Today is May 4, 2018. We are at the Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Atlanta, [Georgia,] interviewing Mr. Hershel Greenblat for the Taylor Oral History Project. My name is Sara Ghitis. Mr. Greenblat, could you tell me when and where you were born?

I was born April 24, 1941 outside the city of Kremenchuk [Ukraine], underground in some caves.

Where was the city?

Kremenchuk is in Ukraine. It’s southeast of Kiev, about 150 miles from Kiev.

What name were you given when you were born?

The name I was given was Grisha when I was born.

Do you know if you were named after someone?

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1 Kremenchuk or Kremenchug, an important industrial city in central Ukraine, stands on the banks of the Dnieper River in western Ukraine. There were about 19,880 Jews living in the city in 1939. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Kremenchuk was occupied on September 9, 1941. Many of the Kremenchug Jews managed to flee eastward with the retreating Red Army and according to a census conducted on September 26, 1941, only about 3,500 Jews and 100 mixed families remained. At the end of September or in early October, the Jews were forced to move into a barracks surrounded with barbed wire on the outskirts of the town. The first mass shooting took place on October 28, 1941 and continued through January 1942. The city was bombed heavily during the war and remained under German control until the Red army liberated it on September 29, 1943.

2 In another interview (with the Kennesaw State University Museum of History and Holocaust Education, which can be found at https://soar.kennesaw.edu/bitstream/handle/11360/2222/hershel-greenblat-transcript.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y), Herschel mentions that his family was hiding in the Priest’s Grotto Caves. The Priest’s Grotto Caves (also known as Ozerna or Blue Lakes) are located beneath an expanse of wheat fields within the remote farmland of Western Ukraine, southeast of Kiev, Ukraine. It is part of an extensive gypsum giant cave system and is one of the longest caves in the world. There are over 127,779 meters of passageways, caves, and an underground lake. During World War II, the caves functioned as a hiding place for several Jewish families. It is also possible Herschel and his parents were instead in the Verteba Cave. A group of 26 Ukrainian Jews, including seniors, children and three families, hid in Vertebas Cave for about six months from the fall of 1942 until spring 1943. Verteba Cave is about 8 kilometers (5 miles) away from the Priest’s Grotto Caves. It measures about 7.8 kilometers (4.8 miles) in length. It consists of maze-like passageways, often separated by thin walls, as well as broad galleries. The Gestapo captured two of the 26 during a surprise raid in 1943, forcing the others to flee. Eventually they were joined by other Jews and entered the Priest’s Grotto Caves. A documentary titled “No Place on Earth” (2012) details the story of thirty-eight Ukrainian Jews who survived the Holocaust by living in the Priest’s Grotto Caves for eighteen months.
Hershel: I was named after my grandmother.
Sara: Was your last name the same as it is now?
Hershel: Yes, Greenblat. It was spelled differently [Grinblat].
Sara: What were the names of your parents? What was your father’s name?
Hershel: My father’s name was Abraham. My mother, her name was Malka. Her last name was Mucznik.
Sara: Where were they born?
Hershel: My mother was born in the city of Kremenchuk in the Ukraine. My father was born in Lublin, Poland.\(^3\)
Sara: Do you know what brought them to this area?
Hershel: That’s where their families lived for generations.
Sara: What do you know about your ancestry before your parents?
Hershel: I really don’t know much about that. The only thing . . . I heard stories about my grandparents.
Sara: Such as?
Hershel: My father’s father was a tailor. He had a little shop in Lublin. He was also the shammash of the synagogue.\(^4\) As far as I know, my grandmother just . . . There were sixteen children in the family, so I guess she had her hands full with that.
Sara: Do you remember any stories your parents told you about their lives before the war?
Hershel: Not really. My father told me that he went to school in Lublin. That’s about all he told me. My mother really never talked about her childhood.
Sara: Do you know what your father’s occupation was before the war?
Hershel: He was a student. He was only nineteen years old.
Sara: When the war started?
Hershel: When the war started, yes.
Sara: Let us go to the Holocaust years. I heard you say that you were born in a cave?
Hershel: Yes.
Sara: How did that happen?

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\(^3\) The city of Lublin lies about 160 kilometers (99 miles) southeast of Warsaw, in eastern Poland. In August 1939, around 37,000 Jews were living there among a total population of some 122,000. German forces occupied Lublin on September 17, 1939.

\(^4\) A shammash is an official acting as the sexton or caretaker of a synagogue.
Hershel: My mother was part of an underground resistance group in the Ukraine. That’s where they hid—underground caves. She said that I was born . . . She gave birth to me in the caves.

Sara: How did it happen that your parents went to a cave?

Hershel: That’s where they were hiding. That’s all that they told me. My father actually left his home in Poland in late October of 1939 because he was being hunted by the SS. He was in the Underground in the ghetto in Lublin [Poland]. He escaped across the border into Ukraine, and found his way to the town of Kremenchuk, and that’s where they met.

Sara: The town was under German control?

Hershel: No, at the time it was still under Russian control.

Sara: Soviet?


Sara: Continue with the story.

Hershel: Okay. My father met with my mother’s group in Ukraine. That was in early 1940. My father was nineteen years old and my mother, I believe, was eighteen. They got to know each

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5 The SS or Schutzstaffel was a major paramilitary organization under Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. It began at the end of 1920 as a small, permanent guard unit known as the “Saal-Schutz” made up of Nazi Party volunteers to provide security for party meetings in Munich. Later, in 1925, Heinrich Himmler joined the unit, which had by then been reformed and renamed the “Schutz-Staffel.” Under Himmler’s leadership, it grew from a small paramilitary formation to one of the largest and most powerful organizations in the Third Reich. Under Himmler’s command, it was responsible for many of the crimes against humanity during World War II. After World War II, it was declared a criminal organization by the International Military Tribunal and banned in Germany.

6 In response to the German occupation, Poles organized one of the largest underground movements in Europe with more than 300 widely supported political and military groups and subgroups. Some Jews who managed to escape from German occupied cities and ghettos or camps formed their own fighting units. It is unclear which group Hershel’s father was involved with. There was an active resistance group in the Lublin ghetto, but the ghetto in Lublin was not created until the spring of 1941. It is possible his father had continued ties with friends and family in the ghetto and may have come to Kremenchuk with a resistance group from Lublin. He probably fled east into Soviet territory when German troops began to seize Jews for forced labor in the immediate weeks after their occupation of Lublin.

7 The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (also known as the Hitler-Stalin Pact and German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact) was a non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia signed August 23, 1939. Russia, which had a treaty with Poland to defend it if it was attacked, reneged in secret. Russia agreed to stand aside if Germany attacked Poland and not declare war on Germany. The pact provided that the two countries would not attack each other, independently or in conjunction with other powers; would not support any third power that might attack the other party to the pact; would remain in consultation with each other with regard to their common interests; would not join any power or group of powers that threatened the other; and would solve all differences between them through negotiation or arbitration. The public pact was accompanied by a secret protocol, reached on the same day, which divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. Hitler, knowing that he wasn’t going to have to fight Russia if he invaded Poland, invaded Poland just one week later, while the Soviets invaded form the east. Under the pact, the city of Lublin was within German territory. Eastern Poland and Ukraine (including the city of Kremenchuk) were under Soviet control until June 22, 1941, when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union.
other and they were married in the early summer of 1940. Then I was born about ten months later.

**Sara:** Do you know what the circumstances of life were inside the cave? Were there other people living there?

**Hershel:** There were other people in the caves. I was an infant so I don’t . . . My mother said it was dark, cold. They had to come out for food. Some of the parts of the cave were wide open; some were very closed in. She kind of just generalized everything for me.

**Sara:** Do you know any details of how they were able to get food and provisions?

**Hershel:** Food, they went out and got food from locals. My mother told me . . . She didn’t talk very much. She didn’t tell me very much about their lives before I was born.

**Sara:** Do you know how much the local population knew about the people that were hiding in the caves?

**Hershel:** Again, she really didn’t talk that much about it. I’ll be honest with you, I don’t know. She said that they hid there in the caves, came out and . . . resistance as far as against the Russian police, the Russian . . . and some of the locals also persecuted them also. That’s something that I . . .

**Sara:** This was at the time when the Russians—the Soviet Union—had a pact with Germany?

**Hershel:** Yes.

**Sara:** They were supporting the Germans?

**Hershel:** Yes. My mother said that they were fighting against Russian police. They would go out for food and supplies. Each family kind of had to take care of themselves.

**Sara:** How old were you were you when the family left the cave?

**Hershel:** We left the caves after my mother was wounded. She was wounded by some stray shrapnel from some sort of a vehicle that blew up. I have no idea if it was German [or] Russian. My mother was wounded in the upper part of her right leg. My father, having to get her medical attention, decided . . . He actually left me in the cave for about eight weeks. Then they came back after she was . . . They came back and she told me she had crutches, bandaged up. She had a about a ten or twelve inch wound in her upper right leg. After they came back, my parents felt that they were really not going to be able to help much. She was on crutches, she was wounded, and she was in pain. At that point, they decided to take me and leave.
Sara: Do you know what year that was?

