INTERVIEW BEGINS

Susan: This is Susan Feinberg interviewing Harriet Greenblatt on September 25, 1991, for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by the Atlanta Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. I want to start out by asking you a little bit about your childhood and youth. Let's talk about when and where you were born. I know here in Atlanta but what hospital? Then we'll talk a little about your home life and your parents.

Harriet: I was born in Atlanta at the eastern end of North Avenue, near Euclid Park in a duplex apartment. My parents lived on the first floor. Three years later, we moved to Fairview Road. When I was six, my sister, Ann died. We had a lot of tragedy in my family. A couple years after Ann’s death, my grandfather, who lived with us, at the time, committed suicide. I was very close to my grandfather, Harry Silverman. Who else do you want to know?

Susan: Let's go back a little bit. First of all, both of your parents were born here in Atlanta.

Harriet: Right.

Susan: Let's go back to the first generation of your family in Atlanta, and who they were and how they came here, the information that you know about that, what their names were.

Harriet: I'll start with Regina Abraham, who came with her brother, August Abraham, [who] was a founder of the Temple, and a sister named Eva. They came from Saarbrucken, Germany. Regina married Jonas Loeb Cohen who came from Germany. Jonas brought over Regina’s cousin,
Emily Baer [Rosenfeld], who was Nell [Eleanor Rosenfeld] Marx’s mother [Mrs. David Marx]. She was married in Regina’s home. Eva lived next door to Regina. She married a Schindler. She was Richard Guthman’s grandmother. I really don’t know much about their background at all, except that my mother always said that Regina was the “most noble of them all.” That was the way she described her. My mother was devoted to her grandmother. My mother’s mother, Sara Cohen [Silverman], died when she was 30 years old. My mother was only five at the time. I suppose Regina was like a mother to her. I really don’t know a lot. Jonas Loeb Cohen’s name was actually Loeb. When he came to Atlanta, his cousin, Levi Cohen, said, “Jonas, nobody knows who the Loeb is. You better change your name to Cohen,” which he did. He became Jonas Loeb Cohen. His son-in-law was Leo Frank. That was that family. I know much more about Morris Wiseberg. I have spent a lot of time tracing his history. I was very curious to know where the Wisebergs and my father's mother's family, who were Hirshfelds, came from. I was always told they were German, because they came over so early. But I knew there was something peculiar about it. I always wanted to know what it was, so I started digging. I knew that the Hirshfelds lived in Memphis [Tennessee]. After many letters written to Temple Israel in Memphis, I finally contacted the chairman of the cemetery committee. He was kind enough to go out to the cemetery and locate Isaac Hirshfeld's tomb. He took pictures of the tomb. He interpreted the Hebrew on the tomb. There was all the information I wanted to know on the tomb, which was wonderful. I found out that his name was not Edward Hirshfeld. His name was Isaac Hirshfeeld, spelled H-I-R-S-H-F-E-E-L-D. He was a native of L-I-E-B-A-L in Courland, 1 Russia, which is [now in] Latvia. I found out that he died April 5, 1863, which was in the middle of the war. I'm very curious to know whether it was a result of the war or whether it was an illness. I do know he was 48 years old. He left a widow and seven children. His widow is buried out at Oakland Cemetery. I do know he died in 1863. In 1864 I found out that Emma Hirshfield, his wife, was given a business license in Memphis. She obviously had to go to work to support those seven children. She also had a child born a few months after he died. Emma must have been quite a girl. She says she supported these children very well. Morris Wiseberg helped her. Morris Wiseberg was the son-in-law.

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1 Courland, also spelled ‘Kurland,’ ‘Kourland’ and other ways, is actually a region (previously a duchy in Latvia). It is situated on the Baltic Sea and contains the towns of Kuldiga, Liepaja, Saldus, Talsi, Tukums and Ventspils. Liepaja is the Latvian name of the city, it was also known as Libau (which the Germans adopted during the war). This region belonged to Russia during the 1800’s. Liepaja is now back in Latvia. I suspect the name being spelled above is ‘Libau’ as this is a very rural and not highly populated area and there are only a few cities and towns.

