Sandra: Today is January 18, 2011, and I am here with Carol Lobman Hart, who has agreed to participate in the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Project of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed today. We are very excited to talk to you about your life in Alabama and your family. I would like to begin with a little bit of background. If you could tell me a little bit about your family, your parents, their names, and your grandparents’ names.

Carol: My parents were Myron Charles Lobman, and my mother was Alma Hertz Lobman. His parents were Nathan Lobman, and his grandfather was Henry. Henry was the one apparently, I just learned, who came first, and moved to Greenville, Alabama, and then to Pine Apple [Alabama]. I’m not sure in what order, but there were relatives in Greenville. How they got there and why, I don’t know.

Sandra: Who was Henry married to?

Carol: Henry was married to Theresa Steiner.

Sandra: And Nathan?

Carol: Nathan was married to Carrie Pollack. She was from New York. Apparently she came to visit Greenville and fell in love with him, and that’s the end of that. On my wall back there, there’s a letter that he wrote to her parents in New York City thanking them for her hand.

Sandra: How lovely.

Carol: Isn’t that nice. My mother’s mother was Sophie Oppenheimer. She married Simon Hertz. She was born I think in Louisville [Kentucky]. She may have been born in Germany, but
I’m not sure. I think she was born in Louisville. Her husband was born, I’m pretty sure, in Germany. I’ll have to tell you later.

Sandra: Her husband’s [name]?
Carol: His name was Simon Hertz.

Sandra: Do you know how they got to Alabama or when?
Carol: I have no idea when. Simon was, to the best of my recollection, I don’t know when he came as a young man. He was a clerk in the Exchange Hotel. I think it was still called the Exchange then. I know after they married they had a boarding house in Montgomery. He died young. I don’t know a lot about him, and I don’t know how they lived after he died. They had seven children, and I don’t have anybody to ask.

Sandra: Again, your parents’ names were . . .
Carol: Alma and Myron Lobman.

Sandra: The business was started originally by Henry, correct?
Carol: I have no idea. Nathan Lobman, his son, and Louis Steiner also lived in Greenville. They were first cousins, and they also married sisters. I think the Steiners started the business. I’m not sure.

Sandra: What was the name of the business?
Carol: The business was Steiner-Lobman Dry Goods. They dealt in mercantile stuff. I don’t know what they did originally. I don’t know how it grew is what I’m trying to say. They were the wholesalers that, by my time anyway, supplied all the little merchants and all the little small towns around that you don’t have anymore.

Sandra: Did they start out as retailers, though?
Carol: I don’t think so. I think they were always wholesalers, because that was the way business was done back then.

Sandra: Did they sell everything? All kinds of dry goods?
Carol: They sold piece goods, which is material. They sold notions, which is buttons, fasteners, rirrac, thread. They sold some clothing, underwear, long johns, and that kind of

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1 A boarding house is a house, frequently a family home, in which lodgers rent one or more rooms for one or more nights, and sometimes for extended periods of weeks, months, and years.
2 Dry goods are products such as textiles, clothing, personal care, and toiletry items. In U.S. retailing, a dry goods store carries consumer goods that are distinct from those carried by hardware stores and grocery stores.
3 A narrow, zigzag braid or ribbon used as a trimming on clothing, linens, and other fabric items.
thing. I don’t know when . . . when I find the little booklet on the business I’m sure it’s in there. . . they started the first overall manufacturing in the state of Alabama. Then they sold overalls and work clothes. I don’t know whether that was concurrent or how many years after they moved to Montgomery. My father was born in 1890, and they moved when he was six months old.

**Sandra:** To Montgomery.

**Carol:** To Montgomery.

**Sandra:** Do you know what precipitated the move?

**Carol:** I’m sure it was commerce. Montgomery was a river town. It was the capitol.

**Sandra:** Let’s get a little bit to you now. What year were you born?

**Carol:** 1924.

**Sandra:** Do you have siblings?

**Carol:** I had a brother who was killed when I was 12. He was 15.

**Sandra:** I’m so sorry.

**Carol:** It’s long enough now. I was essentially an only child for a long time.

**Sandra:** Can you talk a little about your earliest memories of growing up in Montgomery, where you lived, your neighborhood? Can you talk a little bit about your neighborhood and what your house looked like?

**Carol:** I can give you a picture of the front of the house. It was just a one-story . . . It was what you call a story and a half. It had an attic, which, when I was little, I’m sure you had a pull-down stair. I don’t remember. When I was about ten, they figured out how to add a stairway and made a big room up there for my brother. It was floored, so I played up there as a 12-year-old on rainy days. One of the memories, speaking of rainy days, the wash was done by somebody who came in on a charcoal burner outside and boiled in a washtub and hung on the line. If it was raining, since the attic was floored, it was hung upstairs. I can’t remember. I guess it was after World War I[^1] [that] we got a washing machine.

**Sandra:** That’s great.

**Carol:** I can’t remember.

[^1]: World War I, also called First World War or Great War, was an international conflict that in 1914–18 embroiled most of the nations of Europe along with Russia, the United States, the Middle East, and other regions. The war pitted the Central Powers (mainly Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey) against the Allies (mainly France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and, from 1917, the United States). It ended with the defeat of the Central Powers.
Sandra: What was the neighborhood like? Were there other Jewish neighbors?

Carol: Oh, yes. There were Jewish neighbors, but it wasn’t a Jewish neighborhood as such. It started out as a separate city from Montgomery. They built that house in 1922, and Cloverdale was a separate city. I don’t know how long, but I don’t think it was very long after that that it was incorporated in the bigger city of Montgomery. It was just a suburban neighborhood with schools and grocery stores, and that was it. You went downtown to do your shopping.

Sandra: Where did you go to school?

Carol: I went to a school called Bellinger Hill, a grammar school which was through sixth grade.

Sandra: That’s Ballinger Hill?

Carol: Bellinger.

Sandra: Bellinger.

Carol: It was named for the neighborhood, I think from a family Bellinger. It was just an elementary school, four rooms downstairs and four rooms upstairs. For assemblies, you sat on the stairway, and the assembly was in the foyer, entrance hall. My father took me to school. In my later years, toward fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, I walked home. Everybody walked. I did not start there until I was in the second grade, because I have a December birthday. I went to kindergarten, a private kindergarten. There [were] no public kindergartens then. I don’t remember how I got home. I may have walked, too, because everybody walked. Nobody cared. Whether somebody came and walked with me I really don’t remember. I’m not very good at remembering.