Hershel: That was in early 1942, spring of 1942.

Sara: You were . . .

Hershel: Not quite a year old.

Sara: What happened after that?

Hershel: They decide to leave. They went even further east into an area of Ukraine, to a city called Krasnodon. They decided they were going to . . . My father said they destroyed their identification, all their paperwork. They would not speak any Yiddish. They just spoke mainly Russian. When they got to Krasnodon, my mom took odd jobs as a seamstress. She was still in pain. I kind of vaguely remember sleeping on the floor in people’s basements next to a stove. I do remember that my mother said something about not touching the stove, and I did, and I burned my hand. Just something . . . glimpses . . . what I remember.

Sara: While your mother was working . . . She worked inside the house?

Hershel: Yes. No, she worked for other people. We moved around.

Sara: Who took care of you?

Hershel: My mother.

Sara: While she worked?

Hershel: I don’t . . . She just said she’s the one who took care of me.

Sara: What did your father do?

Hershel: My father took a job with the Russian army in a bakery. They didn’t know that he was Jewish.

Sara: Under a false identity?

Hershel: Yes, under a false identity. He took a job. One day, he decided he was going to take a . . . At the bakery, there was a lot of baking bread. He decided he was going to take some bread home to his family. He got caught and he was put in prison by the Russians. He spent pretty much the rest of . . . That was in March of 1943. [He] was put in prison and spent the rest of the war in a Russian prison camp.

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8 Hershel’s pronunciation of the city sounds like, “Krosnauer.” It is possible he is referring to a city in eastern Ukraine, 100 kilometers (62 miles) east of Kremenchuk that was called Krasnodon (also known as Sorokino). It was a mining town that had been founded in 1914. Krasnodon was under German occupation from July 20, 1942 to February 14, 1943 and an underground anti-fascist youth organization known as the Young Guard was active there.

9 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 many European Jews up until the middle of the twentieth century.
Sara: By this time, the Russians were Allies already?\textsuperscript{10}

Hershel: Yes.

Sara: Anything else your father told you about his time in prison?

Hershel: The one picture I have was taken of him and our family. I could tell he was very [malnourished]. He was very thin. He was very sick when he got out. He didn’t really tell me much about [it].

Sara: Is this city still in Ukraine?

Hershel: It’s in the north. I think so, yes.

Sara: What happened next?

Hershel: After the war . . . A month after my father was imprisoned . . . My mother was pregnant with my sister, Anne. My sister, Anne, was born in Krasnodon. She took care of the two of us. Again, it just seems impossible, but how she did it . . . You really had to know her. She was very strong willed. She was strong of character. Her main concern was her children and that’s the way she was until the day she passed away. How she did it? I often asked her and she kind of shrugged her shoulders. She said, “I had to.”

My father was released after the war ended. At that point, there were about 20 families in that area hiding together. They decided . . . because of Communism, and the Iron Curtain, and Stalin, Jews were going to be persecuted in Russia.\textsuperscript{11} They decided they were going to escape.\textsuperscript{12} They were able to get ahold of a couple of cattle cars. My mother wrote down the number of people. She said it was a little over 210 people that left on those two cattle cars. There were 32 children, she said. They had a destination. They wanted to cross into Austria because

\textsuperscript{10} The Allies were a group of countries who worked together to oppose the Axis forces (Germany, Italy, and Japan) during World War II. At the start of the war in 1939, the Allies consisted of France, Poland and Great Britain. In 1941, the Soviet Union and the United States joined the Allies. In 1942, Allied policy was controlled by the “Big Three:” Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Other Allies included China, Canada, British Raj (India), the Netherlands, Norway and Yugoslavia. The alliance was formalized in the Declaration by United Nations in 1942.

\textsuperscript{11} The “Iron Curtain” is a term that referred to the non-physical, political, military, and ideological barrier dividing Europe into two separate areas from the end of World War II in 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. On the east side of the Iron Curtain were the countries that were connected to or influenced by the Soviet Union, while on the west side were the countries that were allied to the United States or nominally neutral.

\textsuperscript{12} After Germany’s surrender in 1945, Soviet troops occupied most of Eastern Europe, including Poland and Ukraine. As Soviet power and influence expanded, a communist dictatorship was established under Josef Stalin, who led the Soviet Union from the mid–1920s until 1953. After liberation, many Jewish survivors encountered manifestations of antisemitism, hostility, and violence from the local populations when they returned home. In postwar Poland, for, example, there were a number of pogroms (violent anti-Jewish riots). In 1946, a surge of Jewish survivors and refugees from the Soviet Union flooded into the western Allies’ zones, hoping to escape the anti-Jewish violence and further persecution from Stalin’s regime.
there was a DP camp, a displaced persons camp outside of Salzburg, Austria. That’s really my first memory. I do remember that morning that we got to the DP camp.

Sara: What was the name of the camp?
Hershel: The camp was called Beth Bialik. I think it was an old Germany army camp. There was a lot of destruction. I would say more than half of the barracks were destroyed. A lot of them were . . . There was a lot of patching going on by American soldiers or workers.

We got off the train. We were on that train for almost nine weeks because we could only travel under darkness.

Sara: You travelled east to west?
Hershel: From Krosnaureer . . . From east to west, yes.
Sara: Yes. You started saying you traveled mostly at night?
Hershel: Mostly at night. That’s why it took us so long. A few of the . . . There were a few elderly people that did pass away. They really didn’t have time to bury anybody. The bodies were kind of . . . We were sleeping with . . I was five years old. It was . . . As far as human needs, we just sat right there on the train. At night, we could get out, and go underneath the train, and go to the bathroom. My sister, Anne, was very sick. She was about two years old.

Sara: How did you get food?

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13 When hostilities ended on May 8, 1945 in Europe, as many as 100,000 Jewish survivors found themselves among the 7,000,000 uprooted and homeless people classified as displaced persons (DPs). The liberated Jews, who were plagued by illness and exhaustion, emerged from concentration camps and hiding places to discover a world in which they had no place. Bereft of home and family, most were reluctant to return to their pre-war homelands. Allied authorities and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) established and administered temporary facilities (DP Camps) across Germany, Austria, and Italy to house DPs. In a matter of months, more than 150,000 other Jews fleeing fierce antisemitism in Soviet occupied Eastern Europe joined them. From 1945 to 1952, more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons lived in camps and urban centers in Germany, Austria, and Italy. Eventually, DPs were repatriated to their home countries, reestablished themselves in new countries or immigrated outside of Europe. Most of the DP camps were closed by 1950.

14 Beth Bialik (also Beit Bialik) was one of five transient DP camps in Salzburg, Austria (There were three permanent camps). The United Nations relief and Rehabilitation administration (UNRRA) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee administered the camp.

15 As a result of post-war negotiations between the Allies and Soviet authorities, it was agreed that all Soviet citizens would be repatriated to the Soviet Union. Initially, Soviet authorities were even given free access to the DP camps in order to identify Soviet citizens for repatriation. A policy of forced repatriation gave DPs no choice and many were forcibly sent home, where they were often sent to the labor camps of the Gulag or drafted into the army, while others faced issues of postwar rebuilding and antisemitism. As wartime relations deteriorated and the Cold War emerged, however, the Allies no longer supported Soviet demands for repatriation. Soviet operatives in the DP camps began using both legal and covert methods of deception, kidnapping, bribery, and threats to force repatriation of Soviet nationals in order to curb a concentration of anti-communist political expatriates in the West. For people fleeing Soviet controlled countries, crossing borders became increasingly difficult and dangerous.
Hershel: Again, during the night we would go into people’s farms. I remember there were a lot of beets and potatoes. Sometimes they weren’t even cooked. They were raw.

Sara: Can you assume that there were local people helping?

Hershel: I don’t know that locals were helping. I think mainly that my parents and some of the others, under darkness went in to farms and took whatever they could take. There were a few days we didn’t eat at all. My mother told me that the night we crossed into Austria, the American nurses weighed all the children. She said that I was five years old and I weighed just a little over 20 pounds. We were covered in human feces. We didn’t have a change of clothing because nobody took anything. There were no possessions to take.

[They] tried to make sure we weren’t going to be caught. I found out that during that time, the Russians liked to lock the people trying to escape in the boxcars and just set the boxcars on fire. That’s why it took us so long. My memories become very clear for some reason [on] that particular night when we crossed the border into Austria.

Sara: What’s in your mind’s eye when you think of crossing the border?

