Ann: This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg interviewing Simon Stephen Selig on the March 24, 1997, for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. I would like to ask you if you would tell me a little something about your family’s history in the Atlanta community. You can start either with the Massell family, your mother’s family, or with the Selig family.

Steve: My mother and father were both born in Atlanta, which is unusual in this day and time. They both went to high school in Atlanta. My grandparents on my mother’s side, Ben Massell and his wife, Fannie . . . I did not know Fannie because she died either before I was born or when I was very young. I don’t remember which. Ben Massell came, I always thought, from Lithuania, but I was looking at a family tree that somebody did for me on my birthday almost eight or ten years ago . . . No, that’s the other side. I think my grandfather came from Lithuania. I don’t know where my grandmother came from. My grandfather married again, and the only grandmother I ever knew was his second wife, Helen.

Ann: What was your grandmother’s maiden name, your real grandmother? Do you remember?

Steve: No, I can’t remember right this minute. I’m not good on family history. My mother had a brother, a single brother, Ben Massell, Jr. I guess finally, after my grandfather died.

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1Benjamin “Ben” J. Massell (1886-1962) was a civic and community leader in both the Jewish and general communities of Atlanta. In the early 1900’s, he and his two brothers, Sam and Levi, founded the Massell Realty Company, which had a hand in the development and sale of several landmark properties in Atlanta. Civic leader Ivan Allen, Sr., was known to say, “Sherman burned Atlanta and Ben Massell built it back.” Ben Massell was the uncle of former Atlanta mayor Sam Massell.
father’s side, it was Simon Selig, who I always thought and had been told came from Germany, but I saw on a family history that was done for me about ten years ago he may have come from Russia. The name Selig sure does sound German, and I have always been told he was from Germany. The family history may be wrong, so I’m not really sure. He died right when I was born, so I never knew him. His wife, Emma Printz, who was from Cleveland [Georgia], lived until up in her eighties. I grew up with her. I didn’t know her very well.

Ann: Did she live in Atlanta or in Cleveland?
Steve: She lived in Atlanta. She used to live at the Briarcliff Hotel on Ponce de Leon Avenue. I remember going over there a lot of weekends.

Ann: Where did your family live?
Steve: When I was very young, we lived on Peachtree Battle Avenue.

Ann: Do you remember the number?
Steve: Either 500 or 533. It might have been 533 Peachtree Battle Avenue. I even remember the phone number, CHerokee3-0488, for some reason. When I was three or four years old, I think, right after my sister was born, we moved to 741 West Wesley Road, where my folks lived for their entire lives basically. After they both passed away, I actually lived there myself to take care of things for a year or two before finally we sold it and went our separate ways. Cathy moved back. <unintelligible 4:17> After I got married, we sold the house and moved over here.

Ann: Tell me about what timeframe your grandparents came to this city. When did the Massells . . . Did he come here as a married man?
Steve: I think so.

Ann: Do you have any idea how old he was or anything of that nature when he came here?
Steve: My guess is early twenties. If I had some time, I could go back and find out. We were looking in old city directories and old city phone books not too long ago, because we were trying to come up with the date that our business actually started. The business that I have now is basically a successor to the business my grandfather started. The earliest date we could find for a

<sup>2</sup>Starting in the 1920s until the 1960s, in most areas of North America, telephone numbers in metropolitan communities consisted of a combination of digits and letters. Letters were translated to dialed digits on the telephone dial. The leading two or three letters of a telephone number indicated the exchange name, for example, EDgewood and IVanhoe, and were followed by 5 or 4 digits. The limitations that these system presented in terms of usable names that were easy to distinguish and spell, and the need for a comprehensive numbering plan that enabled direct-distance dialing, led to the introduction of all-number dialing in the 1960s.
Massell Real Estate company was 1918. I have to think back to how old he would have been in 1918.

Ann: What year was your mother born, if she was born in Atlanta?

Steve: Let’s see. My dad was born in 1913. I know that. My mother was born probably six or seven years later.

Ann: About 1919, 1920?

Steve: She was about 65 when she passed. I guess so.

Ann: That way we can place at least that they were present in the city, since she was born here.

Steve: Right.

Ann: I know that the Massell name has been very prominent in a variety of ways in the community. Would you like to . . . Since you didn’t know your grandfather personally . . .

Steve: I knew my grandfather Massell.

Ann: Oh, you did know him?

Steve: I didn’t know my grandfather Selig.

Ann: That’s what you said. Would you talk a little bit about him as a person, what you remember?

Steve: My grandfather, Ben Massell?

Ann: Just personal things. Your own personal recollections.

Steve: My grandfather was a . . . My recollection of him . . . He died when I was in college, so I didn’t really know or appreciate him as much then as I do now. I appreciate him more now than I guess I did then. I didn’t realize, I don’t think, how important he was in the community and the Jewish community. To me, he was just a kind, loving guy who always had a story, always had a joke to tell. [They] had a big old house that had a lot of places to hide.

Ann: Where did they live?

Steve: They lived . . . I can’t remember if it was The Prado or exactly the name of the street. There are some condominiums there now, right across the street from the Piedmont Driving Club, right around The Prado, up on a hill. They had a big house, and they had a big garage

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3The Piedmont Driving Club is a private social club in Atlanta, Georgia with a reputation as one of the most prestigious private clubs in the South. Founded in 1887 originally as the Gentlemen's Driving Club, the name reflected the interest of the members to ‘drive’ their horse and carriages on the club grounds. The club later briefly used the adjacent grounds as a golf course until it sold the land to the city in 1904 to create Piedmont Park. The
house, sort of. The thing I remember most about going over there was there was always a fire in
the fireplace. Always. A big fire burning in the fireplace. I assume that was during the chilly
months. They had a big porch. They had a porch to the left, and I guess another porch to the
right. There were fires in both of them. In the living room they had carpet, but they had a wood
floor under a table. I remember it was a great place to play marbles. I used to play marbles there
every time I would go over there. I would roll the marbles up against the wall, and they would
roll back to me. I had marble races. They had an old kitchen, one of those old-fashioned kitchens
that had the freezer sort of in the wall. It was not free standing. You would open up all these
various . . .

Ann: . . . doors. Little compartments.

Steve: Yes, sort of steel doors.

Ann: My grandmother had the same setup. It is sounding very familiar.

Steve: [They had] big old stoves. Outdoors they had a wonderful garden with a wonderful
goldfish pond with lilies. We used to go over there and feed the goldfish. I remember playing in
that garden and watching those goldfish. They were huge. At least they seemed huge to me at the
time. We had a lot of fun over there. A lot of fun.

Ann: You and Cathy were the only grandchildren?

Steve: Yes, because Ben never married, so we were the only grandchildren. [My
grandfather’s] wife, Helen, had either nephews . . . I think nephews, but I didn’t know them. I
don’t think she had any other children. I’m not sure.

Ann: You don’t recall any young children there.

Steve: No, I don’t.

Ann: So it was just the two of you kids.

Steve: There was a guy named David, but I don’t know if he was her son or her nephew. I’m
not sure. Probably a nephew.

Ann: What recollections do you have of your own parents? Tell me a little something about
them.

Steve: Before I do that, let me give a recollection of my other grandparents.

Ann: Of the Selig grandparents?

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Club's facilities include dining, golf, swimming, fitness, tennis, and squash. In May 2000, the club built an 18-hole
championship golf course and Par 3 course several miles away on Camp Creek Parkway.
Steve: I didn’t know Simon Selig. By the way, back on Ben Massell, I guess I knew intellectually that he was doing great things. I guess I knew that he was a big builder, but I really wasn’t involved.

Ann: Even in high school or early college?

Steve: No. I was more involved on my dad’s side, in his chemical business. My grandmother, Emma, was sort of the matriarch of the family, and, as I said, she used to live on Ponce de Leon. The thing I remember about her was she lived in an apartment. We used to go over there and play and run in the halls and what not. She would always have these pastries, and she made homemade ice cream as I recall. We used to go over there and have a lot of fun. I used to play a lot with my first cousin. At that time, her name was Dotty Ann Joel. My sister and I went over there. We had a lot of fun. Then she moved out to Peachtree [Street], out near the old Standard Club out on Peachtree, and had an apartment over there. Ultimately, they had to put her in a [nursing] home, because she was getting feeble and . . .

Ann: . . . confused?

Steve: Confused, yes. I don’t know if she had Alzheimer’s or not in those days, but she was confused and frail. She went out to . . . What’s the name of that place?

Ann: Wesley?

Steve: Yes, she died at Wesley Woods, for the last several years of her life. It was kind of sad seeing her like that. They took good care of her.

Ann: Tell me about . . . Obviously you had cousins on that side. Therefore, your dad had relatives.

Steve: My dad had a sister. Dorothy is still alive. Dorothy Joel. Now I guess she’s the matriarch. We had a lot of good times together. They lived over on Woodhaven Road, near what is now the Governor’s Mansion on West Paces Ferry [Road]. I had three first cousins from that family, Lyons Joel, Sue, and Dotty Ann. We had a lot of fun together. Dotty Ann was the only one my age. She was a year behind me. We went to school together, double dated together, and that sort of thing.

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4The Standard Club is a Jewish social club that started as the Concordia Association in 1867 in Downtown Atlanta. In 1905, it was reorganized as the ‘Standard Club’ and moved into the former mansion of William C. Sanders near where Turner Field is now located. In the late 1920’s the club moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue in midtown Atlanta. Later, the club moved to what is now the Lenox Park business park and was located there until 1983. In the 1980’s, the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta’s northern suburbs.
Ann: Who did you date?

Steve: Who did I date? From early times? I dated a lot of people. Date is different than who did you like. When you go back to the early, early days . . .

Ann: Who did you have a crush on? Do you want me to ask you that?

Steve: When we started going to dancing class, there was an Atlanta girl named Joan Kaufman, who was Donald and Rhoda Kaufman’s daughter and, in fact, is going to be in town this week. I’m going to a reunion and will see her. I haven’t seen her in a long time. Then there was a girl named Nancy Zaglin, who lived across the street from Dotty on Woodhaven. Then, when I really started going out, I went out with a girl named Sharon Reed, who went to Northside [High School]. Then I went with Susan Zoss. That was probably the first great love, I guess. She was several years behind me in school, but she was pretty mature for her age.

Ann: What has happened to her?

Steve: Interestingly enough, she got married and was living in Washington [District of Columbia]. I was in Washington for a while, so I saw her a couple of times up there at soccer games and stuff. Then I think she got divorced, and she remarried a younger guy and moved to California. I think she had twins just a few years ago. She has got to be 51 or 52, so she probably had those twins when she was 49 or 48 years old. I haven’t seen her in a long time, but she was a beautiful girl. Then, when I got a little older in high school, I dated a girl named Diana Deas, who was not Jewish.

Ann: Did that not go over well at home or did it not matter?

Steve: You know something? I don’t think it mattered. It was irrelevant at that time. I went to Westminster.\(^5\) I was pretty well liked and pretty well received there, and I didn’t feel very much discrimination at all. I was an athlete, and I was a class officer. I was a doer, so I was pretty well received. I do remember Diana and I had been going out for a couple of years, I guess a year or two. I think I was with the boys. A lot of my friends and I went to Europe one summer. It was

\(^5\)The Westminster Schools is a private Christian day school in Atlanta, Georgia that originated in 1951 as a reorganization of the North Avenue Presbyterian School, a girls’ school and an affiliate of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church. Dr. William L. Pressly served as Westminster's first president. In 1953, Washington Seminary, another private school for girls founded by two of George Washington's great-nieces in 1878, merged with Westminster. The resulting school was co-educational until the sixth grade, with separate schools for boys and girls continuing through the twelfth grade, a practice that continued until 1986 and provided the basis of Westminster's plural name.
the year we graduated. We went to Europe and rented a Volkswagen bus. About six of us drove around Europe. Diana was being asked to make her debut. She was going to become a debutante. When I got back, her parents had told her they didn’t want her to date me anymore. That wasn’t my first by any means, but I remember that as an interesting time, because . . . It really wasn’t that big of a deal to me, because I didn’t care about dating her that much anyway, but she really wanted to date me. What we did was for several months I had friends pick her up, and we would still go out. I guess at the beginning I did want to date her. I guess I did. We stayed friends. My friends picked her up. I had one friend who picked her up so many times that her parents didn’t want her to go out with this guy so many times.

Ann: Was there objection that she was tying herself down to one person too soon or rather that you were Jewish?

Steve: I think [because] I was Jewish. All the parties at the Piedmont Driving Club and all that sort of stuff.

Ann: What was her family name? Deas?


Ann: You mentioned something about Westminster.

Steve: Let me finish the people I went out with. I only have one or two more. Diana was . . . We stopped dating in college. We both went to [University of] Georgia and kept on dating. I met somebody else. I met a nice Jewish girl named Janet Simensky my sophomore year at Georgia, from Orlando, Florida, who I ultimately married. After I graduated and she graduated, I started going out here in Atlanta. Janet went to New York to work for Look magazine. I stayed here and started going out with Judy Cohen, who is now Judy Kogan. That’s Gerald Cohen’s daughter. We had a relationship for several months, and then finally we had to decide, because New Year’s Eve came along. It was a question of who I was going to go out with on New Year’s Eve. It was no big deal when Janet was in New York and Judy was here, but Janet was expecting to come down. I had the history with Janet, and we ultimately got married. She is the mother of my children. I’ll stop there.

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In 1950, Volkswagen, maker of the Beetle automobile, expanded its product offerings to include a microbus. Known officially as the Volkswagen Type 2 (the Beetle was the Type 1) or the Transporter, the bus became an icon of the American counterculture movement during the 1960s.
Ann: We will pursue all of that further. I was trying to get a feel for some of your friends in those early years. You mentioned having gone to Westminster. This would have been in the 1950’s, since you graduated from high school in 1961. Correct?

Steve: Right.

Ann: What was the percentage or how many Jewish young people were there at Westminster in those years? You personally didn’t feel any discrimination, but did you feel any kind of undercurrent or did others who were there mention anything about antisemitism?

Steve: Oh, yes. When I say I didn’t . . . I mean I never had the swastika on my book or dirty Jew said to me or anything like that. [There was] a lot of joking around and all that sort of thing. I think there were probably as many Jews at Westminster then as there are now. That would probably be, I’m going to guess, five or six percent, maybe seven percent. Certainly under 10 percent. Way under 10. They had religious emphasis week. It was very Christ oriented. I knew clearly I was different. Don’t get me wrong. Clearly I understood the difference and understood who I was and what I was. I think I did have a lot of really good friends over there, and I had a lot of good friends who did not go there. A lot of the people I am still friendly with today. Not as friendly. I am talking about the non-Jewish friends. I am not as friendly, but we are still friendly. I guess when you get married and your wife is not from this community, you don’t go out as much with people that she is not comfortable with, but I still have pretty close friends from my early days.

Ann: Do you want to mention some of the men’s names? You mentioned some of the women’s names.

Steve: Some of the men’s names who I am friends with?

Ann: From high school. From those years.

Steve: These are people that I am still . . . Some of my Jewish friends?


Steve: Let me start on the Jewish side. There were four or five . . . When I was really young, I was friendly with the guys who were a year older than I was. That would be Joe Hess, Henry Bauer, Michael Kahn, Jeffrey Hess, Malcolm Ringel. All those guys were at least a year older than me. I’m not sure why I was friendly with them, but I used to be very friendly with them. I know one reason I was friendly with them was they could drive before me, but I am talking even younger than that.
Ann: Did you all go to Sunday school together?

Steve: Yes, but they were a year ahead of me.

Ann: They still were ahead. I thought maybe because you had been moved up . . .