Sandra: What synagogue did you belong to?
Carol: We belonged to Temple Beth Or, which was the Reform synagogue. We had a Conservative/Orthodox synagogue. I don’t know when that was established. It’s always been there since I knew it, but it could have been around about that time. We also had one of the few Sephardic congregations in the United States, which about eight years ago merged with the Conservative synagogue because there just weren’t enough people to maintain it.

Sandra: What were the names of the other two synagogues?

Carol: Agudath Israel is the Conservative, and . . . It will come to me. I know it very well. Interestingly, they established a building right near the Reform temple, and because there were so few children they came to our synagogue, our Temple, for Sunday school. I knew lots of the Sephardic children, not as many as the Conservative children. A lot of it was economic reasons. We didn’t live in the same neighborhood. You didn’t get all that chauffeuring that you get now.

Sandra: Was the temple a big part of your family’s life?

Carol: Yes and no. As they got older, yes. I think that’s with a lot of us. They participated, always on the holidays and sometimes other times, but as they got older they went almost every Friday night.

Sandra: What about you?

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5 A Reform congregation in Montgomery, AL. The congregation was formally formed in 1852 and was known as Kahl Montgomery. In 1862, they completed a temple in downtown Montgomery and later changed the name to Temple Beth Or [Hebrew: House of Light]. It is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places and still stands today serving as a church. Due to the increasing Jewish population, a new house of worship was built in 1902 and again in 1961, which is the location of Temple Beth Or today.

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

7 Conservative Judaism is a form of Judaism that seeks to preserve Jewish tradition and ritual but has a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the law than Orthodox Judaism. It attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture, while preserving a commitment to Jewish observance. They also observe gender equality (mixed seating, women rabbis and bat mitzvahs). Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written Torah and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.

8 Sephardic Jews are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants. The adjective “Sephardic” and corresponding nouns Sephardi (singular) and Sephardim (plural) are derived from the Hebrew word Sepharad, which refers to Spain. Historically, the vernacular language of Sephardic Jews was Ladino, a Romance language derived from Old Spanish, incorporating elements from the old Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula, Hebrew, Aramaic, and in the lands receiving those who were exiled, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian vocabulary.

9 Agudath Israel Etz Ahayem Synagogue in Montgomery, Alabama is the 2001 merger of two congregations: Agudath Israel, a Conservative synagogue, established in 1902, and Etz Ahayem, a Sephardic congregation established in 1912.
Carol: No. I went to Sunday school. I went to youth group. My children went to Sunday school. I was a Sisterhood member, but when you’re raising a family you don’t seem to find that it’s important. I do now, and I did for a long time.

Sandra: When you were growing up, was it at all difficult to be Jewish in Montgomery?
Carol: I never felt it. I guess I was lucky. I’ve talked to some of my friends, and they felt it. I knew, for instance, when I went to high school I would not be allowed to join the sororities. The fraternities were different. Why, I don’t know. They accepted the Jewish boys. I just accepted it. I knew that was what was what. I actually belonged to the Girl Scouts. I think that was a great part of my life, not only for what they offered me but because those same girls who belonged to the sororities also belonged to my Girl Scout troop, which we kept through the twelfth grade. Our friendship wasn’t split.

Sandra: Did it bother you that you couldn’t get into the sororities?
Carol: I guess not. I don’t think so, but some of my friends it did. As I said, I had a full life, so I really didn’t miss it.

Sandra: Did you ever speak to your friends in your Girl Scout troop about not being able to go?
Carol: I don’t remember. I really don’t remember. Probably not. It was probably just an unspoken . . . I was never taunted about it, so I don’t remember but I don’t think so.

Sandra: Were your parents concerned at all about those kinds of issues? Did they talk to you about being Jewish in a smaller city, not that Montgomery is very small.
Carol: It was then. It was a small city. I really don’t remember. I guess some things, if we did, I’ve buried them or forgotten about them or they weren’t that important at that time.

Sandra: Your friends, were they a mix, Jewish and not?
Carol: Yes, mostly a mix. We went to dancing school together, and all those things that girls do. By the time I began dating, most of the people I went with were Jewish. My friends were Jewish, although they were a year ahead of me in high school. We walked to school together.

Sandra: Was it important for your parents that you date someone Jewish?

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10 A group of women in a synagogue congregation who join together to offer social, cultural, educational, and volunteer service opportunities.
11 A social organization of female students typically at a college or university; usually identified by Greek letters.
12 A social organization of male students typically at a college or university; usually identified by Greek letters.
13 Founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Lowe, Girl Scouts of America is a youth organization that aims to empower girls and help teach values such as honesty, fairness, courage, compassion, character, and citizenship through various activities. Membership is organized by grade level.
Carol: I cannot remember it being an issue and talked about, but intuitively I knew that was what I wanted. I didn’t really date a lot in high school, except for a few Jewish boys. I had enough social life that it didn’t seem to bother me.

Sandra: Did you participate in any of the socialization, like Ballyhoo14 or Falcon?15

Carol: Yes.

Sandra: What did you do?

Carol: Falcon was in Montgomery, and when you were 16 you were . . . I guess you were eligible to go. I won’t say people didn’t ‘go steady’ like they do today, but even those who ‘went steady’ would date other boys. It wasn’t quite as much ‘oneness’ as it seems to be now. You dated whoever asked you. Everybody seemed to want to be there and be with a date. It wasn’t a huge problem.

Sandra: Can you describe a Falcon party, what it was like?

Carol: They were fun. Usually . . . it was always over the Fourth of July16 weekend . . . the Fourth of July wasn’t always a weekend . . . I always thought of it as a weekend and I can’t remember whether maybe they put it on the weekend . . . but it was over the Fourth of July. You would have a picnic. The boys and their parents engineered it, planned it I guess you could say. You would have a swimming party. I don’t remember a swimming party to tell you the truth until the one after [World War II]17 because we didn’t have a swimming pool. The country club

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14 From 1931 to the late 1950’s, members of Atlanta’s Standard Club sponsored “Ballyhoo,” an annual courtship weekend attended by college-aged sons and daughters of the Temple community. Over a long weekend, participants endured rounds of breakfast dates, lunch dates, tea dance dates, early evening dates, late night dates, formal dances, and cocktail parties, with the goal of meeting a “nice Jewish boy or girl” who might well become a spouse. Similar courtship weekends in southern cities included Montgomery, Alabama’s “Falcon,” Birmingham, Alabama’s “Jubilee,” and Columbus, Georgia’s “Holly Days.”

15 See reference 13

16 Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July or July Fourth, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from Great Britain (now part of the United Kingdom).