Hershel: My mind’s eye is very vivid. They opened up the doors of the box car and there was a lot of . . . There were spot lights shining and a lot of American soldiers standing there helping us down. They kind of hesitated because, like I said, we had feces, urine and lice and roaches. It was not a pretty sight.

Sara: You said you were in boxcars?

Hershel: Yes, kind of like cattle cars.

Sara: Cattle cars attached . . .

Hershel: Correct, two cattle cars attached to each other. Yes.

Sara: You were very crowded?

Hershel: Yes. There were over 200 people in those two boxcars.

Sara: What happened next, once you were in the DP camp?

Hershel: As soon they took us out of the boxcars and train, the girls were separated from the boys. I remember my sister crying because my parents were taken to another area. I guess for registration and identification or whatever. They were told which barrack they were going to go to. I remember they gave my dad a couple blankets. Basically everybody took the blankets and hung them by a string or something kind of [like a wall to indicate] this is where we [live]. [In] the barracks, the floors were dirt. [There was] no heat.
Sara: What month was it?

Hershel: That was in November 1945. They took us off, and got us cleaned up, and started . . .

Sara: How were you cleaned up?

Hershel: They took the clothes off of us and washed us with washcloths. They sprayed us with a delousing powder. They had canisters that they pumped and sprayed us. The lice and everything kind of fell off us. They gave us some food. It was maybe like cream of wheat, very bland type food.

Sara: Yes, porridge.

Hershel: The kids were all scared. We wanted more food. We were thinking that was all we were going to get. They very slowly gave us . . . We were there for two or three days. They gave us clean clothes. If we needed antibiotics, if we had sores, they had someone there.

Sara: Were there other refugees?

Hershel: Yes, that’s all there was—Jewish [refugees].

Sara: You said you stayed there . . .

Hershel: The children stayed there. It was like an infirmary or hospital. I remember I had a very bad abscess on the back of my left leg. The doctors drained [it]. I remember laying on my stomach and they drained the abscess. It was very big. They seemed to be concerned about it, but . . . I was a little over five years old.

Then we met up with our parents. We stayed inside one of the barracks—again, kind of in our own area that my father took—my little sister, and I, and my mother. She still was . . . She was always in a lot of pain. Her leg was . . . She had surgery here a couple of times when we came to the United States, but it didn’t really help much.

Sara: What did you do? Did you have any occupation—something to do—in the camp?

Hershel: They tried to organize Kindergartens, cheder . . .16 There were rabbis there. They tried to give us as much of a normal life as possible, but there were hundreds and hundreds of kids. There were people in line for food every morning. [There were] people in line for food every evening. They tried to—we really didn’t have anything—find containers to put food in. It was like a total beginning. The soldiers were very good to us. There were some people there I

16 *Cheder* [Hebrew: room] is a Jewish religious elementary school for boys. Religious classes were usually held in a room attached to a synagogue or in the private home of a teacher called a ‘*melamed*.’ It was traditional for boys to start *cheder* at three or five years old, learning to read Hebrew from a primer and studying the Book of Leviticus. Girls did not attend *cheder.*
think from the UN.\textsuperscript{17} It was a concentrated effort to bring people back to normality. But this camp was mainly a transitional one. Once we got better, once we looked like human beings, we were transferred. My little sister, Ethel, was born there in 1946, in that camp. In late 1946, we were transferred to another camp called Hallein, outside of Salzburg, Austria.\textsuperscript{18}

**Sara:** I have a question. The refugees at this first camp: how many were Jewish?

**Hershel:** All of them, as far as I know. It was very . . . trying to get the kids to go to cheder. If there were other nationalities [or religions], they could have been in different parts of the camp.

**Sara:** Did they come from different places in Europe?

**Hershel:** Yes. [There were] a lot of people that had been liberated from concentration camps, a lot of people that came looking for family. This was right after the war. This was late 1945 and 1946. There were people that came that looked worse than we did. It was not a luxurious time.

I remember helping my mother [with] the pots and pans that we finally got. Our first Passover, which was I guess in the spring of 1946, she took all the pots and pans and whatever she had and they built a . . . dug a big hole in the ground, lit a bunch of logs, and put a large cauldron [on it].\textsuperscript{19} The water would boil. We took whatever pots and pans we had and tied them up in a burlap sack and put them in there. There was a rabbi there saying some sort of prayer so our pots and pans were kept kosher for Passover.\textsuperscript{20}

**Sara:** Your parents were quite observant in spite of the circumstances?

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\textsuperscript{17} Herschel is referring to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which was founded in 1943. Its mission was to provide economic assistance to European nations after World War II and to repatriate and assist the refugees who would come under Allied control. UNRRA managed hundreds of displaced persons camps in Germany, Italy, and Austria and played a major role in repatriating survivors to their home countries in 1946-1947. It largely shut down operations in 1947.

\textsuperscript{18} Hallein is a town on the outskirts of Salzburg, Austria, about 16 kilometers (10 miles) south. Hallein was the site of a work camp annex to the Dachau concentration camp during World War II. After the war, it was the site of a permanent Displaced Persons camp. In mid-1947, ORT opened a school in two of the barracks, teaching tailoring, dressmaking, electrical and radio technology, baking, beautician training, and upholstery to over 200 students. Later ORT also offered English language classes. In 1948, with the closure of other DP camps, Hallein became the Austrian collection point for Jewish émigrés to Canada and the United States. The camp closed in 1954.

\textsuperscript{19} Passover [Hebrew: Pesach] is 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.

\textsuperscript{20} Kosher/Kashrut is the set of Jewish dietary laws that dictate how food is prepared or served and which kinds of foods or animals can be eaten. Food that may be consumed according to halakhah (Jewish law) is termed ‘kosher’ in English. In a kosher kitchen and home, meat and dairy are kept separate, so a separate sets of dishes, cookware, and serving ware are needed. Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law is called ‘treif.’
Hershel: Yes, they were very observant basically through our whole stay in the camp, in both camps, and when we came to the United States, until I started school. I had to eat school lunches.

Sara: Did they respect the Sabbath\(^{21}\) or were they *shomer Shabbat*?\(^{22}\)

Hershel: In the camps?

Sara: In general.

Hershel: Yes. In the camps, the first thing that was done, they opened up synagogues. Some of the barracks were converted into synagogues. They had a makeshift tabernacle [sanctuary]. They had *Torahs*.\(^{23}\) Friday afternoon, the camp became quiet. It was very surreal I remember. On Saturdays, people would walk and rest.

There would be some people . . . a shoemaker in a little corner that would start repairing shoes or a barber. My parents’ best friends that lived across the hall from us where we were, he was a barber—one of the few barbers in the camp. I remember them. Life sort of came back to normal.

Once we looked like human beings, we were transferred to Hallein. At Hallein, we actually had our own room. They gave us our own room.

Sara: Who was in charge of this other camp? The Americans?

Hershel: The American government was pretty much in charge.

Sara: Okay. How was this camp?

Hershel: This camp was very livable. Like I said, we had our own room. We had a nice window. There was a door. They actually came in I remember and painted the room for us, cleaned it up. My parents were able to get a mattress that was on the floor on one side of the room. That’s where they slept with my sister Anne. My sister Ethel was in a crib. We had a crib. I slept on the floor on the other side of the room.

My father somehow or other was able to get ahold of a stove that burned wood. We were one of the few that had a stove because of my father’s underground [black market]

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\(^{21}\) *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.

\(^{22}\) Someone who is *shomer* [Hebrew: to guard, watch, or preserve] *Shabbat* observes commandments for the Jewish Sabbath from sundown Friday evening until sundown Saturday evening.

\(^{23}\) *Torah* [Hebrew: teaching] is a general term that covers all Jewish law including the vast mass of teachings recorded in the *Talmud* and other rabbinical works.
dealings.\textsuperscript{24} Some of the stuff that I feel that he did as far as the underground . . . selling cigarettes and jewelry. He did whatever he had to do. He did a pretty good job of it. Actually, we were pretty comfortable.

Sara: What were your parents aiming at? Where did they want to end up?

Hershel: \textit{Eretz Yisrael}.\textsuperscript{25}

Sara: \textit{Eretz Yisrael}?

Hershel: Yes. Everyone in the camp wanted to go to Israel. My mother had family that already was in Israel. She had two sisters that left in the early 1930s from Ukraine and went to Israel—two older sisters. She had two sisters and two brothers.

Sara: You were in the camp. Was there something ahead for you—a plan—to make it possible to go to Israel?

Hershel: There was a plan.

Sara: How were you going to go about it?

Hershel: Again, just like everybody else after the war, [we thought] somehow we were going to get on a ship and go to Israel. But we were told by the officials that if we were waiting to go to Israel, it was going to be another eight or ten years [because of] the British blockades.\textsuperscript{26} The declaration . . . Israel declared their independence.\textsuperscript{27} There was a war.\textsuperscript{28} I remember my mother

\textsuperscript{24} A black market, underground economy, or shadow economy is a clandestine market or transaction that has some aspect of illegality or is characterized by some form of noncompliant behavior with an institutional set of rules. During and in the years immediately after World War II, rationing and shortages forced many Europeans to rely on goods and services produced and sold in the underground economy.