Transcript ID: OHC10293
married Clara Hirshfield in Memphis in 1862. Memphis fell in 1862. Morris was very interesting. He was born . . . I think that the Hirshfields and the Wisebergs came from the same place . . . he was evidently born in Latvia also in 1832. When he was a small boy, his family moved to his mother's home in Wolverhampton, England. I was always told they moved to escape conscription. He grew up and was educated in Wolverhampton. When he was in his late teens, he went to the gold rush in Australia. He sold wares to the miners. My oldest daughter went to Australia and looked up the [Melbourne] city directory. I have a copy of the city directory in Australia in 1852 . . . it was of Melbourne. Morris Wiseberg was listed as a wholesale clothier. It gave his address in Melbourne. It was on Stephen Street where the Jews . . . it was where the Jews lived. We also have a record of his membership in the synagogue in Melbourne. Morris sailed for San Francisco [California]. Then he evidently took a boat down the west coast to Panama and went across the Isthmus by land and took a boat up to the Texas trail. Maybe he was on the way to Memphis [Tennessee] where he knew the Hirshfields had settled. But he stopped in Washington, Arkansas, which was on the trail. He bought . . . I have the 1860 Census in Arkansas . . . it told where he was living. He was living at [the] Jones Hotel. He was a young man in his twenties. He was a merchant. He evidently had made money in Australia because he was buying . . . he was trading property, because they sent me copies of the deeds. In 1862, as I said, he married Clara. She went to Washington, and they had two children there . . . Bertha and Eda were born in Washington. We also have a copy of a document which told that he bought a slave in Washington. He paid $1,000 for the slave. I was told that every time Clara had a child, he would buy a slave . . . someone to take care of the child. I was also told by my father that his father put 11 bales of cotton down a dry well. When the Civil War was over he sold the cotton for $1,000 a bale. When the war was over . . . it must have been about 1865, he left Washington. He sold out, sold all his property, sold out, passed through Memphis, picked up Emma Hirshfield and all of her children, and they went to Charleston [South Carolina]. But he only stayed in Charleston a couple of years. Another child was born in Charleston. Then he moved to Atlanta. It must have been about 1867. He bought a bonnet

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2 The First Battle of Memphis in the Civil War was a naval battle fought on the Mississippi River. It was fought on June 6, 1862. It resulted in a crushing defeat for the Confederates and marked the virtual eradication of a Confederate naval presence on the river. (The Second Battle of Memphis was fought in April 1864 when General National Bedford Forrest led a nighttime cavalry raid on Memphis. The raid failed.

3 The first gold rush in Australia began in 1851 when gold was discovered near Bathurst, New South Wales. Eight months later, gold was found in Ballarat and Bendigo in Victoria causing large influxes of prospectors. Australia’s total population trebled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871.

4 The Isthmus of Panama is the narrowest part of the peninsula and is consequently where the Panama Canal was constructed linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Transcript ID: OHC10293
Transcript ID: OHC10293

Susan: Let’s continue about his arrival into Atlanta and the early history of what happened after he bought his bonnet factory.

Harriet: I could sort of picture his arrival with the family into Atlanta by reading Margaret Mitchell's account in *Gone With the Wind*, when Scarlett enters Atlanta after the war and she described in detail what it was like coming from the station up Peachtree Street through Five Points. She described what was on the sidewalk and the buildings, the people, everything about it. I imagine that that's the sort of scene that greeted Morris Wiseberg when he and the family entered the city. Then he bought the property at Five Points. He bought a home for [Emma]a and the children. I think that he and Clara lived above the factory . . . lived in the same building for a year or so. Then I traced his progress in the city directories at the Historical Society in Atlanta. It’s very interesting to see his progress and where he moved . . . how he moved from one home to something that was a little better and a little better. Finally, he lived on Ivy Street where the children grew up. I have the 1871 Census. It said "M. Wiseberg, Wholesale Millinery, 33 Peachtree." This was the residence: Church near Fairley Street. Then the next Census, 1876, it said, "Morris Wiseberg, manufacturer sun bonnets, 31 Peachtree; Residence 121 Ivy Street." It’s fun to trace their progress. I suppose that's about all there is of interest about Morris. He was a founder of the Temple.

