

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

**MEMOIRIST:** MAXINE GOLDSTEIN  
**INTERVIEWER:** SANDY BERMAN  
**LOCATION:** MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA  
**DATE:** MARCH 9, 2010

**INTERVIEW BEGINS**

<Begin disk 1>

**Sandy:** Today is March 9, 2010, and I am in Milledgeville, Georgia, with Maxine Goldstein, who has agreed to participate in the Esther and Herbert Taylor Jewish Oral History Project of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum.<sup>1</sup>

**Maxine:** And I thank you for coming.

**Sandy:** Thank you for allowing us to come. I wanted to go back to the very beginning of your life. But even before that, I'd like to talk a little bit about your parents and grandparents, and how they came to this country and how you eventually ended up in Augusta, Georgia.

**Maxine:** Well, I don't really know the circumstances behind why my grandparents came to the United States, but I thank God every day that they did. My mother's family, they were **Rabinowitzes**, and they settled in Pennsylvania, Shenandoah, around that area. They lived up North most of their life. Mother met my father visiting her sister, who had married a man from Augusta, and that's why they ended up in Augusta. That's my mother's side. My father's side . . . First, going back to my grandparents on my mother's side: they had a candy store in Pennsylvania. On my father's side, they had a grocery store. They moved from Pittsburgh to Augusta, I don't know the circumstances. I know my father was an infant when they came, and they opened up a grocery store there. Those are the records I'm still looking for to give you. If I can find them!

**Sandy:** What were your parents' names?

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<sup>1</sup> The Esther and Herbert Taylor Family Foundation was founded in 1983 and is administered by the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. The Foundation supports the Oral History Project at the Breman Museum in Atlanta. In 1996, the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum opened at the Selig Center on Spring Street in Midtown Atlanta. The Museum features a permanent exhibit called *Absence of Humanity: The Holocaust Years, 1933-1945* as well as exhibitions about Southern Jewish history and Jewish culture. The Breman Museum also includes the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, the Weinberg Center for Holocaust Education, and a library of research materials.

- Maxine:** Sadie Schapiro, but she was a Rabinowitz, and my father was Harry Schapiro.
- Sandy:** And they opened a grocery store, in Augusta . . . ?
- Maxine:** Yes, [but] not my parents, my grandparents. They moved south.
- Sandy:** Your grandparents opened a grocery store in Augusta. Do you know the name of the grocery store?
- Maxine:** I don't. If we could find those records we might figure it out! I'm sorry.
- Sandy:** Did both parents grow up in Augusta, then?
- Maxine:** No, my mother married and moved to Augusta. My father did grow up in Augusta, because he was an infant when they brought him south.
- Sandy:** Did he speak much about his growing up days in Augusta?
- Maxine:** Not really. He was kind of a retiring man. He spoke up when he had to, and he ran the city council, and he got elected for years and years, and the best thing about it was the family got free movie tickets! That was wonderful. But he was a very religious man, and my mother was happy-go-lucky. Just anything goes with her. We just enjoyed growing up in Augusta.
- Sandy:** If he was a religious man, what congregation did you go to?
- Maxine:** The synagogue. Adas Yeshurun synagogue<sup>2</sup> in Augusta, Georgia.
- Sandy:** Can you reminisce a little about the synagogue, and what it was like growing up there and going to services?
- Maxine:** Yes. I remember the women had to sit upstairs. That may be one reason why I became more of a women's liberator, or something. I can remember my friends, as teenagers we each had to out-dress the other in order to go to the synagogue, especially for *Rosh Ha-Shanah*<sup>3</sup> and *Yom Kippur*.<sup>4</sup> We'd sit in the restrooms with our lipsticks and chew on it during *Yom*

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<sup>2</sup> Adas Yeshurun Synagogue fosters commitment to the tenets of Conservative Judaism, encouraging participation of all members in the observance of Jewish rituals, traditions and life-cycle events. They aim to provide an atmosphere of community and camaraderie as well as a supportive environment for worship and education. They are committed to K'lal Yisrael, the greater Jewish family, and particularly to Medinat Yisrael, the State of Israel.

<sup>3</sup> *Rosh Ha-Shanah* [Hebrew: head of the year; i.e. New Year festival] begins the cycle of High Holy Days. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. On the tenth day is *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. The tradition is that on *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, G-d sits in judgment on humanity. Then the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. Prayer and repentance before the sealing of the books on *Yom Kippur* may revoke these decisions.

<sup>4</sup> *Yom Kippur* [Hebrew: Day of Atonement] is 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).