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Eretz Yisrael} [Hebrew: land of Israel] is an expression used to designate the land of Israel, as God promised it to the Jewish people, according to Biblical tradition.

\textsuperscript{26} After World War I, Britain took over Palestine. Although protested by the Arab states, the League of Nations authorized the British mandate over Palestine, which continued throughout World War II. Beginning in 1929, Arabs and Jews openly fought in Palestine, and Britain attempted to limit Jewish immigration as a means of appeasing the Arabs. Jewish immigration was restricted by a series of official reports (known as White Papers) issued in 1922 and 1930 by the British government. The Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 further caused Great Britain to dramatically limit the numbers of immigrants allowed into Palestine in subsequent years and throughout the Holocaust. In 1939, a third White Paper was issued, which limited Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 for the first five years, subject to the country's "economic absorptive capacity," and would later be contingent on Arab consent. At the end of World War II, Britain continued to strictly limit Jewish immigration to Palestine.

\textsuperscript{27} Jewish resistance organizations managed to smuggle hundreds of thousands of survivors from Europe into Palestine via "illegal" immigrant ships. The British intercepted most ships, however, and began to intern the immigrants they caught in camps. With international pressure mounting in 1945, Britain, unable to find a practical solution, referred the problem to the United Nations, which in November 1947 voted to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in May 1948 when the British mandate was scheduled to end. After the British began the withdrawal of their military forces from Palestine in early April 1948, Zionist leaders moved to establish a modern Jewish state. On May 14, 1948—the day the British Mandate over Palestine expired—David Ben-Gurion, the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, announced the formation of the state of Israel.

\textsuperscript{28} After the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, war broke out when five Arab nations invaded territory in the
said that officials came into the camp and announced that we could sign up to go to America. My mother decided just to sign up. She just didn’t want to stay in a DP camp for another eight or ten years.

Sara: Do you know what organization that was?

Hershel: That was again the United States Immigration and Naturalization [Service]. On my green card that I have a picture of—I had to relinquish that when I got my citizenship—it said it was the Immigration Act of 1940 something that was signed I believe by President Truman.

We had to go through the process. That process took us almost three years.

Sara: How long did you stay in the second camp?

Hershel: Our total in both camps . . . The first camp was from November of 1945 until October or November of 1946. We left Beth Biali. I have a picture. My mother said that picture was taken about two days before we left, and you can see the snow on the ground. We left for Hallein. It was about ten miles away.

Sara: You stayed how long?

Hershel: From 1946 . . . We left Hallein in late September of 1950. From there, they told us we were ready to go. We went to a holding camp outside Bremerhaven, Germany. We were in that holding camp for about two or three weeks. We left Bremerhaven, Germany on an army transport ship on November 16, 1950.

Sara: Do you remember what ship it was?

Hershel: The USS General Ballou. I remember that ship very vividly.

former Palestinian mandate immediately following the announcement of independence. Fighting continued until February 1949, when Israel and its neighboring states of Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria agreed to formal armistice lines.

29 A green card is an identification card indicating the holder’s status to live and work in the USA permanently. It allows a non-U.S. citizen to gain permanent residence in the United States.

30 After the war ended, President Harry S. Truman favored efforts to ease US immigration restrictions for Jewish displaced persons but existing laws had no provisions for displaced persons until Truman issued a directive on December 22, 1945, ordering the State Department to fill existing quotas and give first preference to displaced persons. Still, of the 40,000 visas issued under the program, only about 28,000 went to Jews and between 1946 and 1948, only 16,000 Jewish refugees entered the United States. In 1948, Congress passed legislation to admit more DPs to the United States. The 1948 Displaced Persons Act authorized the entry of 202,000 displaced persons over the next two years but within the quota system. When the act was extended for two more years in 1950, it increased displaced-person admissions to 415,000.

31 Bremerhaven is a port city on Germany’s North Sea coast.

32 The USS General C. C. Ballou was a Navy transport ship first launched in March 1945. It was named in honor of United States Army General Charles Clarence Ballou (1862-1928). In 1949, the ship began sailing between Europe and the United States with refugees before later being used to transport troops in the Korean War. She was placed out of service in September 1954, sold for commercial use, and later scrapped in 1981. According to the ship’s manifest, Herschel’s family set sail aboard the USS Ballou, leaving Bremerhaven, Germany on November 14, 1950.
Sara: What do you remember about the trip?

Hershel: When we first got on that ship, my mother and my sisters were in another part of the ship. My mother was very ill. She never got out of bed on that ship.

Sara: She was seasick?

Hershel: Not seasick. Actually in pain. Her leg was . . . and seasick. My sisters were with her. My father and I were in another part of the ship. It was just stacked like bunks. My father took a job in the commissary or where they cooked. He was very resourceful at making sure his family had food. I got seasick twice. I still remember that ship went up <gestures with hand to show it went up and down>. It wasn’t a cruise ship, but we had food. It was good. They had places for kids to play. It was Navy personnel on the ship. It took us about ten days.

Sara: How was the arrival?

Hershel: I believe it was the twentieth-fifth of November, right before Thanksgiving. I was asleep. My father came down and I was there. [He] woke me up. We went on deck with everybody else. It was a very cold morning. We saw the New York [City] skyline and the Statue of Liberty. Everybody was crying and cheering. The soldiers were pointing at the Statue of Liberty, trying to get us to understand because we didn’t . . .

Sara: Were you able to get entry to the United States because you had a sponsor in America?

Hershel: No. I guess the Jewish Welfare Federation of Atlanta . . . Originally our papers said that we were going to New Castle, Indiana. The story I got from my parents was that each state had a certain quota. The quota for Indiana closed off. I have my entry papers. On the bottom, it said where in Indiana and they crossed it off, and we came to Atlanta by train.

Sara: You got off the ship . . .

and arrived in New York on November 25, 1950.

33 An Affidavit of Support and Sponsorship was among the criteria applicants seeking an entry visa into the United States during the 1930s and 1940s had to meet. This required two sponsors who were United States citizens or had permanent resident status. Sponsors had to provide proof of their financial status (Federal tax returns and an affidavit from their bank and employer) to ensure that the immigrants would not become dependent upon social welfare programs.

34 The Jewish Welfare Fund was one of the preceding organizations of the current Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. Its function was to fundraise for the Jewish community centrally and disperse it throughout the Jewish community (locally, nationally and internationally) rather than each Jewish institution trying to raise money individually. The Atlanta Jewish Federation was formally incorporated in 1967 and is the result of the merger of the Atlanta Federation for Jewish Social Service founded in 1905 as the Federation of Jewish Charities; the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation founded in 1936 as the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund; and the Atlanta Jewish Community Council founded in 1945. The organization was renamed the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in 1997.

35 New Castle is a city in Indiana, 44 miles east-northeast of Indianapolis.
Hershel: Yes, we got off the ship. My parents got all of our green cards. My sisters and I were taken to kind of like a daycare area. There were toys. There were Red Cross volunteers that came in with donuts and milk, and gave us little gift boxes, and made us feel [that] this was something that was going to be good.36

Right after we got all our papers, they put us on a train. None of us spoke English. My father was given a bag with some food in it. I remember the jar of herring. The next morning, the conductor comes over to us and asks if we want breakfast, something to eat. He brought out bacon and eggs. That was not a pretty sight. Then they told us we had to get off the train. That was in Washington, D.C.

Sara: Did anyone eat the bacon and eggs?

Hershel: No. We didn’t eat any of the eggs even because they were laying right next to the bacon.37 It was . . . I think it was more funny. At the time . . .

Sara: You got off the train in Washington, D.C.?

Hershel: We had no idea where we were.

Sara: Why did you get off?

Hershel: The conductor told us we had to get off. We were going to change trains in Washington to go to Atlanta. We had no idea . . . Atlanta. It was Union Station in Washington.38 We just stayed there. We had on our best German-type clothing. I had my lederhosen. A GI walks over to us.39 My father just shoves our papers in his face. He looks and finally figures out what’s going on. About a half hour later he gets us to the train to Atlanta. He gave my sisters and I some fruit. He had a package. He was on his way home for Thanksgiving. He also gave me a fifty-cent piece that I still have, that I treasure just as a reminder.

Sara: How was it that the GI approached you? You were a family of five . . .

Hershel: Five, yes. For a while . . .

Sara: Did you have any money?