Susan: Do you know anything about any of the other people that founded the Temple . . . how this came to be?

Harriet: I have and I'm sure that you have. I have a newspaper article here, *The American Israelite*, September 8, 1877. It’s the dedication of our new Temple of the congregation . . . I can't pronounce it: "Kehilat kodesh gemilat hesen." [Holy Hebrew Benevolent Congregation]. It took place Friday afternoon, August 31. “The house of worship situated at the corner of Garnett and Forsyth Street was filled to its utmost capacity by the members of the congregation and invited guests. On the 24th of May, 1874, the cornerstone was laid, and on the 31st of August, 1877, the Temple stood completed, after two years and four months, and was solemnly dedicated to the service of the Most High.” Then the young ladies who followed . . . it says, “Great credit is due to the building committee which consisted of I. T. Eichberg, Chairman; L. Cohen; H. Haas; Jacob Elsas; Max Franklin; and William Teitlebaum. Mr. L. Cohen was Chief Manager of the Financial

Transcript ID: OHC10293
Plans.” Levi Cohen was Jonas Loeb’s cousin. That was why he came to Atlanta. “The young girls, robed in white, who were in the procession” . . . it was Matilda Eichberg; Rosa Seldner; Eda Hirshfield, which was my grandmother’s sister; Betty Wiseberg, who was my aunt; Eda Wiseberg, who was my aunt; Katie Seldner; Marian Silverman; Fannie Menko (who I believe was Josephine Heyman's mother or grandmother, I'm not sure which); Lena Hartman; Bertha Regenstein; Josie Cohen, who was my mother's aunt; Sarah Cohen, who was my mother's mother; Clara Silverman, who was my grandfather's sister; Flora . . . I can't read that name; and Mamie Elsas. “Matilda Eichberg was in the lead bearing on a cushion the key of the Temple.” There's a description of the whole . . . “Reverend Doctor Brown then read a portion of the Holy Scriptures.” This is a wonderful piece that the library should have. I know that the archives have this.  

**Susan:** Quite a bit of your family was involved . . . as it turned out.

**Harriet:** That's right. On both sides.

**Susan:** Let me just move forward a little bit to maybe your grandparents, which is more a part of what you could remember directly.

**Harriet:** I don't remember directly because I only had one grandparent alive, and he died when I was eight years old. He was an extremely colorful character, and very controversial: Harry Silverman. Harry Silverman was born in Philadelphia. His mother was Henrietta Weil . . . the Weil family . . . I would like to know more. All I know about them is that they sailed . . . I have an account here which I'll read. I found this in the National Jewish Historical Society on the campus of Brandeis University. I found out that Moses Weil, who was evidently a brother of my great-grandmother, I'm not sure . . . Moses Weil was the great-grandfather of Janice Rothschild. I believe he must have been the brother of my great-grandmother. The date of arrival and oath given in this document that I have . . . Philadelphia naturalization records . . . was September 23, 1839. That was quite early. I have the highlights of the congregation's history . . . the congregation B'nai Israel in Evansville, Indiana. It says here, “The history of the congregation, B'nai Israel, begins with the arrival of the first Jews in Evansville because they and their families were the nucleus of that early organization.” It says that “these simple statements convey little of the adventure and

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5 The synagogue was dedicated on August 31, 1877. There was standing room only. A string band was playing as a procession of the rabbi, Board of Trustees, the building committee, two elderly members carrying Torahs, and fifteen young girls dressed in white, their leader bearing a cushion upon which lay the key to the building. Joseph T. Eichberg carefully lifted the key from the velvet cushion and delivered it to the president, Levi Cohen. Mr. Cohen gave a speech, then opened the ark and placed the Torahs inside. The rabbi, Dr. Browne, read a Bible portion and the choir sang a hymn. After that the rabbi preached his sermon and then he formally dedicated the synagogue. Then the regular service began.