Steve: Now I am going to tell you the guys who were my age who I was friendly with, and I am still friendly with them today. The same four people. Steve Weinstein, Andy Ghertner, Gary Rosenberg were people my age. We all went to [University of] Georgia together. We were all fraternity\(^7\) brothers together. Oh, and Reggie Regenstein. Reggie did not go to Georgia. He happened to go to Penn [University of Pennsylvania], but we were all in the same confirmation class at The Temple.\(^8\) Our mothers were pregnant together. We have known each other all our lives, and we are still friendly today. We are still very close, which is really surprising. Then there were some . . . Growing up, I was not as friendly with some of the younger Jewish guys, but we are friendly today. They were a couple of years behind me growing up. I don’t know if I mentioned Jimmy Green. He was a friend of mine growing up, but we are not friends today. I don’t see him very often, but he lived right up the street. Also, there was a guy named Larry Hess who I was friendly with, who lived right up the street, who was Jewish. He moved away. I can’t remember when, \(<22:45\) unintelligible> There are a couple of younger guys from around here who ended up going to Georgia and were in our fraternity. That would be people like Roger Kahn, Jack Collins, and a few others. \(<22:50\) unintelligible> My non-Jewish friends, I have known a guy named Bob Merritt since I was in grammar school. We literally have been friends since grammar school. We still are. My friends in high school were Peyton Robinson, Gordon Mayer, Blake Young. I’m still friendly with them today. We don’t go out. You know how you have friends you don’t see a lot? A very close friend of mine who went to North Fulton High School was Roddy White. I had some friends at Northside [High School]. There were not many friends at Lovett,\(^9\) because they were a year behind. There was a young guy named Richie Reiman who went to school there, who subsequently worked for me in Washington. I am pretty blessed. I had a lot of friends then. Today I would say, interestingly enough, of all the people I

\(^7\)A social organization of male students at a college or university, usually identified by Greek letters.

\(^8\)The Temple, or ‘Hebrew Benevolent Congregation,’ is Atlanta’s oldest Jewish congregation. The cornerstone was laid on the Temple on Garnett Street in 1875. The dedication was held in 1877 and the Temple was located there until 1902. The Temple’s next location on Pryor Street was dedicated in 1902. The Temple’s current location in Midtown on Peachtree Street was dedicated in 1931. The main sanctuary is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Reform congregation now totals approximately 1,500 families (2015).

\(^9\)A private school in Atlanta founded in 1926 by Eva Edwards Lovett in which progressive education is stressed and where children learn by doing. Today the school has an enrollment of more than 1,000 students. (2015)
named . . . Today, most of my really close friends are friends I have met through the Jewish community, through the work I have done in the Jewish community.

<End Tape 1, Side 1, Part 1>

<Begin Tape 1, Side 1, Part 2>

**Ann:** We are going to backtrack, because I realize you never did tell me about your mother and father. Let’s get your mother born or your father born. One or the other.

**Steve:** The earliest recollection I have, and I probably don’t even remember this because I was too young to remember it . . . I was probably just told about this, but when I was very, very young . . . I couldn’t have been more than one or two years old or three years old . . . I was born in Columbus, Georgia, at Fort Benning,¹⁰ because my dad was stationed there at the time. Very shortly thereafter, we went to California. My dad was a tank commander. He was a colonel, but he was an instructor, so he was in California teaching other soldiers how to be tank commanders. This is a weird thing to remember. It was probably just told to me. I think I remember my mother hit somebody with her car one time. It was not serious, but I remember having to go to the hospital with this person she had hit. I don’t think it was a big deal, but I remember that. I don’t know why I remember that.

**Ann:** It was probably pretty traumatic at the time.

**Steve:** I don’t know if I was just told about it or if I actually remember. I think I remember that situation. That is about as far back as I go. My mother and dad were very good together. They were very . . . They had a lot of fun. They could party better than me and my friends. They liked to go out. They would have a good time. They had really good values. They had as good values as anybody. Reputation was very important to them. Doing the right thing and being honorable was very important to them. Other things were not so important to them, but that was. How you groomed yourself and how you looked, your manners. That was all very important to them. It was not so important to me. Maybe a little more now than then. I always sort of rebelled against that stuff, but it was important to them. I don’t think I really knew how close they were. This sounds strange, but I don’t think I really knew how really close they were until my mother got cancer. In those last few years, I saw my father fall to pieces during her sickness and then his

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¹⁰Fort Benning is a United States Army post established in 1918 outside Columbus, Georgia with the capability to deploy combat-ready forces by air, rail, and highway. Much of the growth of Columbus can be attributed to the development of Fort Benning.
inability to accept her death. I think before that I thought they were just like any other couple. They were just married. They were just there. It was not a touchy-feely relationship. It was nothing like that, but it was a darn good marriage apparently.

Ann: A lot of depth to it.

Steve: Yes, more depth than I think I realized, because I am touchy-feely. At least I think I am, and I did not quite get why it was not . . . I think Dad was more touchy-feely than Mother was, Mother was not.

Ann: She was not hands on.

Steve: She was not hands on at all.

Ann: Did you resent that or did you feel rejected, since you yourself liked that affection?

Steve: No, I never felt rejected. I was sort of their pride and joy. They doted on me a lot. I knew how they felt about me. I knew I was the prodigal son, as it were.

Ann: The prince.

Steve: I don’t know about the prince, but I know they had high expectations of me. I dare say that they did not have the expectations of me that I have now achieved, but they had high expectations of me. I have known that all my life.

Ann: What do you think they expected, and what do you think you have done differently? You just eluded to something. I just wondered what that was.

Steve: I will tell you what I have done differently. Never in their wildest dreams, or probably mine either . . . I never expected to be president of the Atlanta Jewish Federation. I have received a lot of awards in my life, but I am fairly young and could have received a lot more had I allowed myself to accept them. I don’t think they would have expected me to be so involved in the Jewish community. I think they would have expected me to be involved in the non-Jewish community, as I am involved. I am very involved. I think they probably . . . My parents were more givers to Jewish causes than they were doers. I remember my father saying to me he could not take cards. I didn’t know what he was talking about, but I knew he would never go and ask

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↑↑The Atlanta Jewish Federation was formally incorporated in 1967 and is the result of the merger of the Atlanta Federation for Jewish Social Service founded in 1905 as the Federation of Jewish Charities, the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Federation founded in 1936 as the Atlanta Jewish Welfare Fund, and the Atlanta Jewish Community Council founded in 1945. The organization was renamed the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta in 1997. The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta raises funds, which are dispersed throughout the Jewish community. Services also include caring for Jews in need locally and around the world, community outreach, leadership development, and educational opportunities. It is part of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA).
other people from money. I remember when I was growing up he said, “I just cannot take cards, because when somebody says no to me I consider it a personal insult. I just cannot do it.” If somebody said that to me today, I would say that is a cop out. I would say that, to me, the best thing you can do is take cards and go have a one-on-one conversation with somebody. They were givers. They were very charitable, and they opened their home. I don’t want to imply that they did not do a lot of things, because they did. I think by my standards today, I have clearly done more than they did. That still surprises me, particularly in the Jewish community, because I did not have a solid Jewish upbringing. I have to take it all back to values, that I did have good values. They were not necessarily in a traditional Jewish home, [but] I knew I was Jewish. I was confirmed. I was never bar mitzvahed.\textsuperscript{12} It wasn’t even offered at The Temple when I was growing up, but I think I had good values. I really like people. I am somebody who really enjoys being with people. I got off track. What were we . . . ?

Ann: We were talking about your parents, but that’s fine. That statement probably is worth my having come here this morning.

Steve: Which one?

Ann: What you just said. I think that is a really important facet of your life. That is the kind of thing that is valuable in an interview like this.

Steve: I am glad. They did have high expectations of me. When you asked what I am doing that they would have expected . . .

Ann: Did have they have academic expectations, as well?

Steve: If they did, I never achieved them. I graduated from college in four years. This is my mother and dad. They would not hear of me not graduating in exactly four years. None of this extra semester stuff. I had to graduate in four years, and that was it. Then I had to decide what I wanted to do and where I wanted to be involved and all that kind of stuff. I think their expectations were that I would be a leader in the community, the overall community. Whatever community means, I would be a leader in it, [and] that I would probably be a leader in our business.

\textsuperscript{12}Bar Mitzvah is Hebrew for ‘son of commandment’ and is a rite of passage for Jewish boys aged 13 years and one day. At that time, a Jewish boy is considered a responsible adult for most religious purposes. He is now duty bound to keep the commandments, he puts on tefillin, and he may be counted to the minyan quorum for public worship. He celebrates becoming a bar mitzvah by being called up to the reading of the Torah in the synagogue, usually on the next available Sabbath after his Hebrew birthday. The term bar mitzvah often is used to describe the celebration itself, i.e. “had my bar mitzvah” or “was bar mitzvahed.”
Ann: And that you would be a good person.
Steve: And that I would be a leader in the family, and I would be a good person.
Ann: Values were important to them obviously.
Steve: Yes.
Ann: That is the thing that you always want. You want to pass those to your children.
Steve: I guess a good father and all that sort of thing, but basically I guess those were the expectations. I dare say that it was probably not the expectation of leadership so much. Erwin Zaban\(^\text{13}\) once said to me . . . After my father died, Erwin took me to lunch, and he said . . . Erwin is a very dear friend of mine, somebody I care a great deal about. I think he cares about me, too. He said, “Steve, you have the opportunity now that your parents are deceased to really make a difference. You need to be a leader in our community.” He said something about me a couple of years later. He said, “I told you to be a leader. I didn’t tell you to be a leader in everything. You could have picked something, but you have done everything.” I have done a lot. My first involvement in the Jewish community was with, I think, the American Jewish Committee.\(^\text{14}\) That’s where Mother and Dad were comfortable, I got involved in that ultimately when I came back from Washington. I became president. I think I did a real good job over there. I was president of the synagogue, The Temple, and now I am president of the Atlanta Jewish Federation, which is, I think, my last leadership role that I desire to take in the Jewish community.
Ann: In the local Jewish community.
Steve: That is an interesting point, because I am doing some national stuff. I don’t know that I really want to do national stuff, but I am not sure I can get away from doing it. I was campaign chairman here for a year at Federation. Then I was first vice president for two years, and I will be president for two years. I am doing a lot, and I am a pretty . . . What kind of person? I’m a

\(^{13}\)Native Atlantan, philanthropist and community leader Erwin Zaban (1921-2010) was known by many as the ‘Godfather of the Jewish Community.’ After quitting school to help in his father’s Depression-era business at age 15, Zaban built successful businesses worth billions of dollars and donated millions to worthy causes. He worked alongside his parents to build Zep Manufacturing Company. Zep later merged with National Linen and became National Service Industries, a Fortune 500 Company. He donated and raised money for undeveloped land in Dunwoody that became Zaban Park, home of the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. He donated money to the Jewish Home, for which the Zaban Tower is named. He helped create the homeless couples’ shelter at The Temple which bears his name.

\(^{14}\)The American Jewish Committee (AJC) was founded in 1906 to safeguard the welfare and security of Jews worldwide. It is one of the oldest Jewish advocacy organizations in the United States.
sensitive person, number one, and I am always on the move. What do you call that? Like a type-A personality. I <34:15 unintelligible> burn myself out <unintelligible>

Ann: You are probably the kind of person who is thorough and does not do a half job. If you accept it, you do it, and you do it properly.

Steve: I always said that I am not a joiner, and if I am going to join something I might as well be president and be the leader of it.

Ann: With people like that, it is inevitable that you do eventually burn out some, because you are giving a lot more than someone who is just . . .

Steve: I was with Erwin again yesterday and Arnie Rubenstein, who is a very close friend of mine and <unintelligible 11:20> the next president of Federation. Irwin said to me . . . My thing is to get . . . When I became president of Federation, I had three goals. One was to raise more money, so we could help those less fortunate. One was to restore pride in our community and in what we are doing, and third was to just have a good time. Let’s enjoy ourselves. When I said restore pride, there are some people who had been put off by the process. There are politics in charity. There are politics in everything. There were some people who were not happy with the way things were going. I have been trying to get those people back in the fold. I was telling Erwin yesterday about one of the people. He looked at me, and he said to Arnie, “You are the greatest healer since Jesus Christ,” or something like that. Arnie said, “You are unhappy if one person doesn’t feel good about what you are doing. You are unhappy about it. You worry.” I said, “You are right.” That is why I can’t ever run for office myself, because if I did not get every vote I would think somebody did not like me. It would be okay if the candidate’s family did not vote for me, the other guy, my opponent’s family. It is important to me that everybody feels good about the process. To do that requires an awful lot of mental energy. A lot of physical energy, too.

Ann: What do you think has made the disaffected feel that way about Federation?

Steve: Some of it is personality. Some of the leadership in the past has not been hands on. They have been seen as elitist, and they have been seen as going behind closed doors in making decisions without bringing other people into the process. Some of it is just sort of a natural resistance, I think. Some people use it as a crutch not to give. Some people want an excuse, and that is a handy excuse. I am trying real hard to overcome all those things. I am trying to be very encompassing. I am trying to speak to everybody who wants to get involved.
Ann: Find the places to be.

Steve: It is not always easy to find a place to put people, but we try. I think we are succeeding right now. We are making great progress.

Ann: I think it is inevitable, and someone your age probably is not . . . You were in the middle of this process, but the Jewish community of Atlanta has changed significantly in the last 40 or 50 years in its interrelationships. I think this is part of what you are talking about.

Steve: You are absolutely right.

Ann: I wonder what your take is on how those interrelationships between the various segments of the Jewish community have evolved.

Steve: First of all, I think it is wonderful that it has. I think one of the main reasons it has is because of the Atlanta Jewish Federation. When I was growing up, I don’t think I knew very many people who were Jewish who were not Reform. I knew some, but they were not my closest friends. Some were. I had a few that were, but . . . How has it changed? First of all, I think the leadership in the Jewish community used to be at the synagogues. I think the presidents of the synagogues were probably the titular heads of the Jewish community. If you look back through the roles of who was president of the various synagogues around town, you will see that those guys were probably the leaders in the community. I think today clearly, and not because I am president, because this will go on after I am president and happened before I was president, to a large extent the leadership of the Jewish community is in Federation. Federation happens to be non-segmented.

Ann: Non-sectarian.

Steve: Non-sectarian. It is not just for one brand of Judaism, and quite honestly one of the things I am doing is working to get the Orthodox more involved. Clearly, the Reform and Conservative are so intermeshed in Federation. There’s no doubt about it. I now belong to two

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15Reform Judaism is a division within Judaism especially in North America and Western Europe. 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.

16Orthodox 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.

17Conservative 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 mitzvah).
I belong to The Temple and to the AA [Ahavath Achim]. I would say perhaps an equal number of my close friends belong to both now, whereas in the past it was always they belonged to The Temple. It may even be more of my close friends, but it is not just those two synagogues. It is Etz Chaim. It is Sinai. It is Beth Jacob. I have got friends over there. I know all the rabbis. Every rabbi in the community is a good friend. One of the things we have been working on is synagogue-Federation relations and outreach. In fact, every rabbi in the community has offered to help me with my Judaism, to teach me Hebrew and that sort of thing, because I have let the word get out that I was interested in that. I thought that I wanted to do it before I became president, because I felt like I really needed to understand more and I particularly needed to learn Hebrew before I became president. Now that I am president, I see it is not necessary. I can do the job without all that knowledge. Now I don’t have time to do it, because this job is almost a full-time job.