36 The International Committee of the Red Cross (“Red Cross”) is a humanitarian institution based in Geneva, Switzerland. At the end of World War II, the Red Cross worked with national Red Cross societies to organize relief assistance to those countries most severely affected by the war.
37 According to Jewish law, pigs are not considered a kosher animal because they have split hooves. Therefore, pork and any food from a pig—such as bacon—is forbidden.
38 Opened in 1907, Union Station is a major train station, transportation hub, and leisure destination in Washington, D.C.
39 “GI” is a nickname given to American soldiers during the Second World War. GI stands for "Government Issue."
**Hershel:** My father I think was given some money at Ellis Island, but [the solider] kept looking over. He kept looking at us. He finally decided he was going to try to help.

**Sara:** When you were there in the station, do you think your father had any idea what to do next?

**Hershel:** No. There was no one. I think it was one of the few times my father kind of was as lost as we were.

**Sara:** This GI comes along . . .

**Hershel:** Right, [he] comes along and gets us on the right train for Atlanta. From Washington to Atlanta, the next day was Thanksgiving Day. We get to Atlanta and, I think if you looked back at the weather, it snowed that day in Atlanta. We get to the station here in Atlanta and the train stops. We just sat there. We had no idea where we were. If the train would have gone on, we would have gone on because we had no idea. Finally after about an hour or so, Dr. Leon Rosen, who was with the Jewish Welfare at the time, came on the train and took us off the train. He said they had been looking for us for hours. [He] took us off the train and we got in a taxi. They took us to the Jefferson Hotel on . . . Pryor Street, right across the street where [the Fulton County] Superior Court is now.⁴⁰ There was a hotel. I remember the room number. We were on the fifth floor [in] room 510. We stayed there . . . We got there November 27. We got to Mrs. Goldwasser, who was our sponsor or the house where we lived, on December 10.

**Sara:** Let us go back a little. You see Atlanta for the first time. Now you are an older kid. What did you see? What was the impression?

**Hershel:** We didn’t see very much because we stayed in our hotel room. My parents wouldn’t . . . We tried to go out. We had to find food. One day, my father said that he saw a restaurant around the corner. The place was called Thompson’s . . . They had these places where they had food inside these little [cabinets] and you opened [the doors to serve yourself], but all they had were salads. Then you had to order. They had a menu but we didn’t know what to . . . We ate salad for a few days. I didn’t see much of the city at that time.

**Sara:** Tell me again where the hotel was located.

**Hershel:** I think it’s Pryor Street and across the street from Fulton County Superior Court. It was the Jefferson Hotel.

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⁴⁰ The Jefferson Hotel, built in 1921, was located at the intersection of Alabama and Pryor Streets. In 1980, a fire destroyed the building.
Sara: What is there now?

Hershel: An office building. The hotel has been torn down.

Sara: What category hotel?

Hershel: It was a regular hotel. It wasn’t like a motel type. It had a bed and a little table. It had a bathroom. That was the first time that we had a bathroom indoors.

Sara: You said the lady appeared who was the sponsor?

Hershel: No, they came and told my father they had a home for us. It was upstairs from a family—Mr. and Mrs. Goldwasser on Capital Avenue. I remember the lady who came for us was Mickie Eisenberg, who I believe someone said she just passed away not too long ago. She was kind of in charge of the welfare, like JF&CS is now. She took us to Mrs. Goldwasser’s. It was a Friday afternoon.

When we got there, our two wooden crates that we packed up at the camp were there. My father opened up the crates and my mother took out her Shabbas candelabra. She was going to light Shabbas candles. That was the first thing she did. I remember about 45 minutes later, Mrs. Goldwasser came up. She had a big trey of broiled chicken, and vegetables, and a big chocolate cake. It was good.

Sara: By the way, the candelabra . . . Is it still in the family?

Hershel: No. That’s kind of a sore story. My father remarried a few years after my mother passed away to a lady he had actually met in the DP camp. He found her here. She lived in California, so he moved to California and he took the candelabra with him. That’s the last I saw of it.

Sara: I want to ask you: In what language did you communicate?

Hershel: With my parents?

Sara: Yes.

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41 Miriam "Mickie" Greenberg Eisenberg Krinsky (1925—2018) was born in Atlanta, Georgia, where she and her first husband, David Eisenberg, helped build the foundation of Atlanta's vibrant Jewish community. Mickie was a passionate leader for many years at the Hebrew Academy of Atlanta, the Jewish Federation, Hadassah, and Congregation Shearith Israel. After David died, she remarried Joseph Krinsky.

42 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 member organization of the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies (AJFCA).

43 Women traditionally do the lighting of the candles on Friday evening before sundown to usher in the Sabbath. After lighting the candles the woman waves her hands over them, covers her eyes and recites a blessing: “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light Shabbat candles.”
Hershel: Yiddish. I spoke a little bit of Russian when we were in the DP camps. I could [understand it], but it kind of went away. It was Yiddish. That was basically it. My parents—when they wanted for us not to know they were talking about, they spoke in Polish.

Sara: When did you have your own home in Atlanta?

Hershel: Actually, we rented. My father rented. We didn’t buy a house until . . . 1971.

Sara: What was your first home?

Hershel: Mrs. Goldwasser’s upstairs. [The Goldwasses] lived downstairs. It was a two-story.

Sara: You rented?

Hershel: Yes.

Sara: Did the Jewish community help you pay?

Hershel: I don’t know. I do know that the rent was $30 a month. Whether they paid, my parents never really discussed anything like that with the kids.

Sara: What was the address?

Hershel: 636 Capital Avenue Southeast, Atlanta, Georgia.

Sara: Is there something else there now?

Hershel: No, this is right across the street where Turner Field is now. What’s there now is a parking lot.

Sara: Okay. Your life in Atlanta started at that point.

Hershel: Yes.

Sara: How old were you?

Hershel: I was eight years old.

Sara: School?

Hershel: That next Monday morning—that was December 12, 1950—Mrs. Goldwasser came upstairs . . . She let me get dressed and my sisters get dressed. She took us by the hand and we walked down the street to James L. Key Elementary School. We went into the Principal’s

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44 Turner Field is a baseball park located in Atlanta, Georgia. From 1997 until 2016, it served as the home ballpark to the Atlanta Braves of Major League Baseball (MLB). Originally built as Centennial Olympic Stadium in 1996 to serve as the centerpiece of the 1996 Summer Olympics, the stadium was converted into a baseball park to serve as the new home for the Braves. Turner Field is located less than one block from the site of the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, their home ballpark from 1966 to 1996. When the Braves moved to a new stadium, SunTrust Park, which opened in north Atlanta in 2016, the stadium was reconfigured for the second time, redesigned for college football as Georgia State Stadium.

45 James L. Key Elementary School was located at Ormond Street and Capital Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia and was in existence from at least the 1940’s through the 1960’s.
office. Her name was Mrs. Cates . . . My sister was crying. She was scared. Of course, I was petrified. I had no idea what was going to happen to us.

Mrs. Rankton, who was the Kindergarten teacher, came in to get my sister. A few minutes later, the third grade teacher, Francis Fidelman—that was her first year teaching—came walking in, in Yiddish introduced herself, and told me that was the last time she was going to speak Yiddish to me. That was . . . In the next six months, I learned how to read, and write, and History. That was the year that Miss Fidelman got married. She’s still alive. She and I are very close friends.

Sara: What do you owe her?

Hershel: I owe her everything. I was scared. [I had] had very little discipline because in the DP camp, I didn’t see my father very much. He traveled all over to try to find family. He found out that most of his family were killed at Majdanek outside of Lublin [Poland]. Most of my mother’s family were machine gunned to death by the Einsatzgruppen outside their town. Other than my mother’s two sisters or her family in Israel, there was no one left.

Sara: How did the other students behave towards you?

Hershel: There was a couple of them . . . Third graders are third graders. I still had my German type clothing, but Miss Fidelman protected me. She really did. She made sure that kids didn’t physically . . . but she gave me a little bit of a leash and get to know everybody. I learned how to play baseball. The kids were pretty good. Some of them were . . . I got called . . . A couple of them called me a Nazi. It was . . . She interceded. She was there for me.

Sara: Did your family become affiliated with a synagogue?

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46 Majdanek was established in July 1941 and served many purposes. The Lublin concentration camp received its more widely known nickname “Majdanek” (“Little Majdan”) due to its proximity to the Majdan Tatarski suburb of Lublin, Poland. Majdanek concentration camp is also often called the “other Auschwitz.” It was intended to provide labor for the entire region, which the SS wanted to turn into a German military-industrial-agricultural utopia. It provided a labor pool (mostly Jews) for labor camps in the area. Between 74,000 and 90,000 Jews were deported to Majdanek throughout its life. It also served as a transit camp for Polish and Soviet citizens who were being sent to forced labor in Germany. On November 3-4, 1943, most of the Jewish prisoners were murdered by shooting in the camp in an Aktion (German: action, operation) called “Operation Erntefest” (“Harvest Festival.”) Majdanek had a small gas chamber and crematorium so it was also an immediate extermination site although not on the scale of Auschwitz-Birkenau. About 500,000 persons passed through the camp over its life of which about 360,000 were murdered in a variety of ways. The camp was evacuated as the Russian army advanced with about half of the prisoners being sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In July 1944, the Russians liberated the camp.