Transcript ID: OHC10293
romance of the pioneering enterprise of those who left the established communities of the Old World to dwell in the frontiers of the New. Across the Atlantic by sailboat, across the Alleghenies by pack wagon . . . I had always heard that they came by covered wagon . . . “or perhaps stagecoach” . . . but I heard that they came by covered wagon . . . “and down the Ohio by flatboat. Such was probably the trail they followed. Perhaps they stopped in Cincinnati to inquire of their co-religionists there concerning the undeveloped lands that lay westward, and then down the Ohio into Evansville. Here was a village built on the high ground above the river. Its population in 1837 was twelve hundred. Here was settled quite a number of immigrants from Germany. Was it because they heard a familiar tongue that they stopped here? We don't know. All that we know is that they came to America in search of” . . . then I can't read that . . . “an opportunity. Here they found it, for they remained, and their descendants are here to this day.” But the descendants of the Weils . . . one married Jacob Haas, came to Atlanta. My [great-]grandmother married Seligman and moved to Philadelphia. Another one married a David and went to South Carolina or North Carolina. I think it was North Carolina . . . Wilmington, North Carolina. I'm not sure about the others. That's all I can remember. But the Weils were the forebears of quite a few of Atlanta's earliest citizens.

**Susan:** How did the Weils come to Atlanta?

**Harriet:** The Weil sisters all married . . . evidently married peddlers, I imagine, and spread as I say to Philadelphia [Pennsylvania] and Wilmington and Atlanta. I think a couple of them went to Philadelphia [Pennsylvania]. Then all I know is . . . you know the history, I'm sure, of all the Haases who came to Atlanta and how they got here. The Silvermans . . . Seligman Silverman and Henrietta Weil died. Their children came to Atlanta and to Wilmington to live with the sisters . . . with Henrietta's sisters. My grandfather, when he was 14 years old, came to live with his cousin, Aaron Haas. Morris Bernard's grandmother, Clara, went to Wilmington and lived with the Davids. Then later on she came to Atlanta and lived with Lena Fox's family, with the Guthman’s. That's all I know about them.

**Susan:** Do you have any idea in any of your information what the attraction to Atlanta was, or do you have any thoughts on that?

**Harriet:** Atlanta was . . . I imagine when Morris went to Charleston [South Carolina], things

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6 The Allegheny Mountains are part of the Appalachian Mountain Range in the eastern United States. They run for about 400 miles in a northeast-southwest orientation from north-central Pennsylvania through Maryland and the Virginias.
weren't lively enough for Morris, in a business way, I'm sure. That was part of it. I'm also sure that he probably wasn't accepted there. It was a closed community. He wasn't happy there. I know that Emma . . . I forgot to tell you this . . . when Emma got a business license in Memphis, she manufactured Confederate uniforms. When she went to Charleston, she manufactured fireman's uniforms. I think there's some document. I don't know. I'm sure he wasn't accepted in Charleston. When he came to Atlanta, the Temple was just being founded. In Charleston, it was much older. I guess there was a large Sephardic community there. When he came to Atlanta, it was different. He was much happier in Atlanta, and the opportunities were much better.

Susan:  Do you want to talk a little bit about your parents?

Harriet:  My parents were never closely connected to the Jewish community in Atlanta. I really don't have much to say about that.

Susan:  So really once the . . .

Harriet:  My grandfather, Harry Silverman, was the interesting character. He was very much involved in the city life of Atlanta. He was controversial because he was always speaking out. He was always in the middle of every controversy, and didn't mind speaking out about it. The rest of the Jewish community wanted to be low key, and didn't want to be controversial at all. Harry went to Cuba during the Spanish-American War [1898]. He was very friendly with Dr. Joe Jacobs. I have a menu here where Jacob's Pharmacy had a dinner at the Etowah Cafe which belonged to my grandfather.

Susan:  Where was the Etowah Cafe? Where was it located?

Harriet:  I have marvelous letters that my grandfather wrote to me. They're marvelous. Here in the 1896 census, I have “Harry Silverman, cigars, tobacco, smokers' articles, 25 Peachtree Street.” It was called 'Silverman's Corner.' It was right at Five Points. I have a lot of pictures which the archives have.

Susan:  Do you know if there were other Jewish merchants in that area?