17 World War II (WWII), also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945, though related conflicts began earlier. It involved the vast majority of the world’s nations, including all of the great powers, eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies (France, Great Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, China) and the Axis (Germany, Italy, and Japan). In a state of "total war", the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities behind the war effort. WWII was marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust (during which 11 million people were killed, including six million Jews) and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centers (during which approximately one million people were killed, including the use of two nuclear weapons in combat). Although the Empire of Japan aimed to dominate Asia and the Pacific and was already at war with the Republic of China in 1937, the War is generally said to have begun on September 1, 1939 with the invasion of Poland by Germany and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom. From late 1939 to early 1941, Germany conquered or controlled much of continental Europe and formed the Axis alliance with Italy and Japan.
didn’t have a swimming pool, but you had a tea dance and a dinner dance. Some people late
dated. It was just a big party.

**Sandra**: What was late dated?

**Carol**: I guess your date took you home about midnight and somebody else picked you up.
I was 16 and much more naïve than the girls are today, so I don’t know what they did at their late
dates.

**Sandra**: Was it pretty much just the Temple crowd?

**Carol**: It was all over the South.

**Sandra**: No, the Temple crowd in Montgomery . . .

**Carol**: Pretty much, yes.

**Sandra**: So the Sephardic and the Conservative didn’t attend.

**Carol**: Correct. Not until the War broke all that down. Falcon existed for a year or two after
that, but those people who had participated were too old and the others hadn’t been brought up in
the mold, so it sort of ran its course. Also by that time youth groups in the temples were being
formed, so there was no need for this getting together from all the cities around.

**Sandra**: Did you ever go to Atlanta to Ballyhoo?

**Carol**: I came to one Ballyhoo, and I must admit I guess had a good time. I really don’t
remember a lot about it, except it was pretty much the same as . . . Let’s see. I never went to
Birmingham to the Jubilee.\(^\text{18}\)

**Sandra**: Let’s talk a little bit more about your home life. Did you have a lot of domestic help
in the home?

**Carol**: We had a cook, and what you would now call a housekeeper. We were lucky. Quite
often it was a young man who was going to Alabama State [University—Montgomery, AL], who
worked the yard and did heavy jobs. Later on . . . They quit. The young ones by that time were
becoming educated, and they were no longer available. We did have a character who worked for
us.

**Sandra**: What was he like?

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\(^\text{18}\) See reference 13
Carol: Actually, I have been trying to think of him for a long time. He was tall and skinny and very uneducated, but he must have had a good bit of brains. He remembered everything. In those days, you didn’t keep everything in your closet and change one closet for the other. You put things up in moth balls in the summer time. It was a lot of work. He would know where everything was, where he put it. He was... I think [he] innately had a good brain.

Sandra: Do you remember his name?

Carol: Oh, yes. His name is Jimmy Birch. He would wait on the table at night, and he would have a white butler’s coat on and he would be barefoot.

Sandra: How long did he work for the family?

Carol: He worked for them pretty much after World War II, and then after my parents died he worked for me off and on, when he would come. He did help me with the yard work and whatever needed to be done. He was mine to take care of.

Sandra: Was there a particular domestic woman that you remember that you grew up with, that helped to take care of you?

Carol: Oh, yes.

Sandra: What was her name?

Carol: Her name was Louise, but we called her ‘Weezy’. She was the cook, and she took care of me. When I was real little, her sister took... I guess [she was] probably 12 or 14, and she would come sometimes and babysit. Eventually, she worked for my aunt, and then after the War, one of those coincidental things, she worked for somebody in... I lived in a fourplex,19 and she worked for somebody in that fourplex. When they moved, she came to work for me. By that time, I had two babies, and she came to work for me and stayed until she died.

Sandra: How would you describe the relationship between you and your parents and the cook and the yard... Was there a closeness?

Carol: Oh, yes. You knew all about them and their families. You loved them and hugged them. I think there was probably a distance that I don’t remember. There was familiarity in that you knew everything about them. There probably wasn’t quite the camaraderie, but they were part of your family. That was just the way it was. You didn’t think very much about it, because it was the way of life. It was just there.

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19 A building that contains four separate apartments or units
Sandra: Speaking about the way it was, did you ever reflect when you were younger about the segregation, the separate drinking fountains? Before things changed, did you think about it much?

Carol: I have to admit, probably not. It was just the way things were, and it wasn’t discussed.

Sandra: How did your family accept the changes that were starting to occur in the fifties and into the sixties?

Carol: By that time, as soon as the Civil Rights law\(^\text{20}\) was passed, the business was changed right then and there. There was a lot of goings on [things happening]. I had four little children by then, and I must admit I sort of stayed in my own little bailiwick. I also, like I said, I’m sorry to say I didn’t give it a lot of thought, because I didn’t have time.

Sandra: How about the community in general, the Temple crowd, your contemporaries, your friends. What was the reaction to the changes within the Jewish community?

Carol: It was very mixed. For instance, I have an aunt and uncle who were very active. They were friends with Virginia Durr.\(^\text{21}\) Do you know her?

Sandra: No.

Carol: Her husband was Cliff Durr.\(^\text{22}\) He worked in . . . I was trying to think this morning, one of the administrations. Probably the Johnson\(^\text{23}\) administration. He was one of the forerunners of civil rights, and they were a big old Christian family in Montgomery. They were both very . . . and my aunt and uncle were, too.

Sandra: Who were your aunt and uncle?

Carol: His name was Bernard Lobman. He was a lawyer. They went to meetings and got their license plates noted and were followed. It wasn’t sort of talked about. My father and my

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\(^{20}\) The Civil Rights Act (PL 88-352) was enacted on July 2, 1964. It outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that served the general public.

\(^{21}\) Virginia Foster Durr (1903-1999) was a constant presence in Alabama politics and the movement for civil rights. She became a nationally known figure recognized as a defender of justice, social equality and civil rights. She spent years working to abolish the poll tax and to end segregation. She was married to Clifford Durr, an attorney, who was also an activist and was involved with a number of civil rights cases.

\(^{22}\) Clifford Durr (1899-1975) was a lawyer and defender of civil liberties during the post-World War II Red Scare, a supporter of the civil rights movement, and counsel to civil rights icon Rosa Parks. With the help of his activist wife, Virginia Foster Durr, Clifford Durr defended those unable to defend themselves, often at the expense of his own livelihood.

\(^{23}\) Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973) was the 36th President of the United States from 1963 to 1968. Came to the office with the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas on November 22, 1963. Often called ‘LBJ.’ He was a Democrat.
husband were more conservative, my husband in particular. He was much more interested in preserving what he had, because he had to raise a family. I think he was probably more liberal than he gave out to be at that time, but because that was the business he wanted to run, he didn’t want anything jeopardizing that. As soon as the law was changed, they began to integrate the factory, the overall factory. I cannot remember that they ever hired a black salesman, but I know the factory became integrated.