*Kippur*. I'm sure that went on everywhere. It was just a nice community. We knew everybody in the Jewish community, even those that belonged to the temple.<sup>5</sup> It just worked out fine.

**Sandy:** Did the two crowds get together? The synagogue and the temple?

**Maxine:** I think mostly it was individuals. You made your friends from either group and you became friends with those people, it didn't matter whether you were reform or religious.<sup>6</sup> It didn't matter. You made your friendships, then went on from there.

**Sandy:** Did you know any folks who belonged to the country club?<sup>7</sup>

**Maxine:** I happened to stumble on working there. Not like you might think, working, but I used to have a radio show, a woman's radio show, and Babe Didrikson Zaharias,<sup>8</sup> or someone, came to play golf. My station sent me out to interview her, and follow her around for a day or two, and that was a lot of fun. That's the closest I got to the Augusta country club. But after **Jake**<sup>9</sup> and I married we would go back and visit friends. Somebody broke the ice, I'm not exactly sure who it was, but then they started taking Jewish members.

**Sandy:** I think it might have been Dr. Greenblatt.<sup>10</sup>

**Maxine:** Well now, that was my buddy! When Dr. Greenblatt came to Augusta, he came from Canada, he had a shirt that was torn with the buttons off, and he sat on my mother's porch, and I remember seeing her sewing that button on his shirt and mending that shirt for him.

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<sup>5</sup> She may be referring to the Congregation Children of Israel in Augusta Georgia, a Reform congregation. Typically, Reform congregations use 'temple' and 'synagogue' is used by Conservative congregations.

<sup>6</sup> Reform Judaism is a division within Judaism especially in North America and Western Europe. 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. On the other hand, Orthodox Judaism (likely what Maxine means by 'religious') is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written *Torah* and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.

<sup>7</sup> Augusta National Golf Club is one of the most famous golf clubs in the world. The course opened for play in January 1933, and since 1934 the club has hosted the annual Masters Tournament, one of the four major championships in professional golf, and the only major played each year at the same course. The club has received criticism over the years for its exclusionary membership policies: they did not admit any African American members until 1990, and no women members until 2012. It is unclear when the first Jewish member was admitted.

<sup>8</sup> Mildred Ella "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias was an American athlete who excelled in golf, basketball, baseball and track and field. She won two gold medals in track and field at the 1932 Summer Olympics, before turning to professional golf and winning 10 LPGA major championships.

<sup>9</sup> Her husband.

<sup>10</sup> Robert B. Greenblatt (1906-1987) was an eminent physician, medical researcher, and scholar at the Medical College of Georgia (later Georgia Health Sciences University) in Augusta. At MCG Greenblatt pioneered endocrinology as an independent discipline and from 1946 to 1972 served as professor and chair of the school's department of endocrinology, the first such academic department in the United States.

**Sandy:** That's great. I'll have to tell his daughter that story. I want to go back to your radio show.

**Maxine:** Alright!

**Sandy:** How old were you when you had a radio show in Augusta?

**Maxine:** I think this was after I got out of college, mostly while I was waiting for Jake to finish. I graduated Augusta Junior College<sup>11</sup> for two years, then I went to the University of Georgia<sup>12</sup> for the others. What Jake didn't tell you was when I first met him and they said, "This is Jake Goldstein," I looked at him and I said, "I hate your guts!" That's my term of endearment. I think I got his attention, I'm not sure!

**Sandy:** Sounds like it, how long have you been married?

**Maxine:** Sixty-two years.

**Sandy:** Sounds like you got his attention.

**Maxine:** I think so!

**Sandy:** What was the radio station?

**Maxine:** It was WTNT.

**Sandy:** I'm enthralled. You got to meet Babe Didrikson Zaharias, what was she like?

**Maxine:** She was kind of big, kind of masculine, but could she hit that ball! She did great. Then one time, because of my position with the radio station, Bill Stern<sup>13</sup> came to Augusta. I don't know if you even remember. He was a big sports announcer, and he was going to be in Augusta for some big do, and it was on the first night of Passover.<sup>14</sup> Well, my father almost had a fit, and my mother was always pushing me, you know, she was always on my side. So, he finally gave me permission to go and interview him that night. It was a story about a place in North

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<sup>11</sup> Though Augusta Junior College no longer exists, it has since become Augusta University. First it was Augusta State University, a public university, until August 10, 2012, when Augusta State merged with Georgia Health Sciences University to form Georgia Regents University, which would later be known as Augusta University.