**Ann:** I was going to ask you. How many hours a week do you think you probably spend on Federation?

**Steve:** I spend day and night. How many hours are in a . . . Are we talking about a 40- or 60-[hour work week]?

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18 Ahavath Achim was founded in 1887 in a small room on Gilmer Street. In 1901 they moved to a permanent building at the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer Street. In 1921, the congregation constructed a synagogue at Washington Street and Woodward Avenue. The final service in that building was held in 1958 to make way for construction of the Downtown Connector (the concurrent section of Interstate 75 and Interstate 85 through Atlanta). The synagogue moved to its current location on Peachtree Battle Avenue in 1958.

Rabbi Abraham Hirmes was the first rabbi of the then Orthodox congregation. In 1928 Rabbi Harry Epstein became the rabbi and the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they joined in 1952. Cantor Isaac Goodfriend, a Holocaust survivor, joined the congregation in 1966 and remained until his retirement. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post. He retired in 2002. Rabbi Neil Sandler is now the rabbi (2015).

19 Congregation Etz Chaim is a progressive, egalitarian Conservative synagogue established in 1975 in Marietta, Georgia, a suburb in north metropolitan Atlanta.

20 Temple Sinai was founded as a Reform congregation in 1968 and met in a variety of locations before establishing a synagogue on Dupree Drive in Sandy Springs, north of Atlanta. Rabbi Richard Lehrman was chosen as the congregation's founding rabbi. The current rabbi is Rabbi Ron Segal (2016).

21 Beth Jacob is an Orthodox synagogue on LaVista Road in Atlanta founded in 1942 by former members of Ahavath Achim who were looking for a more Orthodox congregation. Beth Jacob is now Atlanta’s largest Orthodox congregation. The congregation first met in a rented grocery store on Parkway Drive. It moved to a permanent location on Boulevard when it purchased and renovated a two-story apartment building. In 1956, it converted the Tabernacle Baptist Church on Boulevard to a synagogue. It built its current synagogue building on a five-acre lot on LaVista Road in 1961. Rabbi Joseph Safra was the congregation’s first permanent rabbi in 1951, followed by Rabbi Emanuel Feldman from 1952 to 1991. Rabbi Ilan Feldman has been the congregation’s rabbi since his father Emanuel’s retirement in 1991.
Ann: You are working full time, because you are a young man and you are the head of several companies. You are putting in 60 to 80 hours [a week] probably on that.

Steve: Maybe half. Maybe half of the time goes to Federation. Sometimes considerably less, sometimes . . . probably never more than that. It is considerable, and there is a lot of emotional time involved. A lot. I guess I enjoy it, or I wouldn’t do it. Nobody is making me do it.

Ann: Has it impacted your family life?

Steve: I think it has impacted it far, far to the better. My wife, Linda, is very, very involved. She is president of the Women’s Division [of Federation] right now. She was probably involved before I was. She is very supportive and has her own niche and does wonderful things.

Ann: What is her maiden name?

Steve: Weinkle. She is from Miami. She was formerly married to Bill Shank. He used to live here. He is from Columbus, Ohio. That is a very prominent family in Columbus. My daughter, who had the same misfortune as I did not to be raised in a traditional Jewish home . . . It is not her fault. She has the same lack of knowledge that I do, but she got involved in the American Jewish Committee. This year she was president of ACCESS.22

Ann: What is her name?

Steve: Mindy Shoulberg.

Ann: How do you spell her last name?

Steve: S-H-O-U-L-B-E-R-G. She married a young man from Philadelphia. They live here in Atlanta. They have two <43:15 unintelligible> She was president of ACCESS, which is a thousand-membership, young person’s division of the American Jewish Committee. I’m very proud of her for doing that. She has gotten involved in that because of our involvement. Our two sons are getting there. They are both just out of school and both starting their own careers. We all go to the community events together, and we celebrate the holidays together. We did not always do that growing up. We did not celebrate Passover,23 for example.

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22ACCESS was founded in Atlanta over 25 years ago as a way to engage young professionals in the important work of the American Jewish Committee (AJC). ACCESS, AJC’s Young Leadership Program, prepares the next generation of Jewish leaders to engage in the key issues facing the global Jewish community. ACCESS empowers young Jewish activists to shape the conversation on today’s critical domestic and international issues by reaching out to diplomats, opinion makers, and young leaders of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds.

23Hebrew: Pesach. The anniversary of Israel’s liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, matzah, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the seder, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The seder service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating matzah during the seder, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened
Ann: The whole family?
Steve: Not until my sister and I wanted to do it, and that was probably into our college days maybe.
Ann: Did you ever personally participate with a friend’s family?
Steve: No.
Ann: You never went to a *seder*[^24] until you were in college?
Steve: I think that is about right.
Ann: That is amazing.
Steve: We had Christmas growing up, and I got uncomfortable with that. I am not exactly sure why. My sister and I basically . . . I know I stopped Christmas in my family when my kids were . . . when we moved to Washington, I guess. I became very uncomfortable with it.
Ann: What are your boys’ names?
Steve: My oldest son is Scott, and my youngest son is Blake.
Ann: How old are they?
Steve: Mindy is 28, Scott is 27, and Blake is 25. Now, of course, we would not miss Passover or would not think of celebrating Christmas or anything like that. It is embarrassing to even talk about it, frankly, but that is the way I was raised. I didn’t know any different.
Ann: Why do you think your family ignored those Jewish traditions or rituals?
Steve: I have no idea.
Ann: That was not necessarily so at The Temple. The Temple certainly was . . . I don’t think that Rabbi Marx[^25] ignored Passover, did he? Certainly Rabbi Rothschild[^26] would not have.

[^24]: *Seder* (meaning “order” in Hebrew”) is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted on the evening of the fifteenth day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar throughout the world. Some communities hold *seder* on both the first two nights of Passover. The *seder* incorporates prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

[^25]: Rabbi David Marx was a long-time rabbi at The Temple in Atlanta, Georgia. He led the move toward Reform Judaism practices. He served as rabbi from 1895 to 1946. When he retired, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild took the pulpit that Rabbi Marx had held for more than half a century.

[^26]: Rabbi Jacob Rothschild was rabbi of the city’s oldest Reform congregation, the Temple, in Atlanta, Georgia from 1946 until his death in 1973 from a heart attack. He forged close relationships with the city’s Christian clergy and distinguished himself as a charismatic spokesperson for civil rights.
Steve: Rabbi Rothschild was the rabbi that I had growing up. I guess it just was not . . .
Probably they were not raised with it either. It just did not seem to be a big deal.
Ann: Yet your grandfather Massell, for instance . . . I think usually those kinds of things are
what the mother of the family wants to do more often than instigated by the father. Therefore, I
would say that . . .
<br/>&lt;End Tape 1, Side 1, Part 2&gt;
<br/>&lt;Begin Tape 1, Side 2&gt;
Ann: I think I was in the middle of a sentence, talking about the fact that it was probably your
mother who made that decision not to include a lot of ritual in your home life.
Steve: We had no ritual.
Ann: I wondered if her own life growing up was devoid of all of that.
Steve: I assume it had to have been. I do not ever remember going over to her parents and
having Passover or anything like that.
Ann: It’s interesting, because they were immigrants, or at least your grandfather was an
immigrant.
Steve: Both my grandfathers were, I believe. My other one may have been . . .
Ann: That history, coming from . . . and he was very active in the Jewish community, was he
not, Ben Massell?
Steve: Yes. Make no mistake about it. Clearly we knew we were Jewish. Clearly. I am not
sure how proud they were of it necessarily. They fit in in the general community as well as the
Jewish community, and that seemed important to them.
Ann: Do you think, because of the years in which they grew up and the fact that they lived
through World War II in a different way than you did . . . your grandparents this is . . . and that
they experienced more antisemitism, that may have influenced your mother’s feelings about . . .
Steve: I don’t know. We never really talked about it very much. I always knew, for some
reason, that I was proud to be Jewish. I knew that. I always felt like I was more proud of it than
my parents were. That is just my opinion. That may not be fact. That is just a feeling I had.
Ann: How about Cathy?
Steve: I think Cathy felt like I did. I am not exactly sure how that all happened. Again, I am
not sure how I got so active in the Jewish community, because I really . . . Mother and Dad were
active, but they were very active in the Jewish community. Very active in the Jewish community. They did a lot of good things.

**Ann:** Like [what], for instance?

**Steve:** They were involved in most of the Jewish charities that I was aware of, from Federation to American Jewish Committee to The Temple. They were charitable. They would open their home to the fundraisers and things like that. They would support all of the causes. Not all of the causes. Let me back up on that. They would support what I would consider mainstream causes. They would not have supported, for example, Yeshiva\(^27\) or Torah Day School\(^28\) like we do today, but they supported the mainstream causes.

**Ann:** Were they supporters of Israel?

**Steve:** Yes, they were supporters of Israel. In fact, the first time I went to Israel was with my dad. They were involved in everything, yet they did not . . . I think that’s okay. I think in their own way they were probably good Jews. They just were not ritualistic. Other than that, they lived a life far better than a lot of quote “good Jews” that I know, in terms of their integrity and the way they lived their life. I guess it is all part of who you are. One part was clearly missing, and that was the ritualistic part of being Jewish when we were growing up.

**Ann:** You did not light candles and all of that.

**Steve:** No.

**Ann:** That was not your background. What was your mother like as a person? You said they had fun. Did they go . . . Did that mean they had parties? What did she do during the day?

**Steve:** She did not work.

**Ann:** Most women that age did not.

**Steve:** She was a very refined person, as I said before.

**Ann:** Was she college educated?

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\(^27\)Yeshiva (Hebrew for “sitting”) is a Jewish educational institution for religious instruction that is equivalent to high school. It also refers to a Talmudic college for unmarried male students from their teenage years to their early twenties.

\(^28\)Torah Day School was founded in 1985 with an enrollment of approximately 25 students in grades 1 and 2. Over the years it has grown and moved several times. In 2003, it moved to LaVista Road with a state-of-the-art, full service school on 11 acres and 360 students. Its mission is to inspire students to observe the Torah, strive for personal excellent, and pursue life-long earning.
Steve: Yes, but I don’t think she graduated. I am not sure. I don’t know whether she graduated or not. Of course she was a mother when we were growing up. She took care of us a lot. After we left home, I don’t know what . . . She did volunteer work. A lot of it.
Ann: Do you know where?
Steve: Yes. She did a lot of work with the Service Guild. I think she did a lot of work with the museum [which museum?]. Whoever happened to . . .
Ann: . . . ask her.
Steve: . . . ask her. Those were two.
Ann: Who were her best friends, the people you called aunt?
Steve: Her best friends were Lala Lesser, Jean Cohen, Helen Regenstein, Adele Davis, Charlotte Garson, Elaine Lang, Dotty Oberdorfer. I am leaving out several I am sure.
Ann: Obviously they were in the Jewish community.
Steve: Oh, yes. All of them. All Jewish.
Ann: Interesting. And your dad?
Steve: They did have friends outside the Jewish community that they would get out with on occasion, but primarily it was . . .
Ann: Their social life was . . .
Steve: I think Joanne Guzzi was a friend of hers.
Ann: Probably their social life revolved, in large part, around the Standard Club?
Steve: Yes, for sure. Absolutely. That was it. My dad’s best friends were the husbands of all the people I just named. Frank Lesser, Herbie Cohen, Al Davis, Louis Regenstein, right on down the list. Donald Oberdorfer. I am sure I am leaving out some people. He had some people in his golf game, too. Those are the names that come to mind.
Ann: Did most of them lead the same kinds of family lives. They, too, had little Jewish ritualistic backgrounds? Do you remember?
Steve: I don’t think they did.
Ann: Pretty much the same?
Steve: I think they had the same story as we did, but he had friends who played in his golf game from Myron Dwoskin to . . . I don’t know Levin’s first name. We used to call him <unintelligible 8:01> Levin. I don’t know what his real name was.
Ann: There were people at the AA, for instance, who probably did celebrate *Pesach* [Hebrew: Passover].

Steve: I am sure, and if they were members of the Standard Club they played golf together.

Ann: What about business associates?

Steve: When I was growing up, Dad was president of Selig Chemical Industries, which was his chemical company. He had salesmen working for him. He had two guys . . . One guy ended coming to work for us when we started our real estate company. Bill Body. The other person he hired over there was his nephew Lyons Joel, who became president of <unintelligible 9:04>

Ann: What is the origin of Selig Chemical?

Steve: My grandfather started it.

Ann: Was your grandfather the first Selig in Atlanta?

Steve: There was Simon Selig and there was Albert Selig. I’m not sure if Albert was in the business or not.

Ann: Were they brothers?

Steve: I think they were cousins. I think. Again, I am not sure, because Albert left when I was pretty young.

Ann: His line is no longer in this city.

Steve: No. <unintelligible 9:35>

Ann: Your grandfather founded the company. Where was it located?

Steve: It was located on Marietta Street near downtown.

Ann: Not down in the Chattahoochee area.

Steve: No. It was on Marietta Street near Jones Avenue.

Ann: It was industrial?

Steve: Yes. It backed up to the railroad tracks on that side of Marietta Street. Then they moved to Fulton Industrial [Boulevard]. The Fulton County Commissioner was a guy named Charlie Brown. They named the airport29 after him. They were one of the first ones to move out there. I think it had to do with my grandfather, Ben Massell, having some land out there. I am not sure about that. Charlie Brown said to my dad, “What should we call the street?” Dad said, “Why don’t we call it Selig Drive?” They did, so Selig Drive became one of the streets out there, and

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29Fulton County Airport, also known as Charlie Brown Field, is a county-owned, public-use airport in Fulton County, Georgia.
there was Selig Circle, and there was Selig Way. That one little street became a big deal out there on Fulton Industrial. There are a lot of buildings out there.

Ann: Are there any streets named for your other grandfather? The Massells?

Steve: That is a very good question. I don’t think so.

Ann: Obviously he was, being the real estate maven . . .

Steve: He was the guy. You are right.

Ann: He should have something named for him.

Steve: That is an interesting point. That is a very interesting question. He does have the Ben Massell Dental Clinic named after him.

Ann: The origins of which are . . .

Steve: I don’t know. I don’t remember.

Ann: Is it not still under Federation?

Steve: No. I think it is more under United Way now. I think so. It may be under Jewish Family [& Career] Services, but I don’t think so.

Ann: It serves the poor.

Steve: Jewish dentists volunteer their time over there. I guess they are Jewish. Maybe not all of them. I am trying to think of what was named for my grandfather. He dedicated the chapel at The Temple to his wife, Helen. It is the Helen Massell Chapel, and the gym at the Jewish Community Center, which he donated and dedicated to my sister and me and our parents. I don’t think there is anything . . . There was a building we named the Massell Building at Pershing Point, but it is not a prominent building. They may have changed the name by now. I have been

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30In 1915, philanthropist Morris Hirsch established the Morris Hirsch Clinic to provide outpatient medical services to those unable to afford care. A dental program was added to the clinic in 1929. In 1956, the dental clinic moved to Pryor Street and was renamed the Ben Massell Dental Clinic. The brothers Irving and Marvin Goldstein, both dentists, supported a volunteer dental force that served 6,000 patients each year. The Ben Massell Dental Clinic is still in existence today.

31United Way is a national system of volunteers, contributors and local charities helping people in their own communities.

32Jewish Family and Career Services (JF&CS Atlanta) is a group of professionals and volunteers offering programs, and resources for individuals and families of all faiths, cultures and ages. Services include counseling, tools for employment, and support for people with developmental disabilities. JF&CS is a member organization of the Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agencies (AJFCA).