47 The Einsatzgruppen were mobile units that followed the regular German army (Wehrmacht) into the Soviet Union when Germany invaded it in June 1941. The four major groups were identified as ‘A,’ ‘B,’ ‘C,’ and ‘D’ and were broken up into smaller units (Einsatzkommandos) as they moved into occupied territories. They were responsible for the deaths of a minimum of 1,000,000 Jews in the occupied East as well as anyone they perceived as an enemy of the state.
Hershel: Yes. We were on Capital Avenue. There were two synagogues on Washington Street—Shearith Israel with Rabbi [Tobias] Geffen and, of course, the [Ahavath Achim] with, at that time, Rabbi [Harry] Epstein. We were the little schul and AA was the big schul. [They were] about three blocks apart. We became affiliated with Shearith Israel.

Sara: Are you still affiliated with them?

Hershel: No. My children became members at the Dor Tamid Reform Synagogue in John’s Creek [Georgia].

Sara: What about making a living? What did your father do?

Hershel: My father was given a job with London Iron and Metal Company that was owned by Mr. Max London and Mr. Sidney Feldman, whose pictures are all over this building [the Breman Museum]. He basically just rode on a truck, collecting scrap metal. He did that for about a little over a year. Then a piece of metal fell of a truck or something and pinned him. [He] hurt

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48 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. Tobias Geffen who was the rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta, Georgia from 1910 to 1970. After World War II, Rabbi Tobias Geffen moved the congregation to University Drive, where it became the first synagogue in DeKalb County. In the 1960’s, they removed the barrier between the men and women’s sections in the sanctuary, and officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement in 2002.

49 Ahavath Achim Congregation (often referred to as “AA”) was organized in 1886 as Congregation Ahawas Achim (Brotherly Love) and is Atlanta’s second oldest Jewish congregation. Organized by Jews of Eastern European descent, the congregation’s founding members felt uncomfortable in the established Hebrew Benevolent Congregation (The Temple) comprised primarily of Jews from Germany, who by the late 1800s had begun to liberalize their Orthodox doctrine. Originally located in a rented room at 106 Gilmer Street, the congregation would make a succession of moves, to 120 Gilmer Street, to a hall on Decatur Street in 1895, to its first building in 1901 on the corner of Gilmer Street and Piedmont Avenue, to its second building on Washington Street in 1921, and finally, to its present location on Peachtree Battle Avenue in 1958. In 1928, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein was hired as Rabbi. He retained that position for the next 50 years. During the early years of Rabbi Epstein’s tenure, he slowly made innovations and modifications in congregational activities. By 1952, Ahavath Achim joined the Conservative Movement, with the most noticeable shift from Orthodoxy being the gradual change to mixed seating. Today, Ahavath Achim Congregation is the largest Conservative congregation in Atlanta.

50 Shul is a Yiddish word for synagogue that is derived from a German word meaning “school,” and emphasizes the synagogue's role as a place of study.

51 Established in 2005, Congregation Dor Tamid is a Reform Jewish synagogue in Johns Creek, a suburb north of Atlanta, Georgia.

52 The London Iron and Metal Co. was a scrap metal salvage company founded in Atlanta, Georgia in 1936 by Mary and Max London. Along with their nephew, Sidney Feldman, they built their business into one of the foremost metal recycling businesses in the Southeast. The company was sold in 1989.

53 Sidney Feldman (1921-2005) was a leader of many organizations, both nationally and in Atlanta. Among his many honors were the B’nai B’rith Man of the Year, the Anti-Defamation League Abe Goldstein Human Relation's Award, Prime Minister's Medallion on the 25th anniversary of Israel, the National Council of Christians and Jews ‘Good Neighbor Award,’ and the American Jewish Committee Award for Advancing Understanding Among All People. He was National Vice-President of United Jewish Appeal, President Emeritus of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta and past president of several organizations including the William Breman Jewish Home, and the Marcus Jewish Community Center.
his back. We thought he wasn’t going to be able to walk. He was in the hospital for a number of weeks.

When he finally got out of the hospital, Mr. London took my father to the bank and cosigned a loan for my father. My father bought a small neighborhood grocery store in a Black ghetto neighborhood,\textsuperscript{54} which is what a lot of the immigrants did when they came to the United States. My father bought that store on 4\textsuperscript{th} Street in the summer of 1952.

\textbf{Sara}: What was the name of the store?

\textbf{Hershel}: Abe’s Market.

\textbf{Sara}: What did he have there? All kinds of fresh groceries?

\textbf{Hershel}: It was fresh, yes. It was in an African American neighborhood so he had all kinds of pork type [products]. He learned how to become a butcher. It was a very small . . .

\textbf{Sara}: How did he relate to the community around him?

\textbf{Hershel}: Relate? He owned that store from 1952 until almost 1970. He became very beloved because he helped. He gave food on credit. He gave food away. He would tell the children that came near the store, if they wanted to try and steal something, just to let him know and he would give them something to eat. The families [and] everyone in that area adored him. It was a good way for him to kind of pay it back.

\textbf{Sara}: I understand there is a Martin Luther King, Jr. connection of some kind?\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{Hershel}: Yes. 4\textsuperscript{th} Street is . . . Dr. King’s church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, is about four or five blocks away from where the store was.\textsuperscript{56} Dr. King came in the neighborhood—this was

\textsuperscript{54} Hershel’s father opened a small grocery store in the poor, Buttermilk Bottom neighborhood of Atlanta, now in Old Fourth Ward. The area is just south of where his family lived.

\textsuperscript{55} 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 United States’ cities.

\textsuperscript{56} Ebenezer Baptist Church was completed in 1922 and is located in Atlanta’s historic Sweet Auburn district. Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr. became pastor of Ebenezer in 1931 and served until his retirement in 1975. From 1960 until his assassination in 1968, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., joined his father as Co-Pastor, giving Ebenezer international stature. Ebenezer Baptist Church is now part of The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site.
almost ten years after my father was in the [store]—and introduced himself. He had heard about my dad. Dr. King wanted really to know about his history. I was there twice. I came to pick up my father and take him home from work because I was the only one that finally bought a car and started driving. He never drove. His nerves were shot. They became friends. They talked.

**Sara:** Did you help in the store?

**Hershel:** Yes, we all had to especially on . . . He had to open on Saturday because that’s when everybody came to shop, so we . . . I got out of school late Friday afternoon. I would get on the number six bus and take it to his store, right off of Forest Avenue. I’d help him on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings. For the first couple of years, he woke me up, and we went, and got on the bus, and we’d open the store. Yes. My sisters helped later on.

**Sara:** Where were you living at this time?

**Hershel:** We stayed with Mrs. Goldwasser a little over a year. They bought a house in northeast Atlanta off Rock Springs Road [in northeast Atlanta], so they sold the house. We had to move. We were basically across the street at 595 Capitol Avenue. It was a bigger apartment. We lived there at 595 until the summer of 1955, when I finished at James L Peale. The next summer I was supposed to go to high school. Instead of going to Hoke Smith High School on Georgia Avenue, we moved closer to the synagogue. That’s when Shearith Israel moved over on University [Drive]. We got an apartment off of North Highland Avenue a few blocks from the synagogue, because my parents wanted . . . From there, that’s where I grew up, went to high school, and I got married in 1964. That was when I left home.

**Sara:** Let us go back a little.

**Hershel:** Okay, let’s go back.

**Sara:** You went to high school. What kind of a student were you?

**Hershel:** B’s [and] some C’s.

**Sara:** Did you make friends in high school?

**Hershel:** Yes.

Any other activities?

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57 Hoke Smith High School was a high school in Atlanta, Georgia from 1947 to 1985. It was named for Michael Hoke Smith who was a United States Senator from Georgia, the 58th Governor of Georgia, and United States Secretary of the Interior.

58 Highland Avenue is a major thoroughfare in northeast Atlanta, forming a major business corridor connecting five Intown neighborhoods.
Hershel: Yes, AZA\textsuperscript{59} and B’nai B’rith.\textsuperscript{60} I became very much involved with AZA, in an AZA chapter. A lot of close friends.

Sara: Do you remember the names?

Hershel: Yes, my best friend [was] Bobby Newman. He’s passed away. Then the friend that I still have, Ricky Katz, who is a retired attorney. Through him is how I became part of the Breman. I had a lot of friends, but they were the only two that really knew I was a survivor.

Sara: Do you have a feel of how survivors were received by the community in those days? Of course you were very young. Was there interest in your stories or were you interested in telling them?