<sup>12</sup> The University of Georgia, founded in 1785, also referred to as UGA or simply Georgia, is an American public research university in the city of Athens in the U.S. state of Georgia.

<sup>13</sup> Bill Stern (1907-1971) was a U.S. actor and sportscaster who announced the nation's first remote sports broadcast and the first telecast of a baseball game.

<sup>14</sup> The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, matzah, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating matzah during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled 'kosher for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

Georgia, the Barry school<sup>15</sup> or something? And I had to do one of the characters, and interview him. Anyway, we did do that, and Daddy said okay, but I don't think he ever forgave me!

**Sandy:** That's great. So, in Jake's interview he said it was just kind of understood that after you got married . . .

**Maxine:** Right.

**Sandy:** . . . you were going to move to Milledgeville. Is that your story, also?

**Maxine:** Yes, it is. I just went along for the ride.

**Sandy:** Did you have a hard time giving up your career?

**Maxine:** No. When I came here I went to the radio station, and see Jake had paved all the groundwork for me no matter what. They let me have a woman's daily show. I cut it back to once a week, but I had it for several years, and then I just gave it up. But Jake's family's connections made it very easy for me to be a member of the community. I didn't come in cold because they had so many friends, and when they found out that I was Jake's wife they just all accepted me, like he tells you they accepted him, and they've just been wonderful through the years.

**Sandy:** You had a much larger Jewish circle, probably, in Augusta.

**Maxine:** Absolutely.

**Sandy:** Was that hard to give up?

**Maxine:** No, because I felt like, after World War II,<sup>16</sup> that we were living in a ghetto.<sup>17</sup> We made the ghetto ourselves. And I think sometimes that's not a good thing. I think it's important to keep contacts, relationships, your religion, and all that, but I don't think you ought to have it

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<sup>15</sup> She may be referring to Berry College, a private Christian liberal arts college in Mount Berry, Georgia. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Berry was founded in 1902 by Martha Berry. With 27,000 acres, Berry College claims the largest contiguous campus in the world.

<sup>16</sup> World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945, although related conflicts began earlier. It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. Marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust (in which approximately 6 million Jews were killed) and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centers (in which approximately one million were killed, and which included the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), it resulted in an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history

<sup>17</sup> The term "ghetto" originated in sixteenth-century Venice from the Jewish quarter, where authorities compelled the city's Jews to live. The term's usage spread across Europe and referred to areas within cities where members of minorities (typically Jews) lived and were often restricted to by the authorities as a way to separate them from the majority Christian population. During World War II, Nazi Germany established ghettos in segregated city districts to further isolate and imprison regional Jewish populations. Starting in 1939, the Germans established at least 1,000 ghettos in German-occupied and annexed Poland and the Soviet Union alone. Jews living in ghettos experienced miserable conditions and overcrowding.

so tightly knitted that you don't have room for anybody else, or you won't go out of the circle. I think it's real important to mix.

**Sandy:** But were your parents okay with you moving away?

**Maxine:** Oh, sure! Honey, they love Jake!

**Sandy:** I found out from him that his mother, sister, and brother all worked in the store.<sup>18</sup> Did you work in there as well?

**Maxine:** Honey, I had grazing rights, and that was much better than working in the store! No, I did help at Christmas time, and Easter, and things like that, and whenever they were real short I did work there. But I didn't have a standing job. That's why I got so involved in the community.

**Sandy:** That's what I want to really get to, is your community activities. Why did you start to get so involved in the community?

**Maxine:** Well, there wasn't a lot of stuff to do in Milledgeville when I moved here, honestly! First thing I was very interested in theater. I had gone a dramatic school up in Media, Pennsylvania, and I just liked that kind of thing. In fact, one thing, when I was up north, I did a nightclub act for several nights, only several nights, with Abbott and Costello.<sup>19</sup> Then I went to Atlantic City, [New Jersey,] with the Harry James Band,<sup>20</sup> because he was playing for the soldiers there, and when I came back to Philadelphia, [Pennsylvania,] Abbott and Costello said, "Maxine, we want you to go to Hollywood with us." I said, "Really?!" I said, "I gotta call my folks on that." They said, "Well, call them!" My daddy says, "You will not go," and if my daddy said I wasn't going . . . he let me go on Passover, to interview somebody in Augusta, but he was not going to give me permission to go out to Hollywood. And you know, in those days I didn't give it a second thought. That was the way it was going to be. I didn't go.