JF&CS is a result of the merging of two separate organizations, both of which started as committees of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. The first, Jewish Family Services was founded around 1890. The agency became an autonomous organization in 1982. In 1979, Jewish Vocational Services was started. It became independent in 1985. The two agencies merged in 1997 to become JF&CS.
asked on a couple of occasions recently, over the last five or six years, several times, Israel Bonds\textsuperscript{33} asked if they could name the Israel Bonds community award for my grandfather. We were very reluctant to do that. We told them no, because right now there is so much already related to our family. It just seemed like too much.

\textbf{Ann:} Overkill?

\textbf{Steve:} Overkill. We have got more publicity than I want. Frankly, we have got too much, and I would like to cut back, so we said no.

\textbf{Ann:} It would be fun to have a street named Massell.

\textbf{Steve:} A street would be okay. If we ever develop another street, we would probably do that. [That is] a very good idea. We do that on occasion.

\textbf{Ann:} How much property does Selig Enterprises now encompass?

\textbf{Steve:} A lot. A couple of hundred pieces of real estate, I would say. Maybe most of that is probably . . . I should know this. I’m going to guess, off the top of my head, eight or nine million square feet. <13:55 unintelligible>

\textbf{Ann:} I realize. Mostly office space or industrial?

\textbf{Steve:} Half retail, half office/industrial.

\textbf{Ann:} All in the Atlanta region?

\textbf{Steve:} Most in Atlanta, but we have several shopping centers in Florida. We have a building in Puerto Rico. We have a building in Tennessee. We have one in North Carolina. Mostly in the Atlanta area.

\textbf{Ann:} I still did not get you to tell me what your dad was like. Before you run away today, tell me about your dad.

\textbf{Steve:} My dad was a great guy, a wonderful guy. [He was] very sensitive. I think I got that part of my character from him, for sure. He would cry at the drop of a hat, which is what I would do, also. You would also. I saw you. He was a great, great guy. He had his ways. He was stubborn at times but a person that I had the privilege of working with for a lot of years before he died, right alongside him. I talked to him a lot. He was a detail guy. My father was a guy who wanted to know where every dollar was going. He watched the costs very, very carefully. I always thought, when I worked alongside him, that if he would ever die I could never do this. I

\textsuperscript{33} Development Corporation for Israel, commonly known as ‘Israel Bonds,’ is a broker-dealer that underwrites securities issued by the State of Israel in the United States.
could never have the grasp of all the details that he did. Guess what. I was right. I could not. I am nowhere near as detail oriented as he was. I am much more <unintelligible 15:35>

Ann: You see the big picture.

Steve: I try to be more big picture. When I was growing up, we had great times. My whole family did. We would take great trips together. When I was really, really young, we went to Atlantic City [New Jersey] a lot, because my grandmother had a house up there. When we got a little older . . . My grandfather, Ben Massell, had a house down in Miami Beach [Florida], so we would go down there <unintelligible 16:15> as a family.

Ann: What did you do as a family?

Steve: Swim, fish, eat, go to clubs. I said my folks liked to go out. I remember going to my first play up in New York [City] and seeing Golden Boy when I think I was about nine or ten years old, with Sammy Davis, [Jr.]. Down in Miami . . . They sold the house when I was 15 or 14 years old, so this was much younger than that. I remember going to see Johnny Mathis at the Fontainebleau Hotel, for example. We did all the normal stuff. It was a lot of fun. I liked that experience. I wish we had that house today. We gave it up <unintelligible 17:05> My parents <unintelligible> and have my girlfriends over to the house. Dad’s big love was the University of Georgia. They went to every single game. They usually went with Lala and Frank Lesser, and I would be in the back of the car with Lainy, Lala and Frank’s daughter. Those were some of the happiest times, going to the Georgia football games. I still do it to this day. It is still one of my favorite things to do. My dad was a huge, huge Georgia fan, as big as they come, and I am today.

Ann: I know that the art museum at Georgia is named . . .

Steve: No.

Ann: No?

Steve: No, we did not do that. We were going to do that.

Ann: They wanted to do that. I saw that.

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34 Atlantic City is a resort city on New Jersey's Atlantic coast that's known for its many casinos, wide beaches and iconic Boardwalk.
35 Samuel George Davis, Jr. (1925 – 1990) was an American singer, musician, dancer, actor, vaudevillian and comedian. Among the many phases of his long career, Davis became a member of the “Rat Pack” in 1959, a group of well-known performers led by Frank Sinatra and including Dean Martin, Joey Bishop, and Peter Lawford.
36 The Fontainebleau Miami Beach (also known as Fontainebleau Hotel) is one of the most historically and architecturally significant hotels in Miami Beach, Florida. The luxurious hotel, which opened in 1954 and was designed by Morris Lapidus, is situated on oceanfront Collins Avenue in the heart of Millionaire's Row.
Steve: We were going to put up a certain amount of money. The State [of Georgia] had to put up a certain amount of money. The State did not do it, so we backed off that. During this period of time, Dad died. My sister and I did not do the museum. We gave to the athletic department. Dad was going to do it for Mother. It was going to be the Caroline Massell Museum. Caroline Massell Selig. After Dad died, we did the athletic department. The front of it is called Selig Plaza, and the street it is on is Selig Drive or Selig Circle, something like that.

Ann: Was he actively athletic?

Steve: No, he was not athletic at all.

Ann: Just a terrific fan.

Steve: He was not athletic at all, and he just loved my athletic success. I was a star football player in high school. I was all-city and all-state. I could have played in college. I could have had a scholarship.

Ann: Why did you choose not to?

Steve: First of all, Dad used to love to come to those games. He came to every game. He used to love it, particularly football. I played tennis. I played soccer. Football was <unintelligible 19:25> I chose not to because, number one, we did not need the money for a scholarship, and, number two, I had worked real hard when I was in high school. I wanted to enjoy college and not worry about it. At that time, Wally Butts37 was the coach and had a reputation for being a real hard-ass slave driver. I just did not feel like I needed that aggravation up there.

Ann: Was your dad disappointed that you didn’t want to go on with it?

Steve: I don’t think so. I don’t think he was disappointed. I always look back and wonder how I would have done, but I could have gone to a number of colleges. Georgia was where he went. Georgia was where I wanted to go. Georgia is where my youngest son went <unintelligible 20:12> That was great. Dad was the kind of person who . . . When I say the man had values I mean . . . We had our own construction crews in those days, like they do today. If they came out to the house and painted a wall, Dad would say, “I want you to send me a bill.” I said, “That is ridiculous. Charge it as if they were painting our shopping center.” He said, “No, I am not going to do it. Life is too short.”

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37James Wallace "Wally" Butts, Jr. (1905-1973) was an American football player, coach, and college athletics administrator. He served as the head coach at the University of Georgia from 1939 to 1960 and the athletic director from 1939 to 1963. He was inducted posthumously into the College Football Hall of Fame as a coach in 1997.
Ann:  He was an honest man. He could not look at himself in the mirror if he did things like that.

Steve:  He said, “Money is just not that important. I have to face myself every morning. I am just not going to do it.” I used to argue with him. I said, “You are crazy. My God, that is what you have a company for.” He said, “Listen, if I want to do that I will just raise my salary. Before I go fast and loose with the books, I will just raise my salary.” He never would do that. I will do it a little more than he did, but I don’t do it much either. I am not as down the line as he was on that kind of stuff, but I remember those lessons very well.

Ann:  You don’t want to end up like Leona Helmsley.38

<They both laugh.>

Steve:  I don’t think so. When you have got 15 people working for your company, and one of them comes out here and mows the grass, let’s say . . .

Ann:  Or shaves the bottom of your door.

Steve:  For them to send me a bill for a hundred dollars, they can put the time down as warehouse time. That is the way Dad was. A very honorable guy. That was the kind of person he was.

Ann:  And a fun person to be with?

Steve:  Yes. Mother and Dad used to go out at night. They would go to parties. I did not appreciate it until I got older, but they would stay out later than I would. We would go out, and they would stay out later. They drank, and they smoked. In fact, they probably drank too much, and I know they smoked. One of the things I remember about our house [is] we all had dinner together growing up, and there was smoke. I have never smoked a cigarette in my life. I remember how uncomfortable it was in that house with all the cigarette smoke.

Ann:  Do you think your mother’s cancer was related to that?

Steve:  Probably. They drank a lot compared to what I drink. I hardly drink at all.

Ann:  I don’t think that is unusual for those years, because nobody was as concerned with the health benefits, or non-benefits, of smoking and drinking.

Steve:  When they got home in the afternoon, they always had a drink, every single day.

38Leona Mindy Roberts Helmsley (1920-2007), born Lena Mindy Rosenthal, was an American businesswoman. After allegations of non-payment by her of contractors hired by her to build her home, Helmsley was investigated and convicted of federal income tax evasion and other crimes in 1989. Although having initially received a sentence of 16 years, Helmsley was required to serve only 19 months in prison and two months under house arrest.
Ann: Did you have a lot of help in the house?

Steve: Yes. I was always embarrassed about that, too. We were served dinner. I hated it. I always hated it.

Ann: How many people?

Steve: I guess two. We had somebody who cooked and we had . . . At one time, it may have been three. It’s hard for me to remember now. I know we had at least two, somebody who cooked and somebody who <unintelligible 23:55>

Ann: I am assuming they were black.

Steve: They were definitely black.

Ann: Did you have a nanny as a little kid?

Steve: A nanny.


Steve: I don’t remember having one.

Ann: Then you probably did not.

Steve: A nanny is different than a maid. Clearly there were African-American women around the house. My mother did not work. She was there. I don’t want to give the impression that she was off . . . If I had a doctor’s appointment, she took me. If I had to go get clothes, she took me. If I had to do whatever I had to do, she was there. It was not exactly like a nanny, but there were clearly help around. The thing that I remember that embarrassed me the most about those years was, number one, being served dinner, and, number two, having . . . I don’t even like to use the word. I’m not sure what you call those people . . . a house person drive us to school.

Ann: A man?

Steve: A man, yes, drive us to school. I was always embarrassed by that.

Ann: Where did you go to grade school, before you went to Westminster?

Steve: I went to Little Lovett.39 I was a private school <unintelligible 25:30>. I never went to public school.

Ann: What is Little Lovett?

Steve: It was Lovett in those days. It was on West Wesley [Road]. Are you from Atlanta?

Ann: No.

39A private school in Atlanta founded in 1926 by Eva Edwards Lovett in which progressive education is stressed and where children learn by doing. Today the school has an enrollment of more than 1,000 students. (2015)
Steve: There is a subdivision there now. <unintelligible 25:37> Lovett School went from kindergarten to sixth or seventh grade. I left in about the fifth grade and went to Westminster when it was on Peachtree [Street]. <unintelligible> I am going to have to stop.

Ann: I think that’s fine.

Steve: We have not even touched on . . .

Ann: A lot of things.

Steve: My White House years, and . . .

Ann: That is exactly right. I would have deliberately decided that this would be it for today, because I knew you were anxious to get to the office. Thank you.

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 1, Part 1>

Ann: This is Ann Hoffman Schoenberg, interviewing Stephen Selig on June 10, 1998, [more than 14 months later] for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. After such a long hiatus, I want to congratulate you on a successful completion of your time and service to Federation. How do you feel now that it’s all over?

Steve: It’s bittersweet. I am not exactly sure how I feel yet. I have a lot more time on my hands. I am already . . . I did not realize I would have this much time this quickly. On the other hand, I will miss the excitement and the action, the leadership, making the decisions, the camaraderie, and the friendships. Although I will not be going away, I still will not be as much in the center of things like I was over the past ten years.

Ann: Have you made a decision about any national service? Have they approached you about it?

Steve: Oh, yes. I have been approached.

Ann: I figured.

Steve: I have not made any decisions. I was asked to be major gifts chair for the UJA/CJF campaign this year, but I said no to that. I told them . . . This was a couple of months ago, when I

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40The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) was a Jewish philanthropic umbrella organization that collected and distributed funds to Jewish organizations in their community and around the country. The Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) served as an umbrella organization of American and Canadian Federations, fostering communication between them about common interests and problems and strengthening their combined impact on global needs. UJA existed from 1939 until it was folded into the United Jewish Communities (UJC), which was formed from the 1999 merger of
was right in the middle of all this presidency stuff. I basically told them that I didn’t want a title. They should just give me any job they wanted me to have but do not give me a title. Do not give me the responsibility. I will take any assignment, but I did not want to chair anything, at least for this year.

**Ann**: You had said, when we talked before, that it really was at least a 40-hour-a-week job, in addition to your normal working load.

**Steve**: Yes.

**Ann**: I could see why you would feel there is a hole in your schedule.

**Steve**: I just want to see what I can do for a few months without the pressure and see if I can decompress a little bit. I will see how it goes.

**Ann**: Have you been involved a good deal of late in the controversies in Israel, the business with the conversion problems and all of that? The political problems.

**Steve**: Yes, only primarily as it affects Atlanta and affects the people who live here. I have been to several meetings about it, and I have been trying to keep the lid on it in Atlanta. One of the things we have done in Atlanta is a synagogue-Federation outreach program, whereby we try to get the synagogues and the rabbis to be much more closely tuned into the Federation. We have got a two-year program to do just that. That is part of it.

**Ann**: Has that been successful with [Congregation] Beth Jacob and the other Orthodox congregations?

**Steve**: Yes, it has. In fact, at my going out at the Federation annual meeting Monday night, I would say there were more Orthodox rabbis there than any other stream. In fact, [Rabbi] Ilan Feldman was there. Ilan Feldman is a big supporter of Federation. He’s the rabbi at Beth Jacob, and all the Kollel rabbis, as well.

**Ann**: Have you had much dissention from people within the community about donating money?

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United Jewish Appeal, Council of Jewish Federations, and United Israel Appeal (UIA). In November 2009, UJC changed its name to The Jewish Federations of North America, Inc.

41Rabbi Ilan D. Feldman began his service to Congregation Beth Jacob as its assistant rabbi in 1980, and became its senior rabbi in 1991. He succeeded his father, Rabbi Emanuel Feldman, who held this position for 39 years. Rabbi Feldman is a founder of Torah Day School of Atlanta and was instrumental in bringing the Atlanta Scholars Kollel to Atlanta.

42The Atlanta Scholars Kollel is a group of rabbis and families in Georgia who have dedicated themselves to promoting Jewish identity through Jewish knowledge, with study opportunities in classes, programs, and informal settings throughout the city.
Steve: It has not really hit Atlanta yet. We have not had a fallout yet from that issue like other communities. We were able to get through this year. I am not aware of any donor . . . I am not aware of one who withheld a gift because of that issue. Now, we have had several talk about it and question it, but no one, to the best of my knowledge, withheld a gift because of that.

Ann: I am going to change the topic totally. I went over the first tape, and there were a few holes in it. I wanted to be sure, before we got too far along into other things, that we filled those holes, if you would. First of all, would you please tell me the names of your wives?

Steve: The names of my wives?

Ann: Yes. Janet was your first wife. Her maiden name was?

Steve: Simensky.

Ann: Simensky? Spell it.

Steve: S-I-M-E-N-S-K-Y.

Ann: Your second wife.

Steve: I don’t remember her maiden name. I wasn’t married that long. Beth. I don’t remember what her maiden name was. I have to think about it.

Ann: You were married just a brief time?

Steve: About a year or less.

Ann: About a year. No children from that union?

Steve: No.

Ann: Your last wife, your current wife, was Linda . . .

Steve: Weinkle.


Steve: W-E-I-N-K-L-E.

Ann: That was one of the gaps. I did not have the maiden names of the women. The other thing is that I did not get you to talk a little bit about your children. We just barely talked about the kids, but I wanted you to talk a little bit more about . . . You had three?

Steve: Yes.

Ann: They are the product of the first marriage?

Steve: Right.

