same problem. Mother had to, in order to be able to rent the space out . . . she used her ingenuity by adding basically a front porch on the house, and those types of things, to make it possible.

Ann: Did that go on for quite a while, the rental and the tenants? Did they have kitchen privileges, by the way, or did they have their own kitchen up in their rooms?

Joseph: The ones who had three rooms had their own kitchen, because we had built it up there. They put it in as a remodeling program. She had a kitchen. The one who had the other two [rooms], she had kitchen privileges. We didn’t rent those rooms out long. The three rooms we rented for a long time. One of them was rented to Mrs. Foot [sp]. That was her name. She used to be out in California. She was interested in theaters. She used to direct plays over at the Alliance.

Ann: Was it a Jewish lady?

Joseph: Yes. She had kitchen privileges, too. The other one we rented . . . after a reasonable time, decided Max and I would take that room. We finally got it back.

Ann: That’s nice. Were you a good kid or a devil?

Joseph: I wasn’t the easiest one to get along with. Things haven’t changed that much.

Ann: What did you used to do to get into trouble? What kind of trouble did you get into?

Joseph: I don’t think I really got into any real serious . . .

Ann: . . . I don’t mean real serious. What did you do to cause your mother a little anxiety? You must have done something.

Joseph: I wouldn’t do anything to trouble my mother. You know me better than that.

Ann: Other than stealing candy from behind the counter.

Lana: He might tell you that if I weren’t here, and he could confess to a childhood fib.

Joseph: That’s routine. I think that’s enough of that.
Lana: You made friends with the guy that rang the bell at school.

Joseph: Going to school where I used to go to school, public school. Time the classes start, he’d ring the big old bells. He’d stand out there in the front and ring it. When he rang that bell that meant that school was going to start. He’d see me coming. I’d wave to him and he’d wait on me to ring . . .

Ann: . . . wait until you got there before he’d ring his bell.

Joseph: I thought that was nice of him.

Ann: Were you always late?

Joseph: Not always.

Ann: Just frequently. What did you have for breakfast? What did you eat? What kind of food?

Joseph: When?

Ann: When you were a kid. You didn’t eat breakfast? When you were a kid going to school, what did they use to serve for breakfast? Did you have eggs or did you have cereal?

Joseph: Oatmeal, cereal, eggs, milk.

Ann: You mean a big breakfast?

Joseph: Yes.

Ann: Did you go home for lunch?

Joseph: No.

Ann: You ate at school?

Joseph: School lasted until two o’clock.

Ann: What’d you do about lunch? Did they feed you at school?

Joseph: I took a sandwich. We had a big dinner at night.

Ann: Did you? Was that usual to have the big meal at night rather than at noontime?

Joseph: It was usual for our family. We always had a big meal at night.

Ann: What was your favorite food? What did your grandmother make that you liked the best?

Joseph: She used to make lokshen. Homemade lokshen. You know what lokshen is?

Ann: Sure, noodles.

Joseph: That’s right.

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188 Lokshen is Yiddish for ‘noodles.’
Ann: Did you watch her? Did she stretch it on a table like this?

Joseph: Yes. I thought she’d cut her finger off . . . and homemade gefilte fish.\textsuperscript{189}

Ann: It smells terrible when it’s cooking, but it tastes so good afterward.

Joseph: I didn’t notice.

Ann: That’s because you weren’t around when it was cooking. Since you weren’t doing women’s work, you wouldn’t have been there.

Joseph: Right.

Ann: Tell me about Ida Pearle. You were going to tell me about her.

Joseph: What shall I tell you about her? She was a great gal.

Ann: Tell me about some of the work that she did in the community, the things she was active in. I see you brought this to me. I know that she was active in Brandeis,\textsuperscript{190} because these are awards she was given by Brandeis.

Joseph: She also received an award which . . .

Ann: . . . was she active in Hadassah?\textsuperscript{191}

Joseph: I don’t think she was active in Hadassah.

Lana: Not as much as in a lot of other things.

Ann: What other things? You can go ahead and join us if you’d like.

Lana: Basically, she was interested in education. She always wanted to know more about everything there was to know. She always wanted everybody else to know more. She always wanted to teach what she knew. Whenever . . .

Joseph: . . . she was a born teacher.

Lana: . . . yes. Whatever organization she got into, her focus was always education. She did study groups for PTA [Parent Teacher Association].\textsuperscript{192} She did study groups for Brandeis. She did

\textsuperscript{189} Gefilte fish is an Ashkenazi Jewish dish made from a poached mixture of ground deboned fish, such as carp, whitefish or pike, which is typically eaten as an appetizer. The dish is popular on the Sabbath and holidays such as Passover, although it may be served throughout the year.

\textsuperscript{190} Founded in 1948, the Brandeis University National Women’s Committee is considered the largest ‘friends of a library’ group with an estimated national membership of 48,000. With national headquarters located in Waltham, Massachusetts, there are more than 100 nationwide chapters. (2015)

\textsuperscript{191} The Women’s Zionist Organization of America. It is a volunteer organization founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold. It is an international Jewish organization with around 300,000 members worldwide. It supports health care, education and youth programs in Israel.