**Sandy:** What about now? Do you regret that you didn't go with Abbott and Costello?

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<sup>18</sup> The Goldstein family ran a department store, originally called Goldstein Department Store, and later C. Goldstein & Sons Inc.

<sup>19</sup> Abbott and Costello were an American comedy duo composed of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, whose work on radio and in film and television made them the most popular comedy team of the 1940s and early 1950s.

<sup>20</sup> Harry Haag James was an American musician who is best known as a trumpet-playing band leader who led a big band from 1939 to 1946. He broke up his band for a short period in 1947 but shortly after he reorganized and was active again with his band from then until his death in 1983.

**Maxine:** No! No, you see I had Jake, I've still got Jake, thank God. I've had wonderful children, of course we lost a daughter. We've got great grandchildren. It's just good. I'm happy with my life. I have no complaints, and I've enjoyed it.

**Sandy:** What were they like, Abbott and Costello?

**Maxine:** They were a bunch of fun. But I can understand, really, why Daddy said, "No, no, no!"

**Sandy:** That's a great story! So, you got involved in theater . . .

**Maxine:** Yes, because I liked it, and I started the Milledgeville little theater. It lasted for several years, and one thing you were discussing about black, and white, and all that: one of the plays, I don't remember the name of it, there was a character who was Afro-American, and we had to get a white person and put dark stuff on them to make them be the character.<sup>21</sup> That wouldn't happen today. We'd have all been sent out of town if that had happened, but it happened back then. That was very early on in our marriage. We were married in 1947.

**Sandy:** Before the civil rights movement.

**Maxine:** Right.

**Sandy:** You must have remembered or recalled what was going on with the schools . . .

**Maxine:** Yes.

**Sandy:** . . . in the late sixties into the seventies, where were your children in school?

**Maxine:** I don't remember which grades they were in, but they were in school, and there was no problem. There really wasn't. A lot was made of it, but everybody got along.

**Sandy:** To backtrack a little bit, we were talking about your activities . . .

**Maxine:** Oh, yes.

**Sandy:** The theater . . .

**Maxine:** The theater, I started the Junior Women's club as part of the Georgia federation of women's clubs,<sup>22</sup> then I co-sponsored the Civic Women's club<sup>23</sup> that's extremely active still

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<sup>21</sup> This is an example of blackface, a form of theatrical make-up used predominantly by non-black performers to represent a caricature of a black person. The practice gained popularity during the 19th century and is considered distinctly derogatory, unnecessary, and offensive today.

<sup>22</sup> An organization composed of representatives of women's clubs throughout the state of Georgia, whose members provided volunteer service to their communities. The women work together to improve the social, cultural and physical needs in their city or town.

<sup>23</sup> The Civic Women's Club of Milledgeville is still running today (2019), and they continue to serve the Milledgeville area through projects and fund raising for non-profit charities, having fun and developing lasting friendships is an added benefit.

today in the community. I co-founded Hadassah,<sup>24</sup> we didn't have a Hadassah chapter here, and that was fun. People came from little surrounding communities. I'm a big flower show person, I like to do arrangements, I enjoy flowers. Horticulture's not my strongest position, but I do like to make fun with flowers, and I'm a master flower show judge, so I started a judges' council over in Macon, [Georgia,] because there weren't enough judges in Milledgeville to make it work. I stated that, and just several things. Some more may come to me as we talk.

**Sandy:** Hadassah.

**Maxine:** Yes.

**Sandy:** That's very interesting to me, because, as Jake said, there were only a couple families here, so what towns did [you come together with?]

**Maxine:** Sandersville, [Georgia]. Nobody from Macon, because they were all to themselves over in Macon. But Sandersville, the few that we could get here, and some family members of some of the women joined, even though they didn't live here. Because you had to have I think ten to start a chapter, and we worked real hard, and it's still going today.

**Sandy:** Is it really?

**Maxine:** Yes, it is!

**Sandy:** How many Jewish families are in Milledgeville today?

**Maxine:** I'm not sure, but more than there were, because the college<sup>25</sup> has brought in a lot of professors and people like that. You can't ask anymore, "Are you Jewish? Would you like to join this, or join that?" Even the students, we have a Hillel<sup>26</sup> chapter. I didn't organize it, that's one thing I didn't organize, but we do have a Hillel chapter, and I do support it.

**Sandy:** Did your children go to public school or private school?

**Maxine:** Public.

**Sandy:** No Georgia military college<sup>27</sup> for your son?

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<sup>24</sup> Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is a volunteer organization founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, with more than 300,000 members and supporters worldwide. It supports health care and medical research, education and youth programs in Israel, and advocacy, education, and leadership development in the United States.