Ann: Why don’t you go ahead and tell me about them. You can brag.
Steve: There is a lot to brag about. My first-born child is Melinda Beth Shoulberg. Melinda Beth Selig Shoulberg.

Ann: Spell it.

Steve: S-H-O-U-L-B-E-R-G. Mindy, from the time she was born, has been a delight. [She] never gave us any trouble, worked hard at school, had to work for everything she got. She was not a naturally gifted kid but was a hard worker. She was extremely popular. Extremely popular.

Ann: Where did she go to school, and how old is she?

Steve: She is 29. She will be 30 in December. She went to a lot of different schools. Her primary schools were Sidwell Friends in Washington when we were living in Washington. Then, when she came back to Atlanta, I guess Westminster. That is the high school she graduated from. She really came back at a tough time. I cannot remember if it was the ninth or tenth grade. I think she came back in the tenth grade. It was unbelievable how quickly the people in her class came to love her. It was even more unusual because there were very few Jewish kids in her class. The sort of proof of her popularity was she was voted in her senior year what really amounted to the most popular by the females in her grade. There was something they had at Westminster called Mardi Gras. She was the one voted the honor of whatever that is riding the float for the class and that kind of stuff. She is somebody that everybody likes. I have had people tell me Mindy does not have an enemy in the world. She is just a superb young woman. Very independent minded. Has her own thoughts and ideas. She is the kind of young woman who took off and went to Europe on her own and did it the hard way. No hotels. The monorails and the youth hostels and all that sort of thing. Actually, she went with a couple of girlfriends, and they sort of walked Europe. When she decided to go to college, it was one of those deals where she was right on the borderline of being accepted. She wanted to go to Tulane [University]. I remember that we went down to interview there, and the admissions director told her that she did not think she was qualified for Tulane and that she ought to go to Sophie Newcomb, which was the girls adjunct to that for, I guess, less gifted students. She had been accepted into Tulane, but for bureaucratic reasons . . . She was real upset about that, but rather than giving in she set out

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43Sidwell Friends School is a pre-kindergarten through 12th grade co-educational Quaker day school founded in 1883 and located in Washington, DC and Bethesda, Maryland.

44Tulane University is a private, nonsectarian research university located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

45H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College, or Newcomb College, was the coordinate women’s college of Tulane University in New Orleans. It was founded in 1886 by Josephine Louise Newcomb in memory of her daughter, Sophie, who died in 1870 at the age of 15. In 2006 it was merged into other Tulane undergraduate colleges.
and worked harder. I think she finished at Tulane with a B+ average and never had any trouble but just worked hard as heck. That was the best thing that ever happened, because Mindy, while at Tulane, pledged a Jewish sorority. Her circle of friends expanded into the Jewish community much more so than it had been before. Having gone to Westminster before, most of her friends were not Jewish. The other great thing about her going to Tulane was she met her future husband.

**Ann:** What is his name?

**Steve:** His name is David Shoulberg. He is from Philadelphia. He is just an unbelievably terrific young man. The hardest working, most dedicated person I have ever known. The best work ethic I have seen.

**Ann:** For whom does he work?

**Steve:** He works for United Distributors, a liquor and beer distributor. He does a great job. Just a very hard worker. Mindy is pregnant now and expecting her first child in August, August 14. They got married . . . After college, Mindy came back to Atlanta. David went to Philadelphia. They were dating all through college. They spent a year apart to see if the relationship was going to last. Neither one of them went out with anybody else. Mindy started working with Holiday Inn and did not like it. She was basically writing press releases and that sort of thing. She got that job literally right out of college. She didn’t have two weeks to take a vacation but did not like it. [She] stayed there a little bit, and an opportunity came up in real estate. A young woman named Julie Solomon was looking for an assistant at Cushman & Wakefield. A friend of hers, a fellow named John Schlesinger, had heard that Mindy was not happy and called me to see if Mindy was interested in interviewing. Mindy was interested, interviewed with Julie, got the job, and took to it like a duck to water. She started working in commercial real estate, which is what I do. She became a retail leasing agent specialist and did a great job. [She] was rookie of the year over there. Made the Million Dollar Club. Finally she left with Julie to go to another company called . . . What was it? Brown . . . I can’t remember the name of it right this minute. It will come to me. She got over there, and they did not do them right. They deceived Mindy and Julie. They did not tell them when they were changing jobs that the company had been sold. Long story short, they sold the company a couple of months after they got there, and all the promises that were made to

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46A social organization of female students at a college or university; usually identified by Greek letters.
them were reneged on, including salary, commission, percentages. Julie left, and now Mindy has come to work with us. Mindy is now in our retail leasing area and does a great job for us.

**Ann:** It is interesting that she should fall into the same area but do so not with you and get her initial experience elsewhere. I think that is very smart.

**Steve:** I have very few rules, but one of my rules is that none of my kids would be allowed to work in any family-owned business for at least five years. They would have had to have worked somewhere else for at least five years, and Mindy’s five years were up.

**Ann:** She is active in the Jewish community.

**Steve:** Mindy is very active in the Jewish community, which is probably as surprising to her as it was surprising to me that I was active in the Jewish community. She has been president of ACCESS, which is the American Jewish Committee’s young leadership group which I think anyone in Atlanta would say is the most active, most populated, best young leadership group in the city. Mindy has been president of that organization for two years. That organization has a thousand members, and she has really done a great job. I think she is just going out [of office] right as we speak. I think she has just gone out. I think their last event is this weekend. She has been very active.

**Ann:** What is she looking toward now?

**Steve:** She is looking to be a mother.

**Ann:** That is true.

**Steve:** She is really trying to decide how to . . . I don’t think she wants to give up her career, but she wants to be a mother first and then see how the career goes after that.

**Ann:** Now we will move on to your second child.

**Steve:** My second child is Scott.

**Ann:** He is how old?

**Steve:** He is 28, and he is engaged to be married. He’ll be married in March, March 27, 1999, to a wonderful young woman from Columbus, Ohio, named Amy Epstein, who, I am happy to say, will be going through the conversion process converting to Judaism. Although her name is Amy Epstein, it was her grandfather on her father’s side who was Jewish, but she was not raised Jewish. She’s converting. Scott [had the] same basic schooling as Mindy. Sidwell Friends and then Westminster. Scott has always had great leadership skills. He is the kind of person who does what he needs to and does not make a big deal out of it. In school, for example, you would never
hear him get uptight about a test. He would just do what he had to do. He sort of coasted through in his own way. He was a solid B student. He had a lot of friends, [was] a pretty good athlete, played Varsity soccer, [has] very good people skills, is very attractive, nice looking physically. 

**Ann:** What is he doing now?

**Steve:** When he graduated from high school, he went to the University of Arizona, which was also a great thing for him to do out there. There were a lot of Jewish students out there. The same thing I said about Mindy. When Scott left Atlanta to go to college, most of his friends were not Jewish through his days at Westminster. He joined ZBT\(^4\) at Arizona. He became president of the fraternity and did a great job. [He] made a lot of good friends from all over the country and had a very good college experience out there. He came back, and he is sort of an entrepreneur. He started his own company called Summit Telephone. That is a public pay telephone business. They put them in people’s properties, shopping centers, warehouses, street corners. They manage those, he and another person. They have about 400 or 500 pay telephones out on the streets around town and are hoping to get it to a thousand. He’s an entrepreneur. He has a lot of potential. Very honorable.

**Ann:** Has he been involved in the Jewish community as well?

**Steve:** Not as much, but they come to all the events. He hasn’t decided to get real active yet. It is hard not to be involved when you are in this family. He has been involved in terms of . . .

**Ann:** It is tangential. You get involved whether you like it or not.

**Steve:** Yes. He has not been involved like Mindy has been involved or like I am. He is 28 years old. He is pretty young.

**Ann:** Yes, and still single.

**Steve:** By the way, Mindy has not been to Israel yet. Scott has been to Israel. We took him . . . I took my family to Israel a couple of summers ago. Mindy did not go. She was working. This was around when Scott was getting out of school, so Scott has been to Israel.

**Ann:** Number three child?

\(^4\)Founded in 1898 as the world's first Jewish fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) prides itself on being an inclusive organization welcoming of any college man who understands and appreciates their mission. With more than 140,000 initiated men, ZBT's can be found in all aspects of life: business, entertainment, media, politics, and more. In 1989, ZBT became the first fraternity to abolish pledging from its organization and, in its place, created a brotherhood program that focuses on equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities for all members.
Steve: Number three is Blake, who is 26 years old. Blake just got married about three weeks ago to a young woman named Stephanie Sanders, who he met at Lovett School here in Atlanta. Stephanie went through the conversion process at The Temple and has converted to Judaism. Blake has different schooling than Mindy and Scott. Blake went to Sidwell Friends in Washington, came back and went to Lovett and then went to the University of Georgia. Blake is one of a kind. He is unique. He is unflappable. You cannot ruffle this kid. He is very calm. He goes at his own pace. He is never in a hurry. [He] has a really good heart [and is] very sentimental and emotional.

Ann: He takes after your father.

Steve: Yes he does, in a way. He does have this sense of peace about him that he is sort of in his own world. You can give Blake a time to be someplace and expect him there 15 minutes late, no matter what it is. He just never hurries. He is sort of known for that. He has a lot of friends. He is a great friend to his friends, and he is somebody they can depend on. He has some very good qualities. He is an entrepreneur. During the Olympics, he started a company to help companies find locations, which he made some pretty good profit off of. I was very proud of him. Now he is in a business . . . He has some sort of painting business where they do this graffiti-free paint. He just started this business. It is tough, but they are working hard at it.

Ann: What is graffiti-free paint? Is this something that has a hard surface that cannot be . . .

Steve: Right. You cannot graffiti it, or, if they do graffiti it, it washes right off.

Ann: It can be taken off easily.

Steve: He and a friend have started from scratch. They are working with it. They are trying. We will see how it goes.

Ann: Is the product they use something they have developed or something that someone else developed that they have latched onto?

Steve: They mix it up. They have got their own formula, but I think it is existing technology.

Ann: Interesting.

Steve: I think he might make a go of it. It is still a little too early to tell. He has not been doing it for a year yet.

Ann: They are young.
Steve: They are very young. None of them want to work in big companies. They all want to be somewhat entrepreneurial. In fact, I am sort of looking around for businesses to buy to see if there are businesses that fit their skills.

Ann: For the future.

Steve: Yes, for the future.

Ann: Since you mentioned businesses, let me move into that area, since we have not talked much about your businesses. You are involved in several. Do you want to go ahead and talk about them?

Steve: Sure. Where do you want to start?

Ann: You pick it.

Steve: The motherlode is the real estate company, which my grandfather really began, my grandfather Ben Massell. He actually went into the real estate business, as far as our records can tell, somewhere back in 1918. We found Massell Real Estate in phone books that go back to 1918. I am not sure exactly how it went, but my grandfather Ben Massell was sort of credited with building the Atlanta skyline. He was a one-person urban renewal guy. He would go into areas and put up buildings. I don’t know how he did it. I did not know him very well, because he died when I was in college.

Ann: Where did he start?

Steve: I don’t know where he started?

Ann: Do you know what part of the city?

Steve: I don’t know. All over the city. He has warehouses in one area and office buildings in another. He was all over the place, but I would say the only place he was not was north. Probably from about Brookwood Station north I’m not aware of anything that he built.

Ann: Nothing in the Buckhead area.

Steve: No.

Ann: He died when? In the 1950’s? In the 1960’s?

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48Buckhead is an area located northwest of downtown Atlanta with gracious homes, elegant hotels, shopping centers, restaurants, and high-rise condominium and office buildings. Buckhead is a major commercial and financial center of the Southeast, and it is the third-largest business district in Atlanta, behind Downtown and Midtown.
Steve: He died in the 1960’s. I graduated from college in 1965. He died in 1965 or 1964. I can’t remember which.

Ann: Obviously that area had not yet really taken off.

Steve: I worked a couple of summers up there and didn’t do much but did a little leasing and showed some spaces. When I got out of college, I went to work for a bank. I didn’t like that very much. Then I went over to Massell company and did some real estate work over there with them and did some leasing. When my grandfather died, my dad sold his chemical business and moved over to run the Massell company’s interests. There were a lot of different companies. I am using Massell as an umbrella here. There was CMS Realty and DeKalb Holdings and . . .

Ann: A bunch of different names?

Steve: Yes. Dad moved over just about the same time I was graduating from college. My cousin, Charles Massell, was still alive. We sort of did that together, when Ben Massell was still alive, with my uncle. After a few years, we bought out my uncle. We bought out his interest. He was not particularly interested in running a real estate company. He had other interests in life.

Ann: What did he end up doing?

Steve: He had a few personal properties that he managed. I am not sure what else he did.<unintelligible 3:30> in New York and what not. Dad and I started together in the real estate business and grew together. He was the CEO [Chief Executive Officer], and I was the head leasing guy. We worked together for a number of years, interrupted by my trip to Washington when I worked in the White House, which I assume we have already talked about.

Ann: No we have not. We are going to talk about it.

Steve: We have not gotten to that either?

Ann: No. We never talked about it.

Steve: When my dad died, after I had gotten back from Washington . . . I cannot remember the date right this minute, but it was about ten years ago . . . I became the CEO and the COO [Chief Operating Officer] of the company. What we do is commercial and industrial real estate. We develop shopping centers and warehouses, small office buildings. We acquire properties. We manage our own properties. We have a brokerage division that brokers deals. We own a company called Triple A [AAA] Parking, which is probably the largest parking operation in the city. We bought Triple A Parking when I came back from Washington. I went into see Dad, and I said, “We need to expand. We need to diversify.” One of the ways we knew to diversify was to
get into like-minded companies. We had this opportunity to buy Triple A Parking. They were managing some of our lots, and we bought it. Now Triple A Parking probably manages over 120 lots and has 600 some odd employees. It is really doing well. In fact, just in the last 60 days, we have taken on the World Congress Center, the new Omni, and all those lots. We have taken over all of Emory University and all of Georgia State University. We have probably added another 20 lots and another 5,000 parking spaces just in the last couple of months. We have done pretty well with that, and it was not a big investment to begin with. The other company that I owned until about a month ago was Southern Promotions, which is the rock and roll side of a huge promotion business, which I got into through my politics. I was national finance chairman for the re-election campaign of Jimmy Carter. Jimmmy Carter was President of the United States at the time I was at the White House. I left the White House and went to the re-election campaign. There was a young man over there named Peter Conlon who worked for me. He was working at the SBA, Small Business Administration. We brought him back over to the re-election campaign, where he did special events. This was during the period of time of the Iranian hostage crisis. Jimmy Carter would not go out and campaign as long as there was an American held hostage in Iran, so we had to figure out ways to raise money for him. One of those ways was through concerts. Federal election laws prohibited you from giving more than $1,000, but you could give your time unlimited. Willie Nelson could write a check for $1,000, or he could give 50 concerts and raise a million dollars, so we did a lot of concerts. Peter did them for me. After we lost the election, I came back to Atlanta. I went to see my dad, and I said, “We need to give Peter Conlon a job in our real estate company.” I knew how talented he was. Dad looked at me and said, “Steve, you’re lucky that we’ll take you back. Don’t come in here trying to raise our payroll.” I literally borrowed $10,000 and started Southern Promotions. We subsequently, within a year, became partners with Alex Cooley, who was the established concert promoter in town. We had a great run. We started this company out of my apartment with $10,000 in January of 1981. The day Ronald Reagan was inaugurated we started this company. We sold Concert Southern

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49 James Earl “Jimmy” Carter Jr. (1924- ) was the 39th President of the United States from 1977 to 1981. He was a Democrat.  
50 The Iran hostage crisis began when approximately 60 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days (November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981) after a group of Iranian students who supported the Iranian Revolution took over the United States Embassy in Tehran. In April 1980, after failed efforts to negotiate the hostages’ release, the United States military attempted a rescue operation which failed, resulting in the death of eight American servicemen and the destruction of two aircraft. Following an agreement signed on January 19, 1981, the hostages were released the following day, minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as the 40th U.S. president.
Promotions, the two companies . . . Alex’s company was Concert Promotions . . . for seventeen million dollars about a month ago, half of which was for Southern Promotions. We had a pretty good run with it.