Hershel: Not really. I don’t think anyone was interested. A lot of the immigrants at that time were busy getting their lives together. They were called the ‘greenies.’\textsuperscript{61}

Sara: The greenies?

Hershel: Yes. The group, [Eternal Life-]\textit{Hemshech} \ldots My father was one of the founders of \textit{Hemshech}.\textsuperscript{62} Very close. I was the oldest of the Greenies’ children. They had the Jewish Alliance over on Capital Avenue. Everybody kind of met there. Some of the people that I’m working with now, they were young kids.

Sara: What happened after high school?

Hershel: After high school—I graduated in 1960—I took a job with Davison's Department Store downtown,\textsuperscript{63} which was a Macy’s store.\textsuperscript{64} I went to night school at Georgia Tech.\textsuperscript{65} I was

\textsuperscript{59} 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 (BBG).

\textsuperscript{60} B’nai B’rith International [Hebrew: Children of the Covenant] is the oldest Jewish service organization in the world. B’nai B’rith states that it is committed to the security and continuity of the Jewish people and the State of Israel and combating antisemitism and bigotry. Its mission is to unite persons of the Jewish faith and to enhance Jewish identity through strengthening Jewish family life, to provide broad-based services for the benefit of senior citizens, and to facilitate advocacy and action on behalf of Jews throughout the world.

\textsuperscript{61} A ‘greenhorn’ is an inexperienced person, and oftentimes refers to newcomers who are unfamiliar with the ways of a place or group. The form “greeny” or “greenie” was also widespread in America.

\textsuperscript{62} Eternal Life-\textit{Hemshech} is an organization of Atlanta Holocaust survivors, their descendants and friends dedicated to commemorating the 6,000,000 Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Approximately 100 Holocaust survivors living in Atlanta, Georgia founded Eternal Life-\textit{Hemshech} in 1964. \textit{Hemshech} is a Hebrew word that means “continuation.” Their purpose was to "perpetuate the memory of their beloved families along with all of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust." The group wanted the memorial to serve as a place to say \textit{Kaddish}, the Jewish prayer for the dead. The committee was comprised Abraham Gastfiend, Mala Gastfiend, Gaston Nitka, Rubin Lansky, and Rubin Pichulik. Dr. Leon Rosen served as chairman and Lola Lansky and Nathan Bromberg were co- chairs. The Memorial to Six Million was dedicated in Atlanta’s Greenwood Cemetery in 1965.

\textsuperscript{63} 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
going to get a business degree at Georgia Tech. As things went, I kind of worked my way up at Davison’s. They invited me to join their JET squad, the Junior Executive Training squad, so I got a real good—it took about 4 years—indoctrination into retail. I worked for them for a long time. Then, I left them when I . . . right before we got married. I stayed in retail [at] a company called Zayre, which was a W.T. Grant. I stayed in retail. Then I decided management was not very much money and a lot of long hours, so I went into sales. I sold high-end furniture at Macy’s. I was in sales pretty much the rest of my [career].

**Sara:** In the meantime, you met your wife?

**Hershel:** Yes.

**Sara:** How did that happen?

**Hershel:** We actually met when I was 13. She was 12. A close friend of her mother and a close friend of my mother [was] Mrs. Alexander. Her mother came to Mrs. Alexander saying that her two daughters—Rochelle is a twin—were going on a hayride [with] some sort of a little club they were in . . . to Piedmont Park. They asked if I would accompany one of them on the hayride. I was 13. Actually, I accompanied her sister, Helene. Rochelle was there. We met, but she was with another guy. After the hayride, I didn’t see them again until 1963.

A friend of mine—it was Friday night—called me, and said he was having a party, and wanted me to bring my record collection. My sisters and I had one of the largest record collections of 45’s of all the Sixties [music]. I said, “Yeah, I’ll come to the party.” I gathered up

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

64 Macy’s, originally R. H. Macy & Co., is a chain of department stores owned by American multinational corporation Macy’s, Inc. As of January 2014, it operates 850 department stores locations in the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam, with a prominent Herald Square flagship location in New York City.

65 The Georgia Institute of Technology (commonly referred to as ‘Georgia Tech’ or ‘Tech’) is a public research university in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States. It is a part of the University System of Georgia. The educational institution was founded in 1885 as the Georgia School of Technology as part of Reconstruction plans to build an industrial economy in the post-Civil War Southern United States.

66 Zayre was a chain of discount stores that operated in the eastern half of the United States from 1956 to 1990. The company's headquarters was in Framingham, Massachusetts. In October 1988, Zayre's parent company, Zayre Corp., sold the stores to the competing Ames Department Stores, Inc. chain, and in June 1989, Zayre Corp. merged with one of its subsidiaries, The TJX Companies, parent company of T.J. Maxx.

67 W. T. Grant or Grants was a United States-based chain of mass-merchandise stores founded by William Thomas Grant that operated from 1906 until 1976. The stores were generally of the variety store format located in downtowns. The first "W. T. Grant Co. 25 Cent Store" opened in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1906. At the time of the demise of William Thomas Grant in 1972, the business had expanded to almost 1,200 stores.

68 Piedmont Park is a 189-acre park located just north of downtown Atlanta. It was originally designed by Joseph Forsyth Johnson to host the first Piedmont Exhibition in 1887.
my records and drove over to his house. I had just bought a brand new car. [I] drove over to his house and there were a bunch of kids, people there.

Rochelle was sitting in a corner. She had just gotten out of the hospital. She was burned in a house fire trying to make a cup of coffee for her grandfather, who lived with them. She wasn’t feeling good. The guy that brought her there started drinking or whatever. She asked if I . . . I finally recognized her. We started talking, reminiscing about the hayride. She asked if I would drive her home. I did and said, “Goodnight.” That was it.

That Sunday, my friend had also just bought a car. He called and said he was going to take his girlfriend in the new car over to Stone Mountain and wanted to know if I wanted to go. I said, “Nah, I don’t want to be a third wheel.” At that time, I wasn’t dating anybody. I was mainly trying to get ahead at Davidsons. He said, “Well, call somebody.” I remembered Rochelle. She had given me her phone number. I called and asked her mother. [She] said, “Yes,” and that was it. That was in March of 1963. We got married a year and a half later. That was over 50 years ago.

Sara: Do you have children?

Hershel: Yes.

Sara: Tell me about your children.

Hershel: My son, Jeff, was born the day after [Rochelle’s] birthday in 1966. Then I have a son, Jacob. He was born about four years later. I have two sons—Jeff and Jacob.

Sara: Where have you lived as a married couple?

Hershel: In Atlanta pretty much. Our first apartment was Rock Springs Apartments off Rock Springs Road. They were apartments that were built during President [Theodore] Roosevelt’s administration, from 1901 to 1909, so they were older apartments. At that time, I was working for Zayre’s. A lot of new apartments were going up all over. There was an apartment complex that was being built on Briarcliff Road [in northeast Atlanta]. We decided to get a one-bedroom apartment. It had air conditioning. We were pretty . . . That was . . .

Sara: From there, where did you move?

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69 Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) was the 26th President of the United States from 1901-1909. He was the vice-president and when President McKinley was assassinated on September 6, 1901 Roosevelt became President. Known as ‘TR’ or ‘Teddy Roosevelt’ his famous slogan was “Speak softly and carry a big stick.” He is also known for the ‘Rough Riders,’ a volunteer cavalry regiment he formed that fought in Cuba in the Spanish-American War. He was a Democrat and started a third party of his own, the Bull Moose Party.
Hershel: We stayed in those apartments. When Jeff was born, we moved into a two-bedroom. Then we moved up the hill [to] newer apartments that were a little bit nicer than the ones that we were originally [in]. Then we kind of moved around and moved out to Norcross [Georgia].

My son Jacob went to Norcross High School [in Norcross, Georgia]. My son Jeff went to Lakeside High School [in Atlanta, Georgia]. They both went to the Hebrew Academy. Then they went, of course, to high school. Hebrew Academy . . . The day before my mother died, she made me promise that they would both go to the Hebrew Academy, so I did. They both finished at the Hebrew Academy. [I am] very proud of them. They know Hebrew. They both . . .

Sara: They got a Jewish education.

Hershel: Yes. We just had the most beautiful seder at my son’s house up in Connecticut. Jeff and Rochel and I were the only Jews at the seder. Everybody else were friends of his. He has a lot of friends that are professionals. They were some people that worked for . . . there were attorneys, and there were grief counselors, professors . . .

Sara: Grandchildren?

Hershel: Yes. My favorite subject. Jeff was married to Suzanne Ginsberg. They met at Hebrew Academy . . . Not quite a year after they were married, my oldest granddaughter, Erin, was born. Rochelle and I pretty much raised her. [Rochelle] raised her because they . . . Jeff was at that time working his way up with Kroger to the point where he was a Senior Vice-President in Cincinnati [Ohio]. Suzanne went to nursing school. They were either working or at school, so we . . .