<sup>25</sup> Georgia College & State University is a public liberal arts university in Milledgeville, Georgia. The university enrolls approximately 7,000 students and is a member of the University System of Georgia. Georgia College was designated Georgia's "Public Liberal Arts University" in 1996 by the Georgia Board of Regents.

<sup>26</sup> Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, working with thousands of college students globally.

<sup>27</sup> Georgia Military College is a military-focused educational institution in Milledgeville, Georgia. It is divided into the junior college, a military junior college program, high school, and middle school.

**Maxine:** Well that's really not a private school. But one of my daughters did go to GMC [Georgia Military College], the younger, because when she was in her senior year, I think, they converted it to include women.

**Sandy:** And your son, he got into the military?

**Maxine:** I don't have a son.

**Sandy:** Oh!

**Maxine:** I have Marsha, and Harriet. Harriet is the one who's deceased, her soul rest in peace, and Marsha.

**Sandy:** Who's . . . ? Oh, the grandson! I'm sorry. Fred.

**Maxine:** Oh, yes.

**Sandy:** I'm sorry, I skipped a generation.

**Maxine:** That's okay! He's a good one to skip to. He's a doll.

**Sandy:** That's great, we'll talk about him in a minute. So, was it difficult for you to maintain a Jewish home in such a small community?

**Maxine:** It was. I started out with two sets of dishes. I'm not talking about Passover, I tried to keep **kosher**. My father was still living, and I was keeping kosher, and it just so happened we kept getting this horrible meat from Atlanta on the bus. Finally, I said, "Jake, this is ridiculous!" he said, "you're right." And I gave up keeping kosher about a month before my father died of a heart attack. He never knew that I didn't keep kosher anymore, and I felt better. [He] really didn't know, you know.

**Sandy:** What about Sunday School and all that?

**Maxine:** Oh, yes, every Sunday they'd carpool from here, the different families. Somebody would drive every Sunday and take the kids to Macon. Some went to the synagogue, some went to the temple, so that's how that worked.

**Sandy:** where did yours go?

**Maxine:** The temple. Then later on they got this marvelous rabbi at the synagogue, I said, "Jake, why don't we switch?" he said, "We're not switching, we started here and we're gonna stay here," and we're still there.

**Sandy:** Jake also mentioned the **Goodriches**, were you friends with the Goodriches?

**Maxine:** Yes! Nathalie and Harold are real good friends of ours. When Nathalie got engaged to Harold, I was already married to Jake, she would call me when she came to town and

we knew each other as phone friends for a long time before we ever met. In fact, I had lunch with her today.

**Sandy:** Right, I talked to her this morning, also. Getting back to your life in Augusta a little bit, did you enjoy growing up in Augusta?

**Maxine:** Had a great time! And then we had this thing going on called the USO [United Service Organization].<sup>28</sup> It was during World War II, and I learned to dance at the USO, and you always had a date if you wanted to go out. The Jewish community supported one specific USO, [in] Downtown [Augusta] on Greene Street, I think it was YMHA [Young Man's Hebrew Association]<sup>29</sup> or something like that, but it was a great place to go. Then for all the holidays we'd bring in the boys for meals, and let them know that we did appreciate them.

**Sandy:** Did you date anyone that wasn't Jewish?

**Maxine:** I don't think [so]. I used to have a friend, we used to walk to school together and back. I don't call that a dating friend. But he was a nice little boy and I knew him well, but we never dated.

**Sandy:** Did you always know you would marry someone Jewish?

**Maxine:** No. I can't say what I'm gonna do tomorrow, so I could never say I was always [going to marry a Jewish man]. I know I've preached it to my children, and I knew I better! But when he came along I had no doubts.

**Sandy:** After you said, "I can't stand your guts," is that what you said? I don't want to misquote you.

**Maxine:** Yes. "I hate your guts!"

**Sandy:** What changed?

**Maxine:** He smiled, and he said "Let's dance!" We literally met on the dance floor, and we've loved dancing ever since. We love big bands, and just all that kind of stuff. At the other house, out on the lake, I've got big pictures of all the old band leaders with Jake and I in the pictures, and it's just real nice.

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<sup>28</sup> The United Service Organizations Inc.(USO) is a private, nonprofit organization that provides morale and recreational services to members of the United States military, with programs in 160 centers worldwide. Since 1941, it has worked in partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD), and has provided support and entertainment to U.S. armed forces, relying heavily on private contributions and on funds, goods, and services from DOD. Although congressionally chartered, it is not a government agency.