Sandra: With the changes in the school . . . We’ll come back to that, because I want to talk a little bit about . . . You went to elementary school, junior high [school], and high school all in Montgomery.

Carol: All in Montgomery.

Sandra: How did you meet your husband?

Carol: I went to New Orleans [Louisiana] after I graduated from college and was introduced by a family friend.

Sandra: Where did you go to college?

Carol: I went to Wellesley College in Boston [Wellesley, Massachusetts].

Sandra: How come? Why did you go north?

Carol: I was a very lucky girl. I went to camp in Maine, because the summers in Montgomery were hot. Luckily, I had an aunt who had no children, and she sent me to camp. That was very nice. I was used to being . . . I met girls that were going there, and I liked them. I thought it would be nice to get away and see some other part of the country. I thought I was very worldwide then, but I wasn’t. I was still very provincial.

Sandra: How did you like college?

Carol: [It was] okay. It was during the War years, and I enjoyed it.

Sandra: What was your degree in?

Carol: My degree was in chemistry, which I went to work at . . . That’s when I went to New Orleans.

Sandra: Who did you work for?

Carol: I worked for Tulane [University] Medical School in one of their labs. That’s when I met my husband.

Sandra: How did you meet?

Carol: A family friend introduced us.
Sandra: How did you end up back in Montgomery, then?

Carol: In the first place, he had graduated as an engineer from Tulane, and he really didn’t like it. He had gone through the War and decided he liked selling. When he came back, he didn’t go back to his old job. They had to give him his old job back. He worked in New Jersey in a paper factory, making cigarette papers and fine papers. He wanted to go as a salesman for them, which they couldn’t or wouldn’t do. I have no idea. They would have given him his other job back. We went back to New Orleans and [he] worked in a retail store, which he loved. After we married, my father, having no male heirs, really needed someone. He went home to Mommy and Daddy, and I had to go with him.

Sandra: What was his name?

Carol: Van Eaton Hart.

Sandra: Pardon?

Carol: Van Eaton Hart.

Sandra: Did you want to go back to Montgomery?

Carol: Not really. I loved New Orleans, except for the weather. That was before air conditioning.

Sandra: Was it an adjustment to go back to the old . . .

Carol: Yes and no. Some of my friends had married and moved. As a young married, you make new friends. It wasn’t too bad.

Sandra: You had four children.

Carol: Right.

Sandra: Getting back to the Civil Rights Era, when they started in school, it was still all segregated.

Carol: It was all segregated.

Sandra: How did you and your husband deal with the integration of the schools in Montgomery?

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2 The American Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them. The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Noted legislative achievements during this phase of the Civil Rights Movement were passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.
Carol: I’m a public school advocate, or I was. There was a private school that was started, they said because they needed a private school that gave better education. It was essentially, I think, because of segregation. My kids stayed in school, but the schools were pretty much segregated from the twelfth grade down. It didn’t really affect them for a year . . . I think Michal, my oldest daughter, was in the third grade. I can’t remember. She couldn’t have been in the third grade. Whenever it was. They eventually just grew up, and that was it. Your neighborhoods still were not particularly integrated. Black children were bussed in.

Sandra: Do you remember much about the Montgomery Bus Boycott?25

Carol: Some, but like I said, I really stayed in my own little bailiwick. You read about it, and you just stayed out of trouble. Because there was no more bus transportation, the lady who worked for me did come. They mostly got taxi carpools, which I paid for, and mostly I took her home at night for a long while, and then I don’t remember.

Sandra: Was that an issue for anybody, that you were driving her?

Carol: Not that I was aware of. It may have been. It wasn’t an issue for her. She was glad to have the work, and, like I said, she was family as far as I was concerned. I was a little remiss in thinking she doesn’t live as nice as I do. All those social issues that go. You grew up that way, and it’s sort of part of you until you really have time to think about it.

Sandra: We have heard that from many people who we have interviewed around the South.

Carol: I’m glad I’m not alone.

Ruth: Was there any . . . When you went to Wellesley and were away from that milieu for a while and then came back to it, [does] anything strike you at that point?

Carol: One day . . . I’ll tell you a funny story . . . I got on the bus to go . . . I don’t remember to town or back, and the bus was empty. It wasn’t empty. It was full of white folks going wherever they were going, so I sat on the back seat. I was told, “Lady, you need to move up front.” I guess I was in college at the time. I had gotten used to Boston. Even though you didn’t see that many blacks in Boston, it was still mixed. You really didn’t see . . . they were . . .

25 The Montgomery Bus Boycott, in which African Americans refused to ride city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating, took place from December 5, 1955, to December 20, 1956. On December 1, 1955, four days before the boycott began, Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, refused to yield her seat to a white man on a Montgomery bus. She was arrested and fined. The boycott of public buses by blacks in Montgomery began on the day of Parks’ court hearing and lasted 381 days. The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately ordered Montgomery to integrate its bus system.
interestingly, some of them . . . the Irish . . . the taxi drivers, were just as adamant about segregation as the South was.

Sandra: Did you have a best friend growing up?

Carol: Several, yes. In fact one of them still lives in New Orleans, and I go visit. She as a grade ahead of me, but she lived right up the street and when you walked to school . . . unless my daddy took us . . . but we walked home every day.

Sandra: Was she Jewish?

Carol: Yes.

Sandra: What is her name?

Carol: Ruth Rosenthal.

Sandra: What was her family’s business?

Carol: Her uncle and her mother worked . . . they had an office . . . they sold ‘tobacco cloth.’ Do you know what ‘tobacco cloth’ is? It’s a very thin muslin [cotton fabric] that they shielded tobacco plants with. I guess it was a big business of that. They also . . . I remember when I got married they got me Wamsutta\textsuperscript{26} sheets <untelligible word; maybe wholesale? 33:52> . . . through their connections. . . I don’t know what else they sold. Her father I know had a hard time during the [Great] Depression.\textsuperscript{27} At one point he sold potato chips. Whether he was the manufacturer or what, I really don’t know. He was the daddy. He wasn’t . . .

Sandra: How did your family’s business fare during the Depression?

Carol: They seemed to fare okay so that I was, I guess, fairly privileged. Everybody was sort of in the same boat, so you didn’t know that you didn’t have this or didn’t have that. The business survived so I was never aware that things were bad.