Harriet:  Yes. I know the Eisemans were there and the Richs and there were many others. I can't tell you all of them. But all that's on record in these books at the Atlanta Historical Society. It's not hard to look that up. Here's where . . . in 1900, Harry Silverman, President of H. Silverman

[7] Conflict between Spain and the United States that started in 1898. It only lasted ten weeks. The main issue was Cuban independence, on whose side we were. The flash point was the mysterious sinking of the American battleship Maine in the harbor in Havana, Cuba. The resulting uproar (“Remember the Maine!”) caused President McKinley and Congress to declare war on Spain. The conflict eventually spread to the Philippines. Ten weeks later Spain sued for peace. The United States acquired Cuba, the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico as colonies.

Transcript ID: OHC10293
Company, wholesale, retail, tobaccos and cigars. He lived . . . it was 17 South Broad Street, Aragon Hotel and Kimball House. Then in 1904, it was Silverman-Goodrum Tobacco Company. J. J. Goodrum Jr., President, Harry Silverman, Vice-President; wholesale cigars, 1-1/2 Edgewood Avenue, retail store: 25 Peachtree.

Susan: Who was Goodrum?

Harriet: J. J. Goodrum? I can't tell you. The name was very familiar to me when I was growing up, but he was an old Atlanta man.

Susan: When you say that your grandfather was somewhat outspoken or liked to speak out on things, obviously we're into a period that's going to touch upon the Leo Frank era. Do you have any information on anything regarding . . .

Harriet: Only newspaper articles . . . what my mother told me. She said they were all so afraid, they stayed in the house for a week. They were afraid to go outside. That's all I know. She said it was horrible, the worst thing she ever lived through.

Susan: You said there was some family connection to Leo Frank, some distant connection?

Harriet: He was married to my mother's first cousin, to Lucille Selig, who was my mother's first cousin. The Etowah Restaurant was [at] 19-1/2 Whitehall Street, [the] Etowah Lunchroom, 7 West Alabama; [the] restaurant in the basement of the Candler Building. He had three restaurants. It was Silverman Catering Company. He also evidently still had the cigar store. Then in the *Encyclopedia of Georgia*, 1906, there's a biography of Harry Silverman. You interested in the biography of Harry Silverman?

Susan: Let's take some excerpts.

Harriet: “A leading cigar dealer and restaurateur was born in the City of Philadelphia, 1861, a son” . . . this says Seligman and Henrietta Weil Silverman . . . “the former born in France and the latter in Germany. When the subject of this sketch was fourteen years of age, his parents took up the residence in Atlanta” . . . that's a mistake . . . only he came to Atlanta with some of his brothers and sisters, but not his parents . . . “where he was reared and educated and where he has been engaged in cigar and tobacco trade, wholesale and retail, since 1885. While he was popular in the business and social circles of his home city, to whose interests he is loyal in all respects, he was one of the original promoters and is a Charter member of the Atlanta Athletic Club, is affiliated with Georgia Lodge No. 96, Free and Accepted Masons. His political allegiance is given to the Democratic Party” . . . he was a real liberal, I can tell you . . . “And he is a member” . . . that was
one reason he was hated so . . . “He is a member of Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, one of the principal Jewish [congregations in the] city. In 1880, Mr. Silverman enlisted as a private in the popular military organization known as the Gate City Guards. At the time of the late Spanish-American War, he tendered his services as a volunteer. Governor Atkinson confirmed upon him the appointment of Second Lieutenant of Company One, Third Georgia Volunteer Infantry, which was duly mustered into the United States service. He received his appointment on July 18, 1898, but his command was not called into active service and he resigned after the protocol of peace was signed.” He didn't go to Cuba. “In December 1898, Governor [Allen] Candler appointed Mr. Silverman aide de camp on his staff and with rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In December 1902 he was made Quartermaster General of the Georgia State Troops with rank of Lieutenant Colonel, an office of which he has since remained the incumbent. On December the 18th, 1887, Mr. Silverman was united in marriage to Ms. Sarah Cohen of Atlanta, and they have two daughters, Helen and Regina.” That's it.

Susan: Let's talk a little bit about your growing up in Atlanta, and where your family lived.

Harriet: When I was three years old, we moved to Fairview Road, which was in Druid Hills. I think the only reason we were able to buy that property or buy that home in Druid Hills was because my grandfather was friendly with Mr. Hightower who sold him the home. We were among the first, very first, to move to Druid Hills. As a consequence, my friends were mainly my school friends and children in the neighborhood. Until I was a teenager that was mainly the children that I grew up with.