<sup>29</sup> The Young Men's Hebrew Association was set up in various cities of the United States for the mental, moral, social and physical improvement of Jewish young men. The first YMHA was started in New York in 1874 and spread across the country in the following years. They still exist today and are more like social clubs.

- Sandy:** He was just out of the military, and you . . .
- Maxine:** Had just graduated from Augusta Junior College.
- Sandy:** Were you at a sorority at UGA [University of Georgia]?
- Maxine:** [Delta Phi Epsilon].
- Sandy:** That's no longer.
- Maxine:** It's no longer? Oh well.
- Sandy:** No, I have all their records.
- Maxine:** You do?
- Sandy:** Down at the [Breman] museum.
- Maxine:** That's great! Do you have the big picture of the sorority sisters on the steps?
- Sandy:** Yes. I have some of those.
- Maxine:** If I can find this one again I'll send it to you.
- Sandy:** That's great. What was that like, being in a Jewish sorority?
- Maxine:** That was fun, I enjoyed it, and the Jewish kids and Georgia did sort of cling together. But not like in a community. You could get out and do things, and you had occasions where you just couldn't do them with Jewish people, you went to other organizations and things that weren't so tight knit a group.
- Sandy:** And what was your degree in?
- Maxine:** Journalism. Radio was my specialty. They didn't . . . Well, they had television, because they had one workshop on television when I was there, and it was a new thing, the new kid on the block, and I had worked real hard with radio.
- Sandy:** With all the activities you were doing in Milledgeville, all the community activities, did you ever start up the radio program again?
- Maxine:** No. I didn't. I got too busy, and the children had come along by then. I just didn't. I did make a T.V. movie, though. It was done at the University of Georgia, and it was called *The Wedding on the Eifel Tower*.<sup>30</sup> I had to go to Atlanta and be auditioned, and I must have made a good jackass of myself, because they took me.
- Sandy:** Really? When was that?

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<sup>30</sup> This could be a T.V. movie based on the 1922 Jean Cocteau ballet of the same name, however the film is not readily accessible.

**Maxine:** A long time ago. I may have a picture in another room I can show you. I was the grandmother. <Gestures to imply being bloated or overweight> I was gorgeous!

**Sandy:** Do you know **Helen Alexander** from Atlanta? Because she was in a lot of things.

**Maxine:** I know an Alexander, but she was very active in the democratic party. **Elaine Alexander**.

**Sandy:** Yes, that's a different Alexander. What was it like for you and your peers when all the young men were off to war [in World War II]?

**Maxine:** We had no problem in Augusta. We had all the men! Because they were at camp Gordon!<sup>31</sup> They were there all the time.

**Sandy:** This is something I should've asked your husband, and I failed to, so I'm going to ask you: did you know when you were 18, 19, 20 years old, did you have any inkling about what was going on with the Jews over in Europe during that time?<sup>32</sup>

**Maxine:** I heard a little bit. I would listen [to] Walter Cronkite,<sup>33</sup> or some wonderful radio announcer would talk about it, and I can remember seeing my father being so upset. It caught my attention, and I said "there's something going on here that we really need to know about."

**Sandy:** Did you have relatives who were lost?

**Maxine:** Yes, we did. Lithuania, I know, and I don't know about the rest.

**Sandy:** Were you in shock to learn what really happened, after the war?

**Maxine:** Absolutely. That's one reason I got so interested and I was appointed the holocaust commission, and I've done everything I can do to educate the people in Baldwin county [Georgia] about what happened during World War II and the holocaust. I've brought in speakers, they've worked wonderfully with us. Jake and I together have done that. We've had the college students have their day, we've had the grammar schools<sup>34</sup> have their day. We've got the school board to furnish school busses to bring students from all around, not just Milledgeville, to come in and see these different programs that we have for them through the holocaust.

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<sup>31</sup> Fort Gordon, formerly known as Camp Gordon, is a United States Army installation established in October 1941. It is the current home of the United States Army Signal Corps, United States Army Cyber Corps, and Cyber Center of Excellence.

<sup>32</sup> The holocaust was the systematic, government-sponsored attempt by the Germans to annihilate the Jews of Europe between 1939 and 1945, which resulted in the deaths of nearly 6,000,000 Jews.

<sup>33</sup> Walter Leland Cronkite Jr. was an American broadcast journalist who served as anchorman for the CBS Evening News for 19 years. During the heyday of CBS News in the 1960s and 1970s, he was often cited as "the most trusted man in America" after being so named in an opinion poll.