Sandra: Did your parents participate in the greater community? Were they involved in clubs like . . .

\textsuperscript{26} Wamsutta Mills was a textile manufacturing company located in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a port which was known as a center of the whaling industry. The company was named after Wamsutta, the son of a Native American chief who negotiated an early alliance with the English settlers of the Plymouth Colony in the 17th century. Wamsutta Company’s textile mill was founded by Thomas Bennett, Jr. on the banks of the Acushnet River in 1846 and opened in 1848. It was the first of many textile mills that gradually came to overtake whaling as the principal employer in New Bedford. Other mills in the area soon sprang up. By the 1870s, cotton textile manufacture was more important to the local economy than whaling. Wamsutta Mills became well known for producing fine quality shirtings, sheetings, and other fine cotton products. The Wamsutta brand continues to this day (2015).

\textsuperscript{27} The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930’s or early 1940’s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.
Carol: My mother was. My mother was a club lady.

Sandra: What clubs?

Carol: Mostly . . . the National [Council of] Jewish Women\textsuperscript{28} was her big thing. She was a Girl Scout, one of the first women who . . . not the first . . . but I was about the right age. I don’t know whether she helped organize it, but there wasn’t but like a head and a few volunteer women. She was one of them. She did all kinds of things. She was not a domestic lady. She would much rather participate. She belonged to a club called the Mothers Circle. My grandmother was not one of the organizers, but she was one of the first women. It was sort of a forerunner of the PTA.\textsuperscript{29} They were all women. I think there were 50 slots, and you didn’t get in . . . I had to wait several years after I married and moved back to Montgomery to get in, until somebody died. Then there was a place for me. At that time, they met twice a month and had speakers on all kinds of civic responsibilities, and they acted on that. That was another one of her . . . and, of course, I joined. We had our hundredth birthday. I think a hundred and one. Finally it disbanded, maybe 10 years ago, because there just was no need for it anymore. None of the younger women . . . They were all working. They didn’t want to join.

Sandra: Did your mother work in the family business at all?

Carol: No.

Sandra: It was all male.

Carol: In those days, women didn’t work, unless they were maybe a lowly secretary. Secretaries were very lowly then. I worked for one day, until my husband decided paying my social security wasn’t worth what he was going to have to pay me.

Sandra: In the business you worked for one day?

Carol: One day. I was going to be the treasurer and sign the checks.

Sandra: What did you and your husband do for socialization?

Carol: We just mostly went out with friends.

Sandra: Dinner?

\textsuperscript{28} An organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into advocacy and philanthropy inspired by Jewish values. They strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and families.

\textsuperscript{29} The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a national organization with affiliations in local schools throughout the U.S. composed of parents, teachers and staff, and devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools.
Carol: Dinner. Mostly Saturday nights. I had a young woman who was going to the black college, Alabama State [University]. It was a black college then. It’s obviously integrated now. She came every Saturday night, so we went out whether we wanted to [or not]. Generally we just went someplace. Somebody’s house sometimes. It wasn’t as much as restaurant eating then. We would generally go to somebody’s house.

Sandra: Were most of your friends Jewish?
Carol: Yes.

Sandra: I wanted to go back a little bit to the Civil Rights Era and talk a little bit about the congregation itself. Who was the rabbi then?
Carol: His name was Eugene Blachschleger.\footnote{Rabbi Eugene Blachschleger was elected as spiritual leader of Temple Beth Or in Montgomery, AL in 1933 and served until his untimely death in January 1965.}

Sandra: What was he like?
Carol: He was sort of a portly man. Those days . . . Of course I was younger, and the rabbis weren’t my friends. They were older than me. My children thought he was G-d. The congregation was, as I said, fairly conservative on the issue. They weren’t very happy that the North was coming down to tell the South what to do. They thought it should evolve by law and gradually. They really didn’t want the Temple to get involved. I think he did get involved some, but the board [of directors] was pretty conservative on that score, not wanting to acknowledge all the rabbis that had come down.\footnote{In 1963 as Birmingham struggled in the throes of the Civil Rights era, Martin Luther King Jr. made pleas to the Birmingham clergy, including rabbis, to support his marches. When the Jewish rabbis counseled patience and moderation and asked him to wait for desegregation laws to take effect, King called them out on their perceived passivity in a “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” The letter gained national attention and a few weeks later a group of 19 conservative rabbis from the North, outraged by the images they saw on the TV of black protestors being beaten, arrived in Birmingham. They didn’t tell anyone in the Jewish community they were coming, which angered the rabbis and many Jews in Birmingham. After talking with King in the Birmingham jail, they toured black churches making speeches of support. Then they left. The whole episode appeared high-handed to the Birmingham Jewish community, and they feared an antisemitic backlash from the Ku Klux Klan.}

Sandra: To Birmingham [Alabama]? Carol: They even came to Montgomery during the Selma March.\footnote{The Selma to Montgomery marches were three marches in 1965 that marked the political and emotional peak of the American Civil Rights Movement. Selma and Montgomery were the focus of black voter registration drives which were resisted on every front. The marches were to support voting rights for blacks. The first was on March 7, 1965 and came to be known as “Bloody Sunday” when 600 civil rights marchers were attacked by state and local police with billy clubs and tear gas. Several marchers, both black and white, were beaten or murdered over the course of the marches. The second march was on March 9, 1965. Martin Luther King Jr. led 2,500 protestors who}
Sandra: How was that? Do you remember the incident?

Carol: I do remember the incident, because my daughter Michal was then . . . You will have to ask her. I think she was in the ninth grade. I don’t think she was in senior high school yet. She had an interview with Governor George Wallace. She had it for months. She was on the debate team . . . I think I’m right . . . for . . . when you vote for the president. What do you call it? The electoral college. It turned out it was the day before the Selma March was coming to Montgomery. I was going to take her, and my husband said no, that he would take her. He didn’t think us two ladies, his daughter and his wife, needed to be . . . They went and had a lovely conversation with George Wallace and left. I wasn’t there, so I can’t tell you. I’m sure there were guards all around the Capital [building], but the march had not reached Montgomery yet, so there was no incident at all. During the march itself, as I said, you didn’t go to town and get involved if you didn’t have to, unless you were a real fighting anti-segregationist.

Sandra: Speaking of George Wallace, what did you think of him as governor at that time?

Carol: At that time, he was a like a lot of Southern governors. He ruled with an iron hand, but he was really a pretty good governor overall. He established our junior college. I remember that because our children were just about getting into that, so I was becoming interested in higher education for everybody. He was a pretty fair governor, but he would do anything to get elected. A lot of people think that he wasn’t as segregationist as he really was. He said anything that would get him elected, and he had to be a segregationist to do that.