**Ann:** You made a little bit of money in the interim.

**Steve:** We had some fun. In the sale, I kept all my good seats and tickets. We had a good run with that. That is something I did on my own.

**Ann:** What are they doing now?

**Steve:** I have a particular sense of pride about that, because the fact of the matter is that going into the family real estate business you have your path paved for you. You have your street already paved for you, and all you need to do is build on the success. That is not always that easy, and we have built on the success. We have taken the company to new heights, but working in the White House, that is something I did on my own. Starting this music business, that was something we did on our own. That is a pretty good success story from basically nothing.

**Ann:** What has happened to Peter Conlon and Alex Cooley?

**Steve:** We were bought out by a New York Stock Exchange company called SFX. They have stayed to run the company.

**Ann:** They are still involved.

**Steve:** They are still involved, but we all cashed in. I gave Peter 42 percent of everything I got. Whatever I made in the sale, I gave him 42 percent. He was really the operating head of the company, and he deserved it. It was because of his efforts that we did as well as we did.

**Ann:** There was a good deal of controversy a year or so ago about building a new amphitheater for those concerts on the north side of town.

**Steve:** That was us.

**Ann:** I assumed you were wanting to build it.

**Steve:** We wanted to build it, and the neighborhood did not want it. It is not going there. It will not be in Alpharetta. They are going to build it someplace, but it will not be Alpharetta. Not on that site anyway, but they need to build an amphitheater.

**Ann:** Talk about Washington. Talk about your involvement in the Democratic Party and how this all came about.

**Steve:** I was always active in politics, from my days even at the University of Georgia, when I was a class officer for three years. I guess I just supported candidates. I remember supporting
John Lewis\textsuperscript{51} when he first ran for Congress against Julian Bond,\textsuperscript{52} and nobody thought John Lewis could win. We supported him, and he did win. I remember my grandfather would . . . This is not politics, but we used to give all these candidates and civil rights leaders office space, campaign space. Martin Luther King, Jr.\textsuperscript{53} had space in one of our buildings. It was donated. I think it was the SCLC.\textsuperscript{54}

**Ann:** Probably.

**Steve:** Down at 41 Exchange Place. I guess I sort of got a reputation as somebody who could raise some dollars, and I do not remember how that started. If somebody worked hard and you

\textsuperscript{51}John Robert Lewis (1940-) is an American politician and civil rights leader. He is the U.S. Representative for Georgia's 5th congressional district, serving since 1987, and is the dean of the Georgia congressional delegation. His district include three-quarters of Atlanta.

\textsuperscript{52}Horace Julian Bond (1940-2015) was an American social activist and leader in the Civil Rights Movement, politician, professor and writer. While a student at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, during the early 1960s, he helped to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Bond was elected to four terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and later to six terms in the Georgia State Senate. He ran for the United States House of Representatives from Georgia’s 5th congressional district in 1986, when he lost the Democratic nomination in a runoff to rival civil rights leader John Lewis. From 1998 to 2010, he was chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the first president of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

\textsuperscript{53}Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) is best known for his role as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement and the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs. A Baptist minister, King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, in 1962, and organized nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, that attracted national attention following television news coverage of the brutal police response. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. On October 14, 1964, King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. In 1965, he and the SCLC helped to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches and the following year, he took the movement north to Chicago to work on segregated housing. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many United States' cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and as a United States federal holiday in 1986.

\textsuperscript{54}The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is a nonprofit, non-sectarian, interfaith, advocacy organization that is committed to nonviolent action to achieve social, economic, and political justice. The very beginnings of the SCLC can be traced back to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which began on December 5, 1955 after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on the bus. The boycott lasted for 381 days and ended on December 21, 1956, with the desegregation of the Montgomery bus system. The boycott was carried out by the newly established Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). Martin Luther King, Jr. served as President and Ralph David Abernathy served as Program Director. As bus boycotts spread across the South, leaders of the MIA and other protest groups met in Atlanta in January of 1957 to form a regional organization and coordinate protest activities across the South. They announced the founding of the Southern Leadership Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration, and its current name, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was adopted at its first convention in Montgomery, Alabama in August 1957. SCLC is a now a nationwide organization made up of chapters and affiliates with programs that affect the lives of all Americans. Its sphere of influence and interests has become international in scope because the human rights movement transcends national boundaries.
get that reputation, people hear about you, I guess. Sam Massell ran for mayor, and he was my cousin. He was somewhat on the fringe at that point, but . . .

Ann: What does that mean?
Steve: It means that . . . I think he ran twice. The first time I do not remember being very active in his campaign. I remember coming in late. I do not know if he was already elected. I do not remember. There was some problem. He was not favored to win.

Ann: Have you been close?
Steve: No, we are not close. We are friendly but not close. I am probably closer to him now than I have been, because I am on the board of the Buckhead Coalition, which he chairs. We have sort of gone our own ways.

Ann: Was that part of the family not . . . They were obviously part of the Massell family. How was he related? Who was his father?
Steve: Sam’s father and my mother’s father, my grandfather, were brothers. I guess Sam and my mother must have been first cousins. I guess he is my second cousin.

Ann: Your first cousin once removed.
Steve: Is that the way it is?
Ann: That is how it goes.
Steve: We were not particularly close.
Ann: He was not close to your mother as a first cousin?
Steve: No, I don’t think so.
Ann: What business were they in? They were not in real estate? He is now.
Steve: He was in real estate. Then he went into the travel business, Your Travel Agent Sam Massell. He did that for a while. I see him. I invited him to my kids’ weddings, and he me invited to his daughter’s wedding. That is a very small, insignificant part of my life. One day I think my friend Hamilton Jordan called and asked if I had had lunch. I think it was Hamilton Jordan. It might have been Bill Schwartz. Somebody called . . . Maybe it was Jimmy Carter . . . and asked

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55 The Buckhead Coalition is a non-profit organization comprised of business and civic leaders interested in nurturing and preserving the quality of life in the Buckhead area of Atlanta, Georgia. The organization plans and implements action programs for improvement of Buckhead.
56 William Hamilton McWhorter Jordan (1944 – 2008) was Chief of Staff to President of the United States Jimmy Carter.
57 William “Bill” Bernstein Schwartz Jr. (1921-2010) was a businessman and community leader, serving as president of The Temple in Atlanta when it was bombed in 1958 and president of the Atlanta chapter of the American Jewish Committee. He served, along with prominent Atlantans Anne Cox Chambers, Andrew Young and Philip Alston, as
if I would have lunch with Jimmy Carter. My dad and I, I will never forget, went to the Commerce Club and had lunch with him. We had not supported Jimmy Carter when he ran for governor. We had supported Carl Sanders. I did not really know him all that well. I had lunch with him, and I was blown away. Just blown away. I had never met anybody who was that impressive up close. I had total confidence in his ability. He knew all the issues. I felt very compatible with him. We were on the same side of the issues. At the end of the lunch, he asked me if I would travel with him and help him be president. I sometimes look back and regret that I did not travel with him. I had young kids, and I was in this family business. I could not break away and just leave and start traveling around the country with Jimmy Carter.

**Ann:** If you had been a single man, it might have been a whole different ball game.

**Steve:** Absolutely. By the way, the person who does travel with you, your traveling secretary or your executive assistant, that is the person who is closest to the candidate.

**Ann:** Who did it end up being?

**Steve:** A guy named Greg Schneider and then Phil Wise. I said I could not do that, but what I would do was I would help as much as I can. I started going over to campaign headquarters and became national finance director for the campaign. I started spending more and more time over there. A lot of time. I started going around the country, not with him necessarily, but for him. I went to Cleveland [Ohio] to try to find people to host fundraisers for him and that sort of thing. I went to New Hampshire. I went all over the place and just helped him raise money. After we won the election, he invited me to come and work in the White House on the White House staff. I was a level below the Hamilton Jordans of the world, the senior staff people, but I had all the privileges, the White House pass and the White House guest privileges. I played tennis on the White House tennis courts. It was a pretty heady time.

**Ann:** How old were you at this time?

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co-chairman of the Carter Finance Committee that raised contributions for Jimmy Carter’s successful campaign for President of the United States. After Carter's election, Schwartz was appointed Ambassador to the Bahamas and served there from 1977 to January, 1981.

58The Commerce Club is a private business and social club in Atlanta. Since 1960, the Commerce Club was located at 34 Broad Street in the Five Points area, where major banks, law firms and accounting firms were headquartered within walking distance. In 2010, the Commerce Club merged with the One Ninety One Club and the new Commerce Club opened on the 49th floor of the 191 Tower on Peachtree Street. Since the merger, the Commerce Club is also known as the ‘191 Club.’
Steve: I was 33 when I went to Washington. I don’t think I ever lost a sense of who I was up there. I tried to take care of our friends. My job was to basically work with the business community and try to get them to support the president and, when they didn’t support the president, to try to mute the criticism and try to get them to work on helping us form policy. It was pretty heady. It was a lot of pressure. My family came up there, and I think it was good. For a while, it was pretty good to be sort of on your own, away from Atlanta. It got to be pretty good for a while, and then it overwhelmed you after a while, too. It was a lot of pressure.

Ann: What did you feel about being an outsider in the Washington area? Did you feel that as part of the Georgia Mafia?  

Steve: Yes. In a way it was like circling the wagons. We had a certain pride about that. You sort of wear it as a badge of honor. We took some shots. People swiped at us pretty good. In the final analysis, it hurt us because we did not integrate more with the Washington establishment, but I think history will be very kind to Jimmy Carter. The fact of the matter is, with what is going on now, he was one of the true moral leaders we have had. He was one of the most brilliant and still is one of the most brilliant people I have ever known. The guy has a steel trap for a mind. He can grasp anything.

Ann: Is his known penchant for getting into the details of things . . . Did that get in the way a lot?

Steve: It did. I was not one of his close advisers up there. I do not want to imply that I had a lot of private meetings with him where we talked about policies. I did not, but people who did said, yes, he would micromanage and get too much involved in too many things. The only thing I can say is . . .

Ann: Maybe better that than being a Reagan where you let somebody else do everything.

Steve: I don’t know. He was moral. He kept the peace. By anybody’s standards, he has been an extraordinary ex-president. Historians will have to write about what he accomplished, but he

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59 “Georgia Mafia” was a nickname given by some members of the Washington media for a group of close aides President Carter brought with him from Georgia who moved to high positions in the Carter administration but who were inexperienced in national politics.

60 Ronald Wilson Reagan (1911-2004) was the 40th President of the United States. He served from 1981-1989. He was a Republican.
did some very good things. With the Panama Canal$^{61}$ and the Camp David Accords,$^{62}$ you have

to say he had some great successes. It was a heady time. When you are in Washington, everyone
wants to be your friend. Everyone thinks perhaps you can help them. Everyone has their hand
out, either blatantly or subliminally.

**Ann:** Surreptitiously.

**Steve:** Yes, surreptitiously. You had to keep your balance. You had to keep your sense of who
you are. I remember this so well, walking from the west wing of the White House, which is the
Oval Office and the offices, to the east wing of the White House, which is where the First Lady’s
stuff is and all the social rooms are, the ballroom and everything. You walked through the
Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. I remember thinking to myself, “Remember who you are and where
you are. This is the White House.” When you are 33 or 34 years old and you are walking through
the White House, it is interesting stuff.

**Ann:** Your particular job dealing with business people, as a Democrat dealing with the
business community, especially in the time of an outsider politician, what was that like?

**Steve:** It was difficult, particularly on the level that we dealt, because we would bring in the
top CEOs in the country. We would bring in the business roundtable. The CEO of General

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$^{61}$The Torrijos–Carter Treaties (Spanish: *Tratados Torrijos-Carter*) are two treaties signed by the United States
and Panama in Washington, D.C., on September 7, 1977, which abrogated the Hay–Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903.
The treaties guaranteed that Panama would gain control of the Panama Canal after 1999, ending the control of the
canal that the U.S. had exercised since 1903. Under the first treaty, commonly known as the Neutrality Treaty, the
U.S. retained the permanent right to defend the canal from any threat that might interfere with its continued neutral
service to ships of all nations. The second treaty, The Panama Canal Treaty, provided that as from 12:00 on
December 31, 1999, Panama would assume full control of canal operations and become primarily responsible for its
defense.

$^{62}$The Camp David Accords were signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime
Minister Menachem Begin on September 17, 1978, following twelve days of secret negotiations at Camp David, the
country retreat of the President of the United States. The two framework agreements were signed at the White
House, and were witnessed by United States President Jimmy Carter. The second of these frameworks (*A
Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel*) led directly to the 1979 Egypt–Israel
Peace Treaty. Due to the agreement, Sadat and Begin received the shared 1978 Nobel Peace Prize. The first
framework (*A Framework for Peace in the Middle East*), which dealt with the Palestinian territories, was written
without participation of the Palestinians and was condemned by the United Nations.
Motors and General Electric and Ford, you name it. Those guys would come in, and they had their own agendas and they had their own staff. We would bring in trade associations, like the Motion Picture Association, where you had the heads of all the studios. Everybody had a trade association. Truck stop operators had a trade association. I think there was a lot of mistrust, a lot of show me type stuff. We would put on some pretty good dog and pony shows in the White House. We would bring in the President, the Secretary of the Treasury or Secretary of Commerce, the head of domestic policy, and we would go through the issues with them. Sometimes we could agree, and sometimes we could not. I think we served a purpose. The White House was open. It was an open White House where people could come in and express their views. I don’t think Jimmy Carter was the most popular president in the business community. We would bring in the Wall Street types and bankers. There were some tough issues.

Ann: I would imagine that was not the segment of the population that was terribly supportive.

Steve: I don’t think so, even today.

Ann: You were probably seeing a good deal of hostility.

Steve: Not directed at me personally. Just directed at the administration. We had some tough breaks. We had the oil crisis, and that really hurt. You had to wait in line . . .

Ann: What precipitated that? That was OPEC I remember. I cannot remember . . .

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63Founded in 1908, General Motors Company is a corporation that designs, manufactures, markets and distributes vehicles and vehicle parts. General Motors had opened an automobile factory northeast of Atlanta, Georgia in 1947. General Motors was a major employer in the Atlanta area and contributed to continued post-war industrial growth in the area.

64General Electric (GE) is an American multinational conglomerate corporation incorporated in New York and headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. General Electric was formed through the 1892 merger of Edison General Electric Company of Schenectady, New York, founded in 1889 based on the research of Thomas Edison, and Thomson-Houston Electric Company of Lynn, Massachusetts, with the support of Drexel, Morgan & Co. In 1896, General Electric was one of the original 12 companies listed on the newly formed Dow Jones Industrial Average. After 121 years, it is the only one of the original companies still listed on the Dow index. In 2017, GE ranked among the Fortune 500 as the thirteenth-largest firm in the United States by gross revenue.