<sup>34</sup> A synonym for elementary school (kindergarten through fourth or sixth grade).

**Sandy:** And what kind of programs do you offer?

**Maxine:** Well, the last one was very unusual. A girl sat in front of a television screen that showed horror pictures, really. But most of them somebody talked, who had been in [the camps], or a liberator, or just people who had been involved in one way or another. It opened everybody's eyes. It really did.

**Sandy:** Has it been well received?

**Maxine:** Absolutely. It's about time for me to do something again, because it's been about two and a half years, and you can't let them forget. You just can't.

**Sandy:** Have you experienced, throughout your time in Augusta and in Milledgeville, a time in your life where it was difficult being Jewish?

**Maxine:** One time, in Augusta, I was working for the city. I had a job at a park in the summer, it was a summer job, and there was one boy in there. He didn't touch me, he didn't do anything, but he ran his mouth and called me a dirty Jew, and all kinds of stuff like that, and I was stunned! Nobody had said anything to me like that. I just didn't respond. I didn't know what to do. Then when I came home and I told my daddy, he talked to the people because he was on city council, and we got that straightened out! I really didn't even want to go back after that day. He was just so mean to me.

**Sandy:** That's interesting that your father was on city council. Were a number of Jews in Augusta involved in city government?

**Maxine:** No. They were not. But he was . . . I don't know if you've heard of the cracker party,<sup>35</sup> but that's who he was a member of. He was well liked, and respected, even if he was my father, I have to say that, and he was a very religious man. I was just real proud of him. He always took care of his daughter.

**Sandy:** What was the cracker party? I don't think I've ever heard of that.

**Maxine:** It was a big redneck<sup>36</sup> political party in Augusta.

**Sandy:** Is it just in Augusta?

**Maxine:** Yes. It was just in Augusta.

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<sup>35</sup> The "Cracker Party" was a Democratic Party political machine that dominated city politics in Augusta, Georgia, for over 25 years, and exerted considerable political influence for roughly four decades after its 1946 defeat.

<sup>36</sup> A derogatory slang term referring to poor, uneducated white farmers, especially from the Southern United States. Southern whites have reclaimed the world using it with pride and defiance as a self-identifier. Similar to 'cracker' and 'hillbilly.'

**Sandy:** What was their platform?

**Maxine:** Don't ask me, I don't want to know! Today I don't think it's even in existence.

**Sandy:** That's amazing.

**Maxine:** And it was through my father that I got interested in the democratic party.

**Sandy:** Was the cracker party a sort of off-shoot of the old southern democrats?

**Maxine:** <Shakes her head> They were their own thing. I don't really know enough about their history, but they were a big factor in Augusta politics in those days.

**Sandy:** Did the Jewish community in Augusta, because it was much larger than here [in Milledgeville], was there even an issue about really wanting to go into the country club for the affluent members of the Jewish community?

**Maxine:** We weren't with the affluent ones, but I do know that there was always talk that they didn't allow Jews there, and this, that, and the other. What happened after I married and left Augusta, something happened, because they did start accepting some Jewish memberships.

**Sandy:** You mentioned that you had a special relationship with Dr. Robert . . .

**Maxine:** Greenblatt?

**Sandy:** . . . Greenblatt.

**Maxine:** Oh, yes!

**Sandy:** Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Maxine:** He was just a wonderful person, and he always treated me like I was his own. One time, I remember, I went for a checkup. I went to him at the age where a woman could go to him, then, and he said something that scared the pure devil out of me! So, I came home and told Mother what I thought he said, but I got so upset. She called him, and it ended up that she said, "Maxine, I game him hell for scaring you to death! Because it was nothing like what he was saying!"

**Sandy:** That's great. I've heard he was just so well respected in Augusta.

**Maxine:** He was. He was so loved there, he really was. My cousin married one of his sons.

**Sandy:** Oh, really? Can you talk a little bit about the synagogue? The rabbi there, was it **Rabbi Goldberg**, in Augusta?