Susan: Right.

Harriet: I was in a little Girl Scout/Brownie Troop. I was the only . . . at Miss Ashcraft's house, which was on South Ponce de Leon . . . I was the only Jewish child in the group. It was rather lonely growing up as the only Jew around. But when I became a teenager, then Mitzi Eiseman and I got together. Mitzi lived on Fairview Road. We were very friendly during our teens. Then I began to go with the Jewish children.

Susan: You lived in your Fairview Road house always? Did your family move to . . .

Harriet: My father lost the house during the [Great] Depression. We moved to another house

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8 Allen D. Candler served two terms as Governor of Georgia from 1898 to 1902. He was a conservative.
9 Later Marie (Mitzi) Eiseman Long Kunian.
10 The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The timing of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the
on Fairview Road which they rented . . . which looked very much like the house that we moved out of. That was about all. My father lost his restaurant in the Candler Building due to the exorbitant rent that he was paying, and Mr. Candler wouldn't do anything about it. There was a fire that destroyed his bakery. My father had a terrible struggle during the Depression. We always managed to eat well and live very nicely, but nevertheless, it must have been a terrible struggle for him.

Susan: You went to the University of Georgia?

Harriet: Right.

Susan: Do you want to talk about your experiences there . . . other people that you became friendly with that are members of the Atlanta community?

Harriet: There again, when I went to the University of Georgia . . . my Christian friends that I went to the University with . . . all joined sororities. I couldn't join the Christian sororities. That was another trauma, if you want to know the truth about it.

Susan: You couldn't join the sorority because you were Jewish . . . because they knew you were Jewish. It was not a situation like you hear about nowadays where Jewish parents really don't want their children necessarily to join the non-Jewish sororities even though . . . back then it was just not available to you.

Harriet: Back then, absolutely not, absolutely not.

Susan: How did these people know that you were Jewish if you really didn't . . .

Harriet: They always knew I was Jewish. I was never anything but Jewish.

Susan: There was a strong division at the University then?

Harriet: Yes.

Susan: When did you meet your husband? Was his family from Atlanta?

Harriet: I was friendly with Sid's sister, Evelyn [Greenblatt Howren], so I knew Sidney all through my teens.

Susan: His family was from Atlanta too?

Harriet: Yes. I would go to visit Evelyn and I would see Sidney. Then Sidney was at the University of Georgia when I was there. That's when we started going together, at the University.

Susan: How far back does his family go in Atlanta's history?

Harriet: He'll have to tell you about all that. I can't go into that.

late 1930’s or early 1940’s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.

Transcript ID: OHC10293
Susan: This is Susan Feinberg and it is October 11, 1991. This is the second session with Harriet Greenblatt for the Oral History Project of the National Council of Jewish Women, the American Jewish Community, and the Atlanta Jewish Federation. We are just going to sort of proceed and add some things that maybe we forgot to talk about before and see what else you have to say. I know you have some notes, so I'll let you.

Harriet: All right. I made a couple of mistakes. Jonas Cohen was not the father-in-law of Leo Frank. It was his granddaughter, Lucille Selig, who was my mother's first cousin, who married Leo Frank. The other mistake was about Morris Wiseberg. I said that he bought a home for Clara when he first came to Atlanta, but the home was bought for his mother-in-law, Emma Hirshfield and her seven children. The home was at 55 Luckie Street. He paid less than $100 for the home.

Susan: Did you want to talk a little more about your parents or your growing up?

Harriet: I left out some interesting things about Sarah Cohen. She was born in the early . . . during the Civil War . . . evidently it was just before the siege of Atlanta.\(^\text{1}\) They must have been preparing for the siege. The story came down to me [that] she was born in the basement. The home was across from where the Capital City Club is now on Peachtree Street, on the corner of Peachtree. I think that's Harris, I'm not sure. They had a cow in the back yard. Sarah was born, and a few months later her mother, Regina Cohen . . . Jonas was a peddler at that time, and he was away from home. . . Regina sold the home for $3,000 Confederate money. They took a train out of Atlanta. I think they went to Nashville, I'm not sure. But she took the children away for the rest of the war.