65Ford Motor Company is an American automaker founded by Henry Ford in Detroit, Michigan, in 1903. The company established its headquarters for Southeastern operations in Atlanta in 1914. After selling its assembly plant and showroom on Ponce de Leon Avenue to the War Department in 1942, Ford relocated the Atlanta assembly operations to eighty-three acres in Hapeville, Georgia, in 1946. Opened in 1947, the Atlanta Assembly Plant produced various Ford and Mercury models including the Ford Fairlane, Falcon, Fairmont, Taurus, Torino, Zephyr, Mercury Cougar, and Sable. At its peak in the early 1970s, the Atlanta Assembly Plant employed over 3,500 people. The plant ceased operations and closed in 2006 as part of Ford's restructuring plan and laid off 1,950 employees.

66"Dog and pony show" is a colloquial term which has come to mean a highly promoted, often over-staged performance, presentation, or event designed to sway or convince opinion for political or commercial ends.

67Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations as of May 2017, created at the Baghdad [Iraq] Conference in September 1960 by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela) and headquartered since 1965 in Vienna, Austria. OPEC's stated mission is coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its Member Countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets in
Steve: The Arabs . . .
Ann: . . . got their acts together?
Steve: I cannot remember exactly what they did, but they would not sell oil. They held it in order to raise the price.
Ann: I remember that. I just could not remember what triggered them doing it.
Steve: I don’t remember.
Ann: When you first met Jimmy Carter . . . You said when you and your dad met him at the Commerce Club, you were blown away. Did you really think, though, that he had any chance of winning?
Steve: I did not, but interestingly enough some of the senior staff . . . I felt like he had the tools to do it. He was smart enough and charismatic enough. I think I was prejudiced against an ex-Southern governor. I did not see how that could happen. The Hamilton Jordans, the Gerry Rafshoons,68 the Jody Powells69 . . . Those guys really thought he could do it. It did not take too long, once you got over there, to change your mind. After New Hampshire and then after Florida and Pennsylvania . . . I remember those primaries. We felt we were very well going to do this thing. It was very, very exciting. Very exciting. I was going all over the place, from Florida to New Hampshire, to Ohio, to New York. While I was in Washington, I did some . . . I remember during the campaign flying into New York with Carter on a helicopter and spending the day with him. I remember he had some speeches to make in New York during the campaign. I think he had already won the primary by this time. It was the general election now. I remember, for example, being in the motorcade in New York at five o’clock in the afternoon. Every expressway was stopped, and we went right through. I was thinking we could lose a million votes here. All these people were cussing us, because they have got all the expressways blocked so that we could go through in a motorcade.
Ann: Right at rush hour.

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order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry.

68Gerald Monroe Rafshoon (1934- ) was the White House Communications Director under President Jimmy Carter and is a television producer. In 1976, Rafshoon was the architect of the advertising and public relations campaign that helped Carter, as an unknown Southern governor and peanut farmer, in his drive to become the 39th President of the United States.

69Joseph Lester "Jody" Powell, Jr. (1943-2009) was the White House Press Secretary during the presidency of Jimmy Carter.
Steve: Then when I was in Washington, riding on Air Force One,70 riding on Air Force Two,71 which is the vice president’s [plane], going to the vice president’s home, going up into the living quarters of the White House, even going to the . . .

<End Tape 2, Side 1, Part 2>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2, Part 1>

Steve: I was talking about going to see what I call the government in exile, in the mountain, where they had the whole government set up. They have beds, and they have names on those cots. I knew I did not have a very important job, because I did not have . . .

Ann: You did not have your own bed?

Steve: I did not have my name down there, so I was expendable.

Ann: You were not going to be one of the ones who was saved.

Steve: Right. It was an interesting life. Washington is not a bad place to live if you can stay out of the heart of the city, as it were.

Ann: Washington, as a place to live almost 20 years ago, probably was a little expensive.

Steve: It was terribly expensive.

Ann: Where did you live? Right in the District?

Steve: We lived in Bethesda [Maryland], right outside. There was some pain there, because that is when my wife and I separated. Janet and I separated and ultimately got divorced, but after the Carter years. It was painful but part of life, I guess.

Ann: I assume that the number of hours you spent in the White House and working probably had something to do with some of that, too.

Steve: Perhaps. We spent a lot of hours. Seven days a week mostly. Well, I don’t know if it was seven days a week. That is not necessarily true, but there were a lot of nights. One of the things I had to do was attend these social functions given by businesses, trade associations, embassies. The White House had parties. It was a lot of that sort of thing.

Ann: Hand holding.

Steve: Yes, a lot of hand holding.

70 Air Force One is the official air traffic control call sign for a United States Air Force aircraft carrying the President of the United States. In common parlance, the term describes those Air Force aircraft designed, built, and used to transport the president.

71 Air Force Two is the air traffic control call sign held by any United States Air Force aircraft carrying the Vice President of the United States, but not the President.
Ann: Let’s go on from there. You came back to Atlanta. Are you still involved in any Democratic politics?

Steve: Oh, yes. I am involved in everything. Now I really do have a reputation for being able to raise money. I would dare say there is probably not a candidate that comes through that I do not get a call from, local or national. We are pretty generous politically. I give money, and I can raise money. I am on a lot of people’s hit lists to support them. You have to be careful who you support. I have had a lot of people talk to me about running for office, frankly. I don’t know if I will ever do that or not, but it is something to think about down the road. Politics is one of my passions.

Ann: You have seen it up close and personal. It is the kind of thing that you either take to or you absolutely abhor.

Steve: Part of it I do abhor. I do not really enjoy city politics. I do not enjoy what I call the politics of race. I do not enjoy the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately type of politics, but I do enjoy the type of politics where you can really make a difference in people’s lives by doing the right thing. That is what I enjoyed about being president of the Atlanta Jewish Federation. My wife, Linda, steered me in that regard. When I got back from Washington, I was involved in a few things. I was involved in the American Jewish Committee. I was involved in the Standard Club, believe it or not. I was on track to be president of the Standard Club, and Linda said to me, “The Standard Club? Would you rather worry about saving people’s lives or about tee times on the golf course?” That was a pretty good comment, so I gave up being president of the Standard Club. I think I was next in line. I decided to drop out and became president of the American Jewish Committee, then president of The Temple, and president of the Atlanta Jewish Federation.

Ann: You put your priorities in a different place.

Steve: Yes. That was a fairly easy decision. The only reason I would have wanted to be president of the Standard Club was that my grandfather and my father had been before me. I think it would have been cool to have done that. They will understand.

Ann: You may still be when you are 100 years old. You never know.

Steve: I don’t think so.

Ann: What roles have you played... You have not played much in the way of local politics? 
Steve: I have played a lot, more than I wanted, in every race. I have been behind the scenes. I have supported all of the people I think are the right candidates who have gone on to win. I was very close to Maynard Jackson, very close with Bill Campbell. <unintelligible>

Ann: You are still supportive of Bill Campbell?

Steve: Yes. He is still a friend of mine.

Ann: Any relationship at all with [Marvin] Arrington?

Steve: Yes. That was a very tough decision. I was Marvin Arrington’s finance chairman when he ran for president of the City Council. He came over to my house here four years ago when he decided not to run for mayor. He was thinking of running for mayor then, which would have been the time to run. He said he was not going to run. He was going to get out of politics. He was going to run for president of the City Council one more time, and that was it. I said, “Okay, I will support you. If you want to be mayor, that would have been the time, four years ago. Not this time.” He decided not to run for financial reasons, and this time he ran. I could not support him, and I told him. He is still my friend, but I could not support him because I had already . . . It is one of those deals where a friend of mine has the job, and a friend of mine wants the job. Why would I betray my friend that has the job for a friend that wants the job? It just does not make sense, so I supported Bill Campbell. It was the right decision. He is also the best person for the job. Marvin may go at it again some time.

Ann: Do you approve of the way that Campbell has been handling city government?

Steve: I am not that close to it. I think there is a lot of controversy there. I think he has got some . . . He has definitely got a public relations problem. For this particular interview, I do not think it is very relevant to what we are talking about. I like Bill as a person, as a friend. I am not that close to the way he handles city government. I am aware of the criticism he has received and the way he comes across.

Ann: As a local businessman . . .

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73William “Bill” Campbell, a Democrat, was the 57th mayor of Atlanta, Georgia from 1994 to 2002. Campbell was convicted in 2006 of federal charges of tax evasion and went to prison from 2006 to 2008.
74Marvin Stephens Arrington, Sr. (1941- ) is an American judge in the Superior Court of Fulton County, Georgia and a former politician in the city of Atlanta. Elected to the Atlanta Board of Aldermen in 1969 (a precursor to the present-day City Council), he served as President of the Atlanta City Council for 17 years until his unsuccessful bid for mayor in 1997. Arrington was one of the first two black students to undertake full-time studies at the Emory University School of Law in 1965.
Steve: He comes across as arrogant, but to me, I have no personal . . . As far as I am concerned, on a personal level, he is a friend of mine and somebody I enjoy being with and I respect.

Ann: I am thinking more in terms of you as a local business man with property and the fact that Atlanta’s infrastructure has been suffering and in great need of help for many years.

Steve: I look at it in a different way. Our business has never been better. We are headquartered in Atlanta, and we are in the real estate business. Property values are up. Our vacancy rates are down. If you are going to criticize him for the things, you have to give him some credit for the good. All this infrastructure stuff, he did not start the fire. He has inherited all that. It all comes down to dollars and what are you going to do with the dollars you have, the union problems, you have to pay people. It is tough. I cut him some slack on this stuff. I give him the benefit of the doubt. I know some people he is working with. I know he is doing the best he can. Atlanta is thriving right now. Give him some of the credit.

Ann: What about your relationships with the black community? Obviously the family has been involved with the black community for some time. You indicated as much.

Steve: I used to have a very, very close relationship in the African-American community. Linda, too. Linda, my wife, has been executive director of Leadership Atlanta75 for the last five or six years. She just resigned recently. I would say it is a relationship of friendships, but it is the kind of friendships that you do not call on the phone, and you do not go out together. You see people, and you like them, and you feel comfortable with them, but you . . . In my life, I do not have time for my old friends. This is tough to say. I do not have time . . . I do not have time for friends. Now maybe I will have more time, now that I am finished with the Federation presidency. Maybe I can start feeling <10:15 unintelligible>. I feel like we have a close relationship. It is not the kind of relationship where you go out to dinner together, the kids are friends, and you see each other socially. It is more of a passing . . .

Ann: It is a working kind of thing, I imagine, whether it is in a political campaign or something for the city.

Steve: Yes, but I know people I know I can call on. They call on me. I do have some friends. A lot of political friends.

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75 Leadership Atlanta is the oldest sustained community leadership program in the nation. Its mission is to connect and inspire leaders to strengthen metro Atlanta’s communities.
Ann: I would assume, from what you are saying, that you do not call them when there is a death in the family. I mean you call them to express sympathy or something of that nature, but you do not call them for help or they would not call you for moral and grief support.

Steve: Actually, when my dad died, one of my African-American friends was at my house every single day. That was ten years ago, and that same person would be there today. My last ten years have been focusing on the Jewish community. That is what I do. That is who I am for the last ten years. That is what I have been doing. That is where my efforts have been. That is where my friendships . . . I have pretty much gotten out of the general community to some extent. I was very active in a lot of the civic and charitable work around town. You just cannot serve more than one master, and I had to back off a lot of the other stuff that I have done [because] I am so involved in the Jewish community.

Ann: Is that an area that you might find yourself interested in pursuing again?

Steve: Maybe.

Ann: More civic kinds of things.

Steve: Perhaps. I have served on bank boards, and I have served on school boards. I have done that sort of thing, but I have not taken an active role in the charities. My charity has been the Jewish community. I do not have time to be involved with the Atlanta Ballet and the [Atlanta] Symphony [Orchestra] and the Woodruff Arts [Center]. I’m on the board of the Woodruff Arts Center, but I haven’t had time to do all that stuff, go to the balls and all that kind of stuff. I have given that up.

Ann: What about something like United Way? Most of the major corporations . . . From what I understand, Atlanta is unique in that respect. Most of the major corporations in the city feel a responsibility, or the executives of the major corporations . . .

Steve: We are involved in the United Way. We have a United Way campaign in our office.

Ann: I don’t mean that.

Steve: Am I active?

Ann: I meant you personally. Have you been approached?

Steve: Oh, yes.

Ann: I figured you had.

Steve: My charity has been the Jewish community, and I just have not had time . . .
Ann: Would you be interested in pursuing some of that or the Chamber of Commerce or any of those roles?
Steve: I am on the board of the Chamber. Linda has been on the board of the United Way. I don’t know.
Ann: At this point it is not something that is . . .
Steve: To take a leadership role there? No, it does not interest me. Not today.
Ann: Not at this moment. I know that this may have been done prior to your time, but I am not sure. We talked about your generosity in the community and your association with the Jewish community in particular in the last several years. The building next door to The Temple, the Selig building, how did the donation of that come about?
Steve: That came about a long time ago.
Ann: Was that through your father?
Steve: Yes. I think The Temple was looking at it to buy it and . . . I cannot remember how it happened. I think Alvin Sugarman\textsuperscript{76} went to see my dad, and he finally agreed to buy the building and donate it to The Temple.
Ann: That is the building that is used for the [homeless] shelter and for the Genesis Shelter and all that.
Steve: It has been used some for Sunday school. I think they have moved some of those people out of there next door to the Davis building. I think they are going to try to lease out some of that space. I think that is how that happened. I cannot remember where I was. I do not remember if I was in Washington or in college. I was not very active in that one.
Ann: What about your recent interest in purchasing the Jewish Community Center\textsuperscript{77} property?
Steve: That is a . . .
Ann: Is that a done deal?

\textsuperscript{76}Rabbi Alvin M. Sugarman, now retired, is the Rabbi Emeritus of The Temple in Atlanta. He began his rabbinate at The Temple in 1971 and in 1974 was named senior rabbi. A native of Atlanta, Rabbi Sugarman received his BBA degree from Emory University and was ordained by Hebrew Union College. In 1988 he received his PhD degree in Theological Studies from Emory University.

\textsuperscript{77}The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta is the primary Jewish community center in Atlanta. It is located in Dunwoody, north of the city, and offers family-centric programs and events with programs, events, and classes that enrich the quality of family life. Their programs include preschool, camping, fitness and sports, Jewish life and learning, arts and culture and social and educational programs. It was named in honor of Bernard Marcus, one of the co-founders of Home Depot, who gave a major gift to the capital campaign. The Atlanta Jewish Community Center (AJCC) on Peachtree Road in midtown preceded it.
Steve: No, it is not a done deal. It is under contract subject to zoning, and we are working with the neighborhood. The interesting thing about that is that is, we think, property that my grandfather at one time donated to the community center, or at least part of it. If he did not donate it, he sold it very, very inexpensively to them. That is a for-profit undertaking. We expect to make a profit by building something on that site. That is not a charitable gift. We are paying for that. We will give them six million dollars or whatever it is, but we are getting a nice piece of real estate. That is a financial transaction, although there is more to it with us than just the finances. We do know that the community center is in trouble and needs to sell that property. We waited and waited to see if they were going to sell it. They have not, so that is why we stepped in.

Ann: No one else has been able to swing the zoning.

Steve: Right. I think we can swing the zoning, because we also own the frontage. We will do a better development than others might.

Ann: You own the property next door.

Steve: Yes.

Ann: Your donation of the building that houses today Federation and the Breman center\textsuperscript{78} and all of that. How did that come about?

Steve: That is probably, other than I guess the sweat and toil of what I have done, the legacy that will stand the longest. Actually, that is the legacy that will stand the longest. That happened . . . I will try to make this long story shorter.

Ann: This is the property on Spring [Street], by the way.

Steve: 1440 Spring Street. Spring at . . .

Ann: Sixteenth [Street].