**Maxine:** Yes. The one who committed suicide.

**Sandy:** Did you know him very well?

**Maxine:** Yes, I did, and I know more about that than I can talk about, so I'm not going there.

**Sandy:** We don't know that much about it. Is there any light you could shed on what he was like?

**Maxine:** Well, he was a good rabbi.

**Sandy:** Did people know he was troubled?

**Maxine:** They might not have known what caused his trouble. Okay.

**Sandy:** Okay, that's enough said. That must have had a large impact on the community?

**Maxine:** Oh, it did, it really did.

**Sandy:** Who replaced him?

**Maxine:** I don't remember. I'm really sorry about that.

**Sandy:** Were you still there when that happened, or were you gone?

**Maxine:** I don't remember. But I know I was involved in part of it, that I can't talk about. But it wasn't me.

<Maxine and the interviewer laugh it off>

**Sandy:** What have we left unsaid? We've talked about growing up in Augusta, we've talked about coming to Milledgeville . . . Were you involved in some of the other organizations that were more social service?

**Maxine:** Yes! The Cancer Society,<sup>37</sup> The Red Cross,<sup>38</sup> The Salvation Army,<sup>39</sup> Heart, all those things I had volunteered for, worked for, and raised money for through all the years I've lived here.

**Sandy:** And what about now? What are you involved with today?

**Maxine:** I'm still involved with the democratic party. You know, I was vice chair for ten years. I had a wonderful time. I went to eleven conventions, with my crazy hats, and met some outstanding, wonderful people. I've enjoyed that part very much. What did you ask me?

**Sandy:** Well, getting to that, how did you become so political?

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<sup>37</sup> The American Cancer Society is a nationwide voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer. Established in 1913, the society is organized into six geographical regions of both medical and lay volunteers operating in more than 250 Regional offices throughout the United States.

<sup>38</sup> The American Red Cross, also known as The American National Red Cross, is a humanitarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief, and disaster preparedness education in the United States.

<sup>39</sup> The Salvation Army is a Protestant Christian church and an international charitable organization. The organization reports a worldwide membership of over 1.7 million, consisting of soldiers, officers and adherents collectively known as Salvationists.

**Maxine:** My daddy was, but it wasn't the politics of today. It was more laid back. One night, being a supporter of the democratic party, the chairman, **Marge Thurman**, the head of the democratic party at that time, they were having a meeting in Macon, so we went over, and we met, and we clicked. Just like that. She put me in her pocket, and she started pushing me, and I know she was my mentor, and I would not be sitting here today telling you stories, I really could tell you, wonderful stories, if it hadn't been for Marge, and I always will appreciate her.

**Sandy:** What do you think of what's happening with the democratic party throughout the south?

**Maxine:** I'm not exactly sure what's happened. I know they've fallen from grace in a lot of places, but something's just happened on the news in the last day or two that might make them more cohesive, with the health plan.<sup>40</sup> I don't know any more than you do, from what I've heard on television, but there may be some hope for the health plan.

**Sandy:** Are you still very involved with them?

**Maxine:** I'm still on the state committee, I'm still on the county committee.

**Sandy:** You're very busy.

**Maxine:** Yes. I stay busy.

**Sandy:** That's wonderful.

**Maxine:** I'm on the board of two foundations: Georgia College and State University, and Georgia Military College. All of these things keep you busy, but I think it's important.

**Sandy:** That's wonderful. You got to Milledgeville right after World War II, how has it changed for you?

**Maxine:** There were dirt streets, some of them got paved thank god! A lot of them have got paved since. I don't know if there even is any dirt streets in Milledgeville now. But the people, more different types of people have moved into the community, because of the different manufacturing plants and things like that that were going on here. We've got great friends. I think we got more educated on being nice to each other, and I think that's important.

**Sandy:** Is there a club here?

**Maxine:** Yes, we have Milledgeville country club. No problems. Jake was . . . <looks off camera at Jake> weren't you one of the founding members or something? We were a founding

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<sup>40</sup> This is likely a reference to the Affordable Care Act, nicknamed "Obamacare," a United States federal statute enacted by the 111th United States Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010.

member, but I don't think we organized it. He mentioned **Mr. John Baum**, he's the one that started it.

**Sandy:** Where is it?

**Maxine:** It's out on the lake. Near lake Sinclair.<sup>41</sup>

**Sandy:** Is that what you do mostly, for socialization?

**Maxine:** No, it isn't. Don't ask me what we do, because I'm not real sure, but we stay busy.

**Sandy:** I can see that. It's been hard to get this organized!

**Maxine:** It's been about a year, I think!

**Sandy:** Yes. I think we're just about done. I think that's great. We're very grateful you agreed to participate.

**Maxine:** Well, we are delighted to do it.

<End disk 1>

**INTERVIEW ENDS**

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<sup>41</sup> Lake Sinclair is a man-made lake in central Georgia near Milledgeville. It is operated by Georgia Power.