Sandra: In later years, I think he had misgivings about how he . . .

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Wallace (1919-1998) was the 45th governor of Alabama, serving four nonconsecutive terms: 1963-1967, 1971-1979, 1983-1987. He also ran for the presidency unsuccessfully. In 1972 he was left paralyzed after an assassination attempt and was in a wheelchair for the remainder of his life. During the Civil Rights Era he was noted for his Southern populist and segregationist attitudes. Wallace’s most remembered utterance was: “In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny; and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.” He tried to stop desegregation in schools by physically standing in the way of black students at several universities in 1963. Federal marshals and the Alabama National Guard under federal command forced him to step aside. He later renounced these views at the end of his life.

33 The President and Vice President of the United States are not elected directly by the voters. Instead, when Americans vote for a President and Vice President, they are actually voting for presidential electors, known collectively as the electoral college. The Constitution assigns each state a number of electors equal to the combined total of the state’s Senate and House of Representatives delegations. A majority of electoral votes, currently (2015) 270 of 538, is required to win.
Carol: I think so, but he wouldn’t have gotten elected, I can tell you, if he had spoken any other way.

Sandra: Do you remember anybody else in the congregation who was either, besides your aunt and uncle, very involved in the . . .

Carol: Oh, yes. There were several of them.

Sandra: Were there any avid segregationists in the congregation?

Carol: I’m sure there were avid segregationists, but there were others. Not a great many. They kept it to themselves, but there were others that were very much for . . .

Sandra: Do you think the Jews, in general, were just afraid to rock the boat?

Carol: Yes. They were well-established, and they didn’t . . . I guess you would say we were selfish. We were self-preservationists. They didn’t want their livelihood . . . they didn’t want the town boycotted. They just didn’t want their livelihood threatened. I think it was their livelihood, more than anything else, that kept them as segregationists.

Ruth: Your kids were going into high school at that point or in high school. Were there any generational differences, like between you and your parents and then your children? Did the generations have a different viewpoint?

Carol: I’ll tell you this. I have a little thing on my computer that Alice wrote that she just put back on there . . . Alice is my second daughter . . . about how she changed. I can’t remember talking about it too much with them. I may have. I’m not very good with remembering. When things are past, as far as I’m concerned they’re done with. Let’s get on. I really don’t remember, but she remembers very vividly. The Temple youth group was her mentor and her springboard for thinking that way.

Sandra: For being more involved.

Carol: Yes. Very definitely.

Sandra: What about your boys?

Carol: They were younger, so I have never really talked about it with them. I don’t know what their feelings were. They were not that much younger, but they were young enough that I didn’t . . . As I said, I don’t remember talking with Alice about it, but I must have. I’m sure we did.

Sandra: When you were mentioning earlier about going out on Friday [and] Saturday night, you mentioned the country club. Was that a Jewish country club?
Carol: Yes.
Sandra: What was its name?
Carol: The Standard Club, like most others.
Sandra: Were there any Jews at all in the non-
Carol: No.
Sandra: What year was the Standard Club . . .
Carol: It was not long before the Depression. That building was built just about the time the Depression hit. It was a downtown club before that, and I don’t know how long it had been there. I know the Falcon [gatherings] were during my parents’ growing up time. It was a long established way for Jewish young folks to meet each other from all over the South. Whether the Standard Club played any part in that when it was a downtown club I don’t know, because as a downtown club I think it was mostly, I guess, eating. I don’t know. It was in just a building. The men I’m sure played cards and smoked cigars.
Sandra: Can you describe the club that you remember?
Carol: It’s still there. It’s not in use as a club anymore. It was a big English-looking building with a golf course and tennis courts. That’s where all your activities belonged. Young people went. The older people went. If there was a dance, such as the Falcon, the older people would sit around the circle . . . older people like I am now . . . and watch the young ones dance.
Sandra: There was a pool?
Carol: After the War there was a pool. Now talking about segregation, there was a pool, and at that point you could join the pool, put money in it, or not. You could join the club, but you didn’t have to be part of the pool. Then, I guess when I got married, if you were a son of a member, you automatically became a pool member, but my father had no sons. I married and moved back to Montgomery, and he went to the board and got me accepted as a legacy of his. There are all kinds of segregation.
Sandra: That’s very true. Was the club mainly German Jews, or was it . . .

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35 The Standard Club was formed in 1871 as a downtown Montgomery social club for Jews during an era when Jews were not admitted to other clubs. The club building was built in 1894 across from the Davis Theater, and members acquired the second lot in February 1913 in order to have a place in the country. The Standard Club maintained the dual properties for over a decade. In 1929, notable architect Frank Lockwood built the current clubhouse. Today, the Standard Club property is a community of residential homes.
Carol: It was before the War. As soon as the War was over, it was pretty much open to everybody.

Sandra: What has happened to it?

Carol: I’m trying to think how many years ago it has been. It hasn’t been that many. It was closed, because they just couldn’t do anything about it. It was sold as a gated community. The clubhouse was going to be the centerpiece. There are about 10 or 12 houses that have been built on it. The economic downgrade came, and it is pretty much status quo right now.

Sandra: What about the family business itself. When did that start to change?

Carol: My husband got sick . . . he had depression . . . around 1968, 1969. I’m never quite sure of the date, but it’s about that time. We sold it, and it didn’t stay in business very long. Wholesale dry goods is not a viable business anywhere anymore. When he came into the business . . . I assume you want to know . . . my father and his oldest brother ran it. My uncle Walter Lobman had a son, and my father brought Van in. They finally decided . . . They had several retail stores at that time. They decided to split it up between the two families and, unfortunately, we got the wholesale end.

Sandra: That wasn’t good.

Carol: People like Stein Mart, who did the same thing in Greenville, Mississippi, and started with one store and now they are worldwide . . . Now whether we would have done that I don’t know, but the wholesale business per se [Latin: in itself] is no longer a business anywhere. There are no mom and pop stores in little towns. Transportation has changed that.

Sandra: When did you see it start to change?

Carol: It was probably around that time, around the early 1960’s. It was still a viable business then, because we also had the overall manufacturing plant. That’s when my husband dreamed up the idea of Polly-Alls, which were cutoffs, which I gave you. They were cutoff overalls for girls. That was probably becoming the bigger part of the business.

Sandra: How did he come up with the idea?