Steve: Yes, next to the Puppetry Arts Center. The Federation had received a large gift from Bill Breman,\textsuperscript{79} targeted for a museum, a heritage museum. Federation started looking into

\textsuperscript{78}In 1992, M. William Breman gave the lead gift, ensuring the creation of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. In 1996, the museum opened at the Selig Center on Spring Street in midtown Atlanta. The Museum features a permanent exhibit called \textit{Absence of Humanity: The Holocaust Years, 1933-1945} as well as exhibitions about Southern Jewish history and Jewish culture. The Breman Museum also includes the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, the Weinberg Center for Holocaust Education, and a library of research materials.

\textsuperscript{79}M. William “Bill” Breman (1908-2000), owner of the Breman Steel Company, was a longtime resident and community leader of Atlanta, Georgia. Breman received numerous humanitarian and human relations awards for the extensive community service work that he did, including the Distinguished Service Award of the Gate City Lodge of B’nai B’rith (1965), the American Jewish Committee Human Relations Award (1981), and the Abe Goldstein Humanitarian Award of the Anti-Defamation League (1984). He served as president of The Temple and the Jewish
building a second floor on their property at Peachtree and Huntington [streets]. I think I was a vice president at the time. I might have been campaign chair. Several of us, after looking at it, saw that that was going to be woefully inadequate, to try to put a second floor on a 9,000-square-foot building on Peachtree that already did not have enough parking. That would be a huge mistake. Federation was going to have to move out of the building while they built the second floor and then move back in. While we were showing Federation alternative office space to move into, I thought about this building we had over on Spring Street that we ought to show them as a place to move temporarily for a year while they built the museum on top of Peachtree. While I was showing them, I noticed that we have got all this office space here, and then we have got this high-ceiling warehouse. It was an office warehouse building, and . . . I can’t remember who it was. It might have been Jerry <unintelligible 18:27>, but immediately everybody started thinking the same thing. This is great. What a great fit for us. We had IBM\textsuperscript{88} in the building paying us a half million dollars a year in rent, and it was one of those things where I don’t know whether I want to give this up or not. IBM was moving out. It was right during the Olympics. We could have rented that building for a half million dollars a year. Over a period of months, the idea caught on that this would be a wonderful future home for the Atlanta Jewish Federation, with a 50,000-square-foot building instead of 9,000 [square] feet.

Ann: Plenty of room to expand.

Steve: The museum could have their high ceilings. The Federation could have its offices. It had plenty of parking, it had a good neighbor in the Puppetry Arts Center, and it would keep them in midtown. I was concerned that everything was moving out to the north. I thought that was a mistake. I was really concerned that Federation might move out beyond the Perimeter. We came up with the idea . . . My sister and I and my wife, really, came up with the idea of honoring our parents, memorializing our parents, which we had all been thinking about for several years. We were trying to find the right way to do it, and this thing came up. It made sense. I have to tell you that I really did not . . . Have you been there?

Ann: Sure.

\textsuperscript{88}International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) is an American multinational information technology company headquartered in Armonk, New York, with operations in over 170 countries. Nicknamed Big Blue, IBM is one of 30 companies included in the Dow Jones Industrial Average and one of the world's largest employers, with (as of 2017) over 380,000 employees.
Steve: I could not envision it being as nice as it is. It really came out . . . It is one of those things where the reality is better than the dream. I could not be prouder of that building.

Ann: I never saw it before it was renovated, so therefore I think it is more difficult because you knew what it looked like originally as a warehouse.

Steve: Just imagine any old warehouse with some offices. I have had people from all over the country . . . I have had staff people from the UJA and CJF and what not come down, and they tell me it is the finest facility of its type in the country, that no city has a better mix, with the museum, the Federation, the auditorium.

Ann: The library and an archives.

Steve: Nobody has a better facility.

Ann: One of the things that is unique, and I do not know who started the archival program, but I think that is unique to this city. I have not heard of other Jewish communities with this strong an archival program.

Steve: There is a family that made a big donation for the archives. It escapes me right now who it is. I should know, but I just cannot recall it as we sit here. The family has memorialized the archives, dedicated the archives.

Ann: That is how that came about.

<End Tape 2, Side 2, Part 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2, Part 2>

Ann: Tell me about your sister. That is another person in the family we have not talked about. Cathy.

Steve: My sister is a wonderful, caring, giving person, who also does not have a mean bone in her body. [She is] very popular, very emotional, very family oriented. She met a guy from California. Let me see . . .

Ann: How old is she? Where did she go to school?

Steve: Cathy is three years younger than I am, so that would make her 51 or 52. She went to Northside High School and the University of Oklahoma. She spent a year in New York at, I think, one of those fashion colleges or something like that. She met a guy from California who she married and moved to California.

Ann: What was his name?
Steve: Roger Lewis. [She] had two great kids, Brian and Greg. Greg is engaged. He is getting married in December. Brian is going to get engaged shortly, I think. He will probably get married next year sometime. She went out there, and I think she did a couple of things out there. She was a travel agent for a while. She did a little real estate for a while, remodeling houses and things like that. After my father died, [she] moved back to Atlanta and came into the business with me. [She is] very community oriented. She is going to be the new Women’s Division Campaign Chair, following in the steps of my wife, by the way, who has already done that. Cathy has a lot of friends. She is a very good person, very <1:53 unintelligible>

Ann: Is she still married?

Steve: No. She got divorced. Then she got remarried again, and that did not work out.

Ann: What name does she go by?

Steve: She’s gone back to her maiden name.

Ann: Her maiden name. Selig.

Steve: Yes.

Ann: Her kids are Lewis.

Steve: Yes. She is single right now and having a good time and enjoying life. She works with us. She is very solid in the family. She has got a great relationship with my kids, and I think I have a great relationship with her kids. We are very tight knit, very close. She is a very special person.

Ann: Had she been involved in things Jewish before? That seems to be a trend in the family, that everybody is coming back from a sort of disassociation, or a semi-association I should say.

Steve: I do not think she was very involved before. She came back and got involved about the same time I did.

Ann: That is interesting. Since this is for the Jewish community, I find that a fascinating aspect of . . .

Steve: She is totally involved now. She is as involved as I am and Linda is, the whole way.

Ann: I know what we did not talk about. The Olympics. You were involved in the Olympics to an extent.
Steve: Yes, I was involved. Billy Payne is a friend of mine. A.D. Frazier is a very good friend of mine.

Ann: How did you know them?

Steve: I knew Billy Payne through the University of Georgia. We were both big Bulldogs fans. I have known him for a lot of years. I knew A.D. Frazier through Jimmy Carter. We worked together in the White House for Jimmy Carter. I have known A.D. for a long time.

Ann: Is he from here originally?

Steve: A.D.? He is from around here. He worked at the C&S [Citizens & Southern National] Bank for a while. Then he went up to Chicago and headed up a bank up there. I was not one of the inner circle, but I was the circle after the inner circle, what we called F.O.B., Friend of Billy. Billy came to see me a lot of years ago.

Ann: When he was just thinking about it?

Steve: It was almost like the Jimmy Carter thing, like when Jimmy Carter came to see me. I said, “You’re running for what? You’re trying to do what?” We gave him some money. I think we gave him $10,000 for his efforts. We were one of the early contributors. We worked with him during the Olympics. Triple A Parking got a lot of contracts during the Olympics. We gave a fair deal, and they worked with us. We did not try to gouge them. I was what Billy Payne called a presidential ambassador, which meant somebody that Billy trusted to help in certain venues with the VIPs [Very Important Persons]. It was a kick. It was fun. I was proud of the city. I thought we put on a great Olympics. I think Billy Payne was a genius, and A.D. Frazier is a great friend. I know how hard he worked. He is a take-no-prisoners guy, which is what he had to be. The Olympics came and went. It is done. It is hard to believe we had it now, but it was a great legacy for us. I enjoyed it. Linda and I were pretty active during the Olympics. It was Billy’s show.

Ann: What do you think of the legacy of having cleaned out the area where the Centennial Park is now, as a real estate person?

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81 William “Billy” Porter Payne is a successful business man in Atlanta. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was a leading advocate for bringing the Olympic Games to Atlanta and, in 1996, Payne was named president and chief executive officer of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG).

82 A.D. Frazier, Jr. is an Atlanta business executive and served as the chief operating officer for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

83 The Georgia Bulldogs football program represents the University of Georgia in the sport of American football. They play their home games at historic Sanford Stadium on the university's Athens, Georgia, campus. Their inaugural season was in 1892. The team is known for its storied history, unique traditions, and rabid fan base.
Steve: I think it is a wonderful legacy. That was one of the worst sections of town, and now it is a tourist attraction. There will be a lot of good things happening around that park.

Ann: In spite of the pollution and all the other stuff?

Steve: There is going to be a lot of good stuff happening, hotels, offices, retail. It is going to happen.

Ann: Do you own property around there?

Steve: Not right up to the park, but in the area.

Ann: I just saw something about the Herndon Homes area and trying to take over the Vine City area, as well, and redevelop that. It was in the paper this last week.

Steve: I don’t know if we talked about this last time. I got more bang at the Democratic Convention this year.

Ann: We didn’t talk about that, as a matter of fact.

Steve: We didn’t?

Ann: No.

Steve: That was one of the great honors I had.

Ann: That was 1988.

Steve: It was 1988 or 1986. I don’t remember the year. It was when the Democratic Convention was in Atlanta.

Ann: I think it was 1988.

Steve: That was really a great honor, because the governor, the mayor, and the chairman of the Fulton County Commission all had to agree on somebody to chair this thing. I think the governor was Joe Frank Harris, the mayor was Maynard Jackson, and the chairman of the Fulton County Commission was Michael Lomax. They did not agree on a whole hell of a lot at the time, but they did agree on me as the chair, along with Yvonne Yancy, an African-American woman. We were in the forefront of that. I have got a great story from that Convention that ought to be in your remarks. This is a true story. Sometimes the true stories are the best. By being chairman of the Convention, I had a box at the Omni, where the Convention was held, and I got to address the Convention, bring greetings. I was on national television. Before you speak, they take you back . . . You do this the day before. They tell you [that] you have got a teleprompter. They run you through. They give you a practice read on the teleprompter. They put makeup on you before you go on the stage and speak. I was sitting there, and they said, “We know where your box is.
We will come get you 30 minutes before you are supposed to speak.” I am sitting there, and in
the box that night . . . I was sharing the box with the governor, the mayor, and a few others, the
senator. In the box that night was Sam Nunn, who was the senator. Joe Frank Harris had Billy
Graham as his guest, and I was sitting next to Billy Graham. They came to see me, and we
were talking. I told him I was a little nervous, speaking to millions of people on television. He
put his hand on my leg, and he said, “You will do fine. Go in peace.” Something like that. I
thought I have got God’s right hand telling me everything is going to be fine. There is not going
to be any problem at all. I had a calm come over me. He is a very nice man, by the way. I had a
long talk with him that night. Long story short, I went back, did the makeup, went up on the
stage, and I got up there to speak. I started speaking, and right in the middle of my speech the
teleprompter broke. There were no words on the thing. Fortunately, they tell you to bring your
copy with you, so I had the copy in my back pocket. I pulled it out and finished my remarks. I
went back to my box, and Billy Graham was there. He said, “You did fine. How was it?” I said,
“Dr. Graham, I appreciate you praying for me, but I think my rabbi could have done a better job.
With all your good wishes, the teleprompter broke.” He laughed. He thought that was hilarious.

Ann: I am sure it has broken on him many times.
Steve: That is a true story. He thought that was very funny. I had a lot to do with what
happened at the Democratic Convention.
Ann: Talk about it.
Steve: I was in charge of all the sizzle, everything outside the Convention. All the volunteers
and all the hospitality. Linda and I would go from one event to another, from one person’s house
to another. There was a party for every state, and we were at every one of them. A lot of good
stuff went on at the Convention. [Michael] Dukakis was nominated, of course, which was a
disaster. Atlanta pulled off a pretty good Convention.
Ann: Who did you support?

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84William “Billy” Franklin Graham, Jr. (1918-2018) was a prominent American Christian evangelist and an
ordained Southern Baptist minister, who became well-known internationally in the late 1940’s. He held large indoor
and outdoor rallies, and his sermons were broadcast on radio and television. In his six decades of television, Graham
was well-known for hosting the Billy Graham Crusades throughout the world from 1947 to 2005.
85Michael Stanley Dukakis (1933 – ) is a retired American politician who served as the 65th Governor of
Massachusetts, from 1975 to 1979 and again from 1983 to 1991. He was nominated by the Democratic Party for
president in the 1988 election, losing to the Republican candidate, Vice President George H. W. Bush.
Steve: I don’t remember. By the time it got to Atlanta, it was over, so it didn’t matter who I supported. Dukakis had already won by the time it got here, so I supported him, I guess.

Ann: It was a foregone conclusion. It is interesting. Political conventions are almost like dinosaurs.

Steve: There is not much suspense left.

Ann: There is none. The only suspense that could possibly be is who is going to be vice president.

Steve: There could be suspense, but as it has gone in the past there has not been. Somebody has had enough votes to . . .

Ann: . . . lock it in.

Steve: It is not a foregone conclusion that somebody won. It could be a brokered Convention, but it just has not been recently, not in my lifetime.

Ann: I do not foresee it happening in the near future.

Steve: You never know. If you have two strong candidates or three strong candidates, and nobody gets enough in the primaries, you never know. What else?

Ann: I don’t know. We have pretty much covered the gaps. What about anything else that you would like to talk about or add in.

Steve: I don’t know how much we have said. I would say that the presidency of the Atlanta Jewish Federation has been the most significant volunteer thing I have ever done with my life. I think it made me a better person. I think I have made some great friends through my service in the community. I have learned a lot.

Ann: You had said to me in that first tape that there were three goals.

Steve: Yes. We did it, too.

Ann: Did you feel that you accomplished all three of them?

Steve: Absolutely. Raising more money, restoring pride, and having a good time. Yes, we did all three of those things. The community is, I think, not necessarily because of me but because of the work we all did, a much better community today than it was two years ago. We had this capital campaign where we raised almost 50 million dollars, which is phenomenal. Historic. We have done some great outreach. Our regular campaign is up. Our agencies and our Federation are much closer. Our synagogues and our Federation are much closer. I think people feel better about their volunteerism. I think people are much more proud of what we do. I feel good about
that. I worked hard. I am not going to be falsely modest here. I worked like a dog. I worked hard. I gave it everything I had while I was president, and I am proud of what we accomplished. I think for the first time people are feeling very proud of what they have accomplished, too, and that is good. We have got some great agencies. All of them are doing good things. Those people are the heroes out there on the street, the day-to-day people. They are there before I get there, and they are there after I go. The professionals and the volunteers and all of them.

Ann: How many people [are] in the Jewish community today?
Steve: Somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000. If I had to guess, I would say about 85,000 to 90,000. We did a . . .
Ann: A survey?
Steve: Not a survey, but a . . .
Ann: . . . an extrapolation, trying to figure out.
Steve: There’s a word for what we did, but I cannot recall the word right this minute. It is like a survey.
Ann: You came up with approximately that number?
Steve: Yes.
Ann: That is pretty significant. How does that compare with other Jewish communities in the country, number-wise?
Steve: It probably puts us in the top 20.
Ann: Fundraising per capita?
Steve: I don’t know.
Ann: Probably up near the top.
Steve: We are a good community.
Ann: That is what I would think.
Steve: We are not the best in terms of fundraising, but we are one of the best.
Ann: Thank you very, very much. We appreciate your time and you sharing all this information with us.
Steve: Thank you.
Ann: I am sure the future will appreciate it also. Thank you.

<End Tape 2, Side 2, Part 2>

INTERVIEW ENDS