\textsuperscript{192} A national organization with affiliations in local schools throughout the United States composed of parents, teachers and staff, and devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools.
study groups for Federation. Every organization she got into, she decided they needed study
groups. If they didn’t have them, she fixed that and organized them.

**Ann:** Created them.

**Lana:** Yes. She always believed people should keep going to school, keep taking courses. My
favorite story, or one of them anyways, is we had some people deliver some roofing to our house,
and the truck broke down. It was a really hot summer day. We invited them in for lemonade. I
had to go take my child somewhere, but she stayed with them until the people from the roofing
company came and got them. When I got back, she had found out their whole life history and
was trying to convince them to go back to school. She was telling them they could get better jobs
and do more for themselves. “Georgia State has courses at night . . .”

**Ann:** Cute.

**Lana:** It was great. Whatever she did. She was active in the synagogue. She was active in
Sisterhood. She chaired . . .

**Joseph:** . . . study groups.

**Lana:** . . . study groups, the education committee, or whatever.

**Ann:** Adult Ed[ucation]?

**Lana:** Adult Ed, the religious schools, too, at the synagogue, the Hebrew school, Sunday
school. She taught Sunday school. She was active in the Bureau of Jewish Education. What
else? She was involved with the camps, the camp committee, and the community center. I
remember my first summer at [Camp] Rutledge, she volunteered to take pictures of the camp.
This was my big opportunity to be away from home. Every time I turned around . . .

**Ann:** . . . there was your mother.

**Lana:** . . . there was my mother with the camera. She kept around. She was always involved,
always had something going on, or had a project of some kind that she was working on. She was
real interested in antiques and arts. [She was] a collector of all kinds of things. She collected
families . . . everybody. She adopted people. All my friends’ children were adopted

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193 A group of women in a synagogue congregation who join together to offer social, cultural, educational, and
volunteer service opportunities.

194 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
lending library of Jewish books and resources.
grandchildren. They all called her ‘Mima’ like my children do . . . did. She saved all kinds of papers, all kinds of boxes, and boxes of things. We gave a lot of it to the archives.\(^{195}\) I was glad the archives came along, because after all those years of saving it, I would have hated to throw it away.

**Ann:** I was going to suggest to you that if there’s anything that you think ought to be saved, that that was the place to save it.

**Lana:** It was hard to tell whether she saved it because she thought it was important, or because she hadn’t quite gotten around to deciding whether or not to throw it out. Some things she saved to go through. One of the things we found were some papers from an English class that she had written in college. The title of one of the papers—I really should have it framed—was called “My Hobby, Hoarding.” At that point she was saving things like theater programs, ticket stubs, all the little trinkets, and memorabilia. As time went on, a lot of the things she saved were part of the history of the Jewish community in Atlanta because she was involved in so many organizations. She collected antiques and little bronze statues [unintelligible 24:45].

**Ann:** Some of the papers and things that may not be appropriate necessarily for the Jewish Archives may be appropriate for the [Atlanta] Historical Society. Also, keep that in mind. If there’s something that may be of Atlanta history there as opposed to Jewish Atlanta history, you might consider that as well.

**Lana:** We turned a lot of it over to Sandy Berman\(^{196}\) who [never] gave it back. I guess she felt it was . . .

**Ann:** . . . I guess she found it was good. That’s great. We have had, I think, a very full program. I think you’ve had it. How about it? You tired?

**Joseph:** I think we’ve had enough.

**Ann:** I know you’re fed up with me. I’m going to go home.

**Joseph:** I think you’re bored.

**Ann:** I am not bored. I have not been bored for five seconds with you. I do want to thank you.

**Joseph:** It’s your own fault. I’ve tried to . . .

**Ann:** . . . tried to shoo me away.

**Joseph:** . . . I’ve tried to bore you.

\(^{195}\) The Cuba Family Archives at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum houses the largest repository for Jewish archival material in the region. (2015)

\(^{196}\) Sandy Berman is an Atlanta author and the founding archivist at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum.
Ann: I do want to thank you. It’s been wonderful, and the archives are richer for your having spent this time sharing your thoughts, your feelings, and your memories with us. We appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Joseph: You’re more than welcome.

<Interview pause, then resumes>

Ann: We’re talking about Young Judaea days. We got started talking about Ed Kahn here for a minute. We got into the relationship between Joseph Cuba and Ed Kahn, when Joe was a young boy, and how Mr. Kahn treated him like an adult. You started to say about a newspaper you made, you put out?

Joseph: We used to put out a program sheet, a suggested program for different Young Judaea clubs to have. I would meet with Ed Kahn. We’d sit there and he would dictate the thing completely. He spent that time with me, trying to be very helpful, and he was. In fact, when we had the Young Judaea conventions, he would come and help supervise them and help do a lot of things along those lines . . .

Ann: . . . that other adults didn’t do?

Joseph: I don’t know whether or not they did. We were very fortunate, in my opinion, to have a man like Ed Kahn as our executive director of the Alliance and Federation, and so forth.

<End of Tape 4, Side 1>

INTERVIEW ENDS