Susan: Explain again who Sarah Cohen is just so that we'll have it at this point.

Harriet: Sarah Cohen was Jonas Loeb Cohen and Regina Abraham's daughter. She married Harry Silverman.

Susan: How is that in line to you? That's your great-great . . .

Harriet: She was my grandmother. But she died when she was 30 years old. She had

\(^\text{1}\) Known as the “Battle of Atlanta” it occurred midway through a larger campaign. Union General William T. Sherman assaulted the Confederate forces which were defending the city, commanded by General John B. Hood, throughout the summer of 1864. Sherman constantly shelled the city and tried to seize railroads and supply lines into Atlanta in order to starve the residents out. Atlanta finally surrendered on September 2, 1864. Sherman established his headquarters in Atlanta, where he remained for some two months. In November, 1864 Sherman ordered the evacuation of all citizens of Atlanta and on November 14 he burned the city to the ground before setting out to capture Savannah after which he began his “March to the Sea.”

Transcript ID: OHC10293
consumption. She was in the hospital at Alto, Georgia. We had a letter from her that she wrote her children. It was so sad, so pitiful. My mother was five years old when she died. My mother went to live with my grandfather's sister, the Auerbach’s . . . Joe Auerbach and his wife, Pauline Silverman. She grew up there. When she was a teen, she went to Athens [Georgia] and lived with her mother's sister, Mrs. M. G. Michael . . . Emma Michael. The Michael brothers owned the big department store in Athens, Georgia. Mama lived with the Michaels and went to Lucy Cobb Institute. We have her diploma from Lucy Cobb and also her diploma from the Atlanta Normal [Training] School. She and Miss Gussie Cronheim taught the kindergarten at the Temple for several years. We have pictures of the children. They have copies in the archives.

Susan: Now the two families that you just mentioned . . . the Auerbachs . . . Is that any relation to an Auerbach family that is here in Atlanta now?

Harriet: I don't think so. Joe Auerbach died . . . my grandfather . . . I learned from the books at the Historical Society . . . moved in with his sister after the husband died. Henrietta and Stella Auerbach had to go to work. I was told that in those days it was really a disgrace for Jewish women to work. They moved to New York. It was soon after the Leo Frank case, and maybe that had something to do with it too. A lot of the Jews, I was told, left Atlanta after that happened. We had another cousin . . . my mother's first cousin was Gussie Abraham, who was August Abraham's daughter. She and her sister, her twin sister, moved to New York for the same reason. They both had to go into business. Their father was an invalid and they had to work, so they had to move to New York City.

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12 ‘Consumption’ was the popular term for tuberculosis since the disease caused the wasting away or ‘consumption’ of its victim. Tuberculosis is a potentially fatal contagious disease that mainly affects the lungs. It can usually be cured with antibiotics but before they were discovered in the 1940’s tuberculosis was the single most common cause of death in the United States. Today it is still a killer, causing about 3 million deaths around the world yearly.

13 The Lucy Cobb Institute was a secondary school for young women in Athens, Georgia. It was founded in 1859 by Thomas R.R. Cobb, a prominent lawyer and proslavery writer. It was named after his daughter, Lucy, who died before the school opened. It closed in 1931. Today it houses a department of the University of Georgia and is on the National Register of Historic Place.

14 This school trained young women to be teachers.

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

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Susan: They actually moved from Atlanta to New York because . . . it was just not acceptable for . . .

Harriet: Right. I knew Gussie Abraham. She lived in Florida. I used to visit with her. She died. She was way up in her nineties when she died.

Susan: There's not an Abraham family in Atlanta? There's not a tie-in to . . .

Harriet: No, they're no more.

Susan: You wanted to make a statement about Gussie Abraham. I think we had a . . .

Harriet: I made a mistake. It's difficult to keep the generations straight. Actually, Gussie Abraham and Sarah Cohen were first cousins. My mother, I guess you'd say, would be a first cousin once removed.

Susan: It's all in the family

Harriet: Right.

Susan: That sounds real good. This has been most helpful, and we appreciate it very much.

<End Tape 1, Side 1>

END INTERVIEW