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36 Stein Mart was founded in 1908 by Sam Stein, a Russian Jewish immigrant who opened his first store in Greenville, Mississippi. The department store carried general merchandise until Stein's son, Jake, took over the company upon his death in 1932. It was then that the store redirected its focus toward discounted clothing. The chain targeted customers who shopped department stores on a regular basis, inducing them to purchase goods by offering discounts of 25 to 60 per cent off department store prices. It remains a strong retailer today (2015).

37 Mom and pop stores are businesses that are privately owned and usually operated by members of a family, rather than being part of a national chain of stores.
Carol: They made overalls. I don’t know. Girls were beginning to wear overalls. I went all through college and the only pair of blue jeans I ever owned was a pair that I went riding in. We made them, but girls did not wear blue jeans. That wasn’t the thing. Now my husband would turn over in his grave if he knew how much they were selling for.

Sandra: What do you attribute the downfall of the wholesale business to?
Carol: Transportation. The change in the world. The fact that Walmart\(^{38}\) came in. There’s no need for mom and pop stores any more. Everybody has a car almost, even the poorest on the farms. There was just no need for it anymore.

Sandra: The overall business is really interesting. When did they change to an overall business?
Carol: They never changed to an overall businesses. That was a separate business, but they just . . . it was a manufacturing plant and they sold through Steiner-Lobman. The manufacturing plant didn’t do any selling. They sold through Steiner-Lobman.

Sandra: What was the name of the manufacturing . . .
Carol: It was Steiner-Lobman. It was all part of the same.

Sandra: Did they make anything other than overalls?
Carol: Work clothes, work pants, blue jeans, overalls. I just used overalls as an ‘over’ name. <Uses fingers to indicate quotation marks> Blue jeans, khaki work pants, work shirts, white painter’s overalls, anything in the work clothes kind of business.

Sandra: Why is the store so famous? It became . . .
Carol: I didn’t know it was famous.

Sandra: Was it the first overall manufacturer or something like that?
Carol: I don’t know how famous it became. It was the first overall plant in the state of Alabama. Levis was there before us.

Sandra: The building, is it still standing?
Carol: The manufacturing building isn’t standing, but the wholesale dry goods business [building] is still standing. We sold it in . . . It was my husband’s 75\(^{th}\) birthday, so it was . . . I can’t add and subtract that quick. We sold it to lawyers. It’s now a business building, so it has been preserved in the manufacturing part of town, which is not too far from the train station.

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\(^{38}\) Walmart is an American chain of discount department stores that sell items such as electronics, toys, clothing, bedding, furniture & home decor.
Sandra: Do you get back to Montgomery much?
Carol: Occasionally, when I get a ride. I used to drive myself, but my children don’t want me to anymore.
Sandra: What is it like now? How do you find the city today as compared to when you were growing up in Montgomery?
Carol: It’s a huge city now. I say huge compared to when I was growing up. You have shopping centers and all the things that go with even little towns. The Jewish population is dwindling, because the children are all coming to Atlanta.
Sandra: It still supports two congregations.
Carol: It still supports two congregations. They have now combined their Sunday schools, because of the small number of children.
Sandra: Do you still support the congregation? Are you still a member?
Carol: I’m still a member, yes.
Sandra: Do your children go back much?
Carol: They did when I was there, but not really. My youngest son does, because he has some business there.
Sandra: We should probably, for the purpose of the tape, get your children’s names.
Carol: My oldest daughter is Michal, who is married to Jack Hillman.
Sandra: Is Michal a family name? It’s unusual for a girl.
Carol: It has a story. My father’s name was Myron, and when I went to camp I had a friend named Michal. I had never heard the name before. She was King David’s wife. I liked it, because I wanted to name her after my father. That’s how she got her name. Alice is married to Brian Wertheim, who also lives here in Atlanta. He’s a lawyer. I have two sons, Julian who lives in essentially Washington, DC. He lives in northern Virginia. My younger son is Van Hart, Jr., and he lives in San Francisco.
Sandra: Very nice. How many grandchildren do you have?
Carol: I have eight grandchildren and three great great grandchildren that are so cute.
Sandra: That is wonderful. Are they here?
Carol: Just one is here. Michal’s grandson is here, and her other daughter has a little girl, and they live in Philadelphia [Pennsylvania]. Alice has a daughter who lives in the [Washington] DC area, and she has a little boy.
**Sandra:** When did you move to Atlanta?

**Carol:** It’s been just a year ago, because my children were here. I really had no support group other than my friends in Montgomery, and they were getting older, too. It was unfortunately time to move.

**Sandra:** What do you think the future is for Jewish life in Montgomery?

**Carol:** Very small. Things are always changing, but the way the world is going, the big cities mostly have it. Unless you have a reason, such as growing up in a smaller town and having something to do there, the young ones are all migrating into the bigger cities. I’m sorry to say I don’t see a lot of future for big congregations, even middle size congregations.

**Sandra:** Is there a Jewish cemetery in Montgomery?

**Carol:** Oh, yes. Two.

**Sandra:** Two. Affiliated with . . .?

**Carol:** One is affiliated with Temple Beth Or, and the other is affiliated with Agudath Israel, which is the Conservative.

**Sandra:** Are there any old families left in Montgomery that have stayed there, who have been there a long time?

**Carol:** Yes.

**Sandra:** Who are some of those families?

**Carol:** The Weil family. They were the Weil cotton business, and they were a worldwide business. They have just now closed their doors.

**Sandra:** They are still there.

**Carol:** They are still there. There’s another Weil family who is not related, and they have a fair number . . . I think 16 hits my head . . . of small town stores, the little mom and pop stores in the real little towns. I’m trying to think. There are some others. Some of the Sephardic families are still there. Most of them have been there since . . . I don’t know why the 1920’s comes into mind as to when they moved into Montgomery.

**Sandra:** When you were older, after the War and you were married, did you associate with mainly still the Temple crowd?

**Carol:** Yes, I did. A lot of people didn’t. It began to become a mixed . . . particularly the ones younger than me . . . became a mixed Christian-Jewish group, although some of them still mostly prefer their Jewish friends.
Sandra: Not just Jewish. I was wondering if you stuck with your Temple friends or if you made friends with Conservative women.

Carol: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

Sandra: Those barriers broke down?

Carol: Those barriers were broken down, particularly after the War so many of those congregants moved . . . Everybody moved into other . . . They were not separated. When I grew up, mostly we lived in what was called Cloverdale. Agudath Israel [members] lived in a suburb called Capital Heights, and they weren’t within walking distance. They really weren’t in bus distance, because you had to go to town and change buses. I knew the Sephardic children because they came to Sunday school. When we got to high school . . . Now I didn’t know them well, except through Sunday school. I didn’t know them well during grammar [school] and junior high [school], but we only had one white high school. Because we knew each other, we got to be friends in high school. Then after the War, everybody began moving in the same neighborhoods. Transportation was better and all that, so, yes, you became . . . There’s really not . . . to my way of thinking. Maybe some people do, but I don’t think so. It is mostly a cohesiveness.