Her brother, Eddie, who is four years younger than she is, was born. We helped raise him also. They had another grandson, Corey, was born here in Atlanta, but he was less than two months old when they moved to Cincinnati. They got divorced. We had the kids all the time. During the summer, they stayed with us.

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70 Norcross is a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, located approximately 18 miles northeast of downtown.
71 The Katherine and Jacob Greenfield Hebrew Academy was the first Jewish day school in Atlanta, and was founded in 1953. As of mid-2014 the Greenfield Hebrew Academy (grades pre-K through 8) and Yeshiva High School (grades 9–12) merged into one college preparatory day school now called the Atlanta Jewish Academy.
72 Seder [Hebrew: order] is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted on the evening of the fifteenth day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar throughout the world. Some communities hold seder on both the first two nights of Passover. The seder incorporates prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.
73 Kroger is a supermarket chain operating in the southeastern United States.
Erin just turned thirty. [She] got married last year. She teaches middle school Spanish. She teaches. She graduated from Eastern Michigan University [with a] degree in education. She was on a Presidential scholarship.

Both . . . Eddie went to Ohio State University.74 His wife, Emily, also went to Ohio State. She’s a teacher here in Atlanta. She teaches special [education]. Eddie is a third year law student at Georgia State [University].75 Corey actually is graduating Sunday from Ohio State. He wasn’t going to walk so we didn’t go up for his graduation. He’s already been accepted to the MBA School at Ohio State.

The other granddaughter—the only daughter of my youngest son, Jacob—she’s a freshman at Georgia Southern [University].76

Sara: I understand you were invited on a trip to Israel not that long ago?

Hershel: Yes.

Sara: How did that happen?

Hershel: When I did the Bearing Witness [program], I think it was in April 2016, a number of my schoolmates from high school came to the Bearing Witness program.77 They really didn’t . . . a lot of them didn’t know that I was a survivor. One of my classmates, Henry Bauer—that’s Judy’s brother—stood up and . . .

Sara: Judy Cohen’s brother?78

Hershel: Yes. He stood up and said, “Hershel, I didn’t know. Have you ever been back to Ukraine or have you ever gone to Israel?” I said I was very open to it, but being retired, that’s something I couldn’t afford. Interestingly enough, about two weeks after that, Rochelle and I are in the car and the phone rings. It was Henry. He said, “How would you like to go to Israel?” I

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74 Founded in 1870, the Ohio State University, commonly referred to as Ohio State or OSU, is a large public research university in Columbus, Ohio.

75 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 into two divisions: Georgia Evening College, and Atlanta Junior College. In 1947, the school became affiliated with the University of Georgia and was named the ‘Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia.’ The school was later removed from the University of Georgia in 1955 and became the Georgia State College of Business Administration. In 1961 the name was shortened to Georgia State College. It became Georgia State University in 1969.

76 Georgia Southern University is part of the University System of Georgia, located in Statesboro, Georgia, that was founded in 1906 as a land grant college.

77 Bearing Witness, is a series that features Holocaust survivors, all Atlanta residents, who recall their experiences during the Holocaust. The Breman Museum hosts the Bearing Witness series through a generous grant from the Sara Giles Moore Foundation. Hershel has participated in the series multiple times.

78 Judy Bauer Cohen serves on the board of the Breman Museum.
said, “I’d love to, but like I said. . .” He said, “No, no. How would you like to go to Israel?” I said, “I’d love it.” He said, “I’ll take care of it.”

Come to find out, some of my classmates and some of the docents here at the Breman got together and paid for the trip for Rochelle and I. We went with Rabbi [Bradley] Levenberg from Temple Sinai and his group to Israel. It was December or 2016. It was during Hanukah, and Christmas, and New Years. It was . . .

Sara: What was the impact?

Hershel: The impact [was] big. We got of the plane at Ben Gurion Airport. It was just so surreal. I had a feeling like, “Hey, I feel like I’ve been home.” We stayed at very nice hotels. We had a fantastic guide. The third day, we went from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. We came into the city right there at Hebrew University. The bus stopped, and our guide took out a loudspeaker thing like a boom box, and played Hatikvah. Then I lost it. I cried like a . . . Here I am . . .

The tour was unbelievable. We went all the way up to the Golan Heights. It snowed up there. Then we went to the Dead Sea and it was 90 degrees. It was just a wonderful trip. The best part of the trip, of course, was the kids that were there. A few of the kids were having their bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs.

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79 Rabbi Bradley Levenberg joined the Temple Sinai of Atlanta clergy in 2006, serving first as Assistant and presently (2019) as Associate Rabbi. In addition to his service to the congregation, he serves on the board of the American Jewish Committee and the Association of Reform Zionists of America. He has received numerous accolades for his work in the arena of civil rights.

80 Temple Sinai was founded as a Reform congregation in 1968 and met in a variety of locations before establishing a synagogue on Dupree Drive in Sandy Springs, north of Atlanta. Rabbi Richard Lehrman was chosen as the congregation's founding rabbi. The current rabbi is Rabbi Ron Segal (2019).

81 Ben Gurion Airport, commonly known by its Hebrew acronym as Natbag, is the main international airport of Israel and the busiest airport in the country, located on the northern outskirts of the city of Lod, which is about 28 miles (45 kilometers) northwest of Jerusalem and 12 miles (20 kilometers) to the southeast of Tel Aviv.

82 Hebrew University of Jerusalem is Israel's second oldest university, established in 1918, 30 years before the State of Israel.

83 Hatikvah [Hebrew: hope] is the national anthem of Israel. It was the unofficial national anthem of Israel from its founding in 1948, and was adopted officially in 2004.

84 The Golan Heights is a rocky plateau in the mountains that overlook southern Syria. It was captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and they retain it as a national security buffer zone.

85 The Dead Sea, also known as the Salt Sea, is a salt lake bordered by Jordan to the east and Israel and the West Bank to the west. It is the lowest place on earth, roughly 1,300 feet (400 meters) below sea level. Visitors can float effortlessly on the waters of Dead Sea due to its concentration of minerals, which is the highest in the world.

86 A bar mitzvah [Hebrew: son of commandment] is 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.

87 A bat mitzvah [Hebrew: daughter of commandment] is 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
Sara: You have been a speaker at the Breman for a number of years.
Hershel: Yes.
Sara: Why do you do it?
Hershel: Why? I think, number one . . . I mean, I don’t enjoy talking about the horrendous way that my father’s and my mother’s family were killed, but I think it is my responsibility. I’m speaking to schoolchildren to let them know what happened. It is my responsibility to make sure they become my voice because, as survivors, we’re going to be gone. That’s life. Make sure that they understand. As I speak to them, [it is] not so much telling them about what happened, but also telling them what I feel why it happened: because of hatred. [I am] trying to get across to them that hatred is not the way you want to go. I beg of them not to get bullied, not to hate, if you see something wrong, do something. That’s my main thing.

Also I feel I want to leave a legacy for my grandchildren and my great-grandson, who just turned a year old. My granddaughter, Erin, has become very heavily involved with our family’s story. I’ve been to her schools the last . . . at every school she’s taught at. I did a presentation at Charleston, South Carolina. She now teaches in Virginia Beach [Virginia]. I’m going to go there in the fall to speak.

I’ve been to Ohio State six times, driving up there. They have a Jewish Holocaust program through their German languages program. I speak there. I speak through the Georgia Commission. I speak at Kennesaw State. I just feel as long as I can drive, I’ll speak.

Sara: Is there something else that you would like to tell future generations?
Hershel: My main lesson to them . . . is that there’s just too much hate.
Sara: What do we do about it?
Hershel: We have to learn. We have to tell them why it happened. We have to tell them that they have the responsibility to listen to survivors, and listen to why it happened, and hopefully that some of them will make it their responsibility also to teach their children not to hate, to teach others. When I ask them not to be a bully, if one of the kids I talk to is a bully, maybe they’ll change it.

I just feel that the world’s got enough hate, and hatred, and enough discrimination. That’s what my father fought against when we came to the United States during the 1950s and

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 rabbis.
1960s in the South: the discrimination against African Americans. What he saw and what he fought for . . . Hopefully, I’ll get through to some of these kids.

I get some of the most beautiful letters from these kids. A couple of them I keep in touch with. One little girl up in Rome, Georgia that was having a lot family problems, she pointblank told me she was thinking of taking her life. Hearing me, she said, “Hey, your family had a lot more problems than I do.” Actually she’s finishing middle school.

I think I’ve made some connections with a lot of teachers that have become very interested in teaching and learning about what happened. It’s an ongoing battle.

Sara: Thank you very much.

<End Disk 1>

INTERVIEW ENDS