Sandra: Besides the change in transportation and neighborhoods, do you think World War II broke down barriers for other reasons?

Carol: I’m sure it did. It had to, and I think the segregation laws broke down . . . People just realized, even if they were Jewish, they may have had prejudices, but that just wasn’t acceptable anymore. I think it all worked together.

Ruth: You said that you were an advocate of public school, and therefore you wanted your children to stay in public school. There was so much upheaval around that period of time, and starting a school for white kids who didn’t want to be in school with the black kids. Were your children . . . Did their friends go to this other school? Were they the only kids who ended up staying? What happened?

Carol: A lot of my children’s friends did go to private school, but they made other friends. A lot of them didn’t, particularly the boys. Then we got more than one high school. Actually we had two white high schools. Then segregation came along, and everybody . . . I think we had probably two black high schools by then. After segregation, then everybody was mixed up together.
Sandra: You mean integration.
Carol: Excuse me. Yes.
Ruth: Do you have a sense for where the Jewish kids went to school? Did they stay in the public school, or did they go to private school?
Carol: Probably half and half. It generally depended on economics.
Sandra: Did you have discussions about all of this with any of your friends that you can recall?
Carol: I remember having discussions about school, and I thought the public schools at that time were very adequate. More than adequate. I thought they were as well as the private school was. When my younger son got to senior high school, he finally decided that his education was not what it should be. That’s a long story. He did not go to private school and ended up, because of that, having lots of time on his hands. We had a wonderful YMCA youth legislature program, and he ended up as governor of Alabama, youth governor, which he would not have had time [to do] if he had been in private school. It had its balances. By that time, it was integrated, and some of the boys who were running with him were black.
Sandra: Can you tell me what some of your fondest memories are [of] growing up in Montgomery?
Carol: I guess just the freedom of it that children today don’t have. Like I said, we walked to school. That school was a mile. I’m not quite sure how far the grammar school was, but it was a long way. The high school I know was a mile. We walked every morning, unless my daddy took us or unless it was raining. Then some parent would take us or pick us up. We walked to our friends that lived within reasonable walking distance. You didn’t have television, and I can remember my uncle lived next door and my aunt . . . These are on my father’s side . . . She lived about three blocks away. A lot of times they would come over, particularly in the summer, and sit on the screened porch after supper and talk a little bit. Then everybody would walk home, maybe a 10-minute walk at the most. When I was about . . . I want to say eight, but I was probably 10, the store that’s now . . . I’ll tell you in a minute. Anyway, it was the big department store. I went on the bus every day . . . not every day, maybe once a week . . . and I learned to knit, because they had a knitting department. I went on the bus [and] either walked to my

39 The Young Men’s Christian Association, commonly known as the ‘YMCA’ or the ‘Y’ is a worldwide organization founded in 1844 that aims to put Christian principles into practice by developing a healthy body, mind and spirit. They offer recreational facilities, parent/child education programs, youth and teen development with after school programming, etc.
daddy’s store and came home with him or rode the bus home. There were no limits. You didn’t have to be 15 or 16 to be independent. I think that’s probably the best thing about a small town.

Sandra: What about some of the Jewish holidays? How did your family celebrate? Did they celebrate the Sabbath? 40 Did you have a Sabbath meal?

Carol: We ate every meal . . . you didn’t have all the restaurants. We ate every meal at home . . . mainly at home. Every night meal was a set meal. No, we didn’t light the candles Friday night, but we did celebrate the others. We celebrated Hannukah, 41 and [on] Purim 42 we had a huge party at the Temple.

Sandra: And Pesach [Hebrew: Passover]? Did you have a seder? 43

Carol: We had a seder, and of course we celebrated the High Holy Days. 44 We didn’t go to school.

Sandra: Was that okay with the school administration?

Carol: I guess so. I was a child, so, if it wasn’t, that was my mother’s problem. We just stayed out of school. We probably had to make up the work.

Sandra: For the Passover seder, who did the cooking, your mother or the cook?

Carol: The cook. My mother was not a housekeeper. I don’t think she would have existed without Weezy.

Sandra: So did Weezy know how to make the seder?

Carol: I guess so. I assume she did since that’s what we had. Who told her . . . I know my mother knew what to do. She just didn’t know how to do it.

40 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.

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

42 A Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire from destruction in the wake of a plot by Haman, a story recorded in the Biblical book of Esther. According to the Book of Esther, Haman planned to kill all the Jews, but his plans were foiled by Mordecai and his adopted daughter Queen Esther. The day of deliverance became a day of feasting and rejoicing. Some of the customs of Purim include drinking wine, wearing masks and costumes, and public celebration.

43 Hebrew for “order”. The ritual family meal eaten at home on the first and second nights of Passover, accompanied by the retelling of the story of the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt.

44 The two High Holy Days are Rosh Ha-Shanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).
Sandra: That’s great. I think on that note we’ve covered pretty much everything I have on my list.

Ruth: Did you send your kids to Jewish camp in the summer?

Carol: Originally I went to Girl Scout camp for a couple of years. Then when I went to Maine for the summer, it was a Jewish camp, but there was no Jewishness about it. We didn’t celebrate Friday night. As far as I remember, except for one or two who may have been children of counselors, they were all Jewish. It was run by a woman whose father had been a fairly famous rabbi. He had been in Cincinnati, and he had been in New Orleans, which was principally . . . His name is Heller.

Ruth: What about your children. Did you send them to Jewish camp?

Carol: They were lucky enough to also go. It was a different camp, but it was also in Maine, and it was a Jewish camp. I don’t think they celebrated any Friday nights or anything. I never thought to ask them, but I’ve never known them to say anything, so probably not.

Sandra: I guess I do have one follow up question. When it came time for your children to start dating, was it important for you for them to date other . . .

Carol: It was, but they dated other people. Just like with me, it was sort of . . . I just grew up knowing that was important, and I’m very fortunate. All four of them married Jewish folks. All of them were Conservative Jews as it turns out. Two of them have come over to the Reform temple, which doesn’t make a bit of difference. I’m very fortunate in that respect. It’s been very important to all of them I guess, because they have all done that.

Sandra: I think we will call it a day, and I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Carol: You’re welcome. If you want to give me a list of things you want me to look at when I . . .

INTERVIEW ENDS

<End Disk 1>