

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

MEMOIRIST: MARK TAYLOR
INTERVIEWER: SUSAN PLASKER
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Note: text in brackets [] are corrections/notes added by Mark Taylor in 2018.

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INTERVIEW BEGINS

PLASKER: This is Susan Plasker interviewing Mark Taylor on October 17, 2002, for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, cosponsored by American Jewish Committee, Atlanta Jewish Federation, and National Council of Jewish Women. Mark, first start with when and where were you born.

TAYLOR: [I was] born here in Atlanta on May 1, 1928.

PLASKER: Were your parents born here?

TAYLOR: Both of them.

PLASKER: What was your dad's name and your mom's maiden name?

TAYLOR: Mother's maiden name was Esther Kahn.

PLASKER: And your dad?

TAYLOR: My father's name was Herbert Taylor.

PLASKER: Herbert Taylor. Were they both born in Atlanta?

TAYLOR: Both born in Atlanta. Yes.

PLASKER: That's quite a feat in this day and time. Where did their families come from? Do you know?

TAYLOR: Not entirely. Dad's history, it was one of those things they never told us much about. I think that Mother's family may have been Lithuanian and my father's [family] Russian, but I am not sure.

PLASKER: They both have an oral history. We can refer back to the Esther Taylor history and the Herbert Taylor history.

TAYLOR: I know that my father's father was sent out of Russia to keep him of the Czar's army, as they did that in those days. He came here with an English (Welsh) high school education, which is why we are named Taylor instead of *Chait* [name in Russia].

PLASKER: You were born in 1928 just before the [Great] Depression.¹ Where were your parents living when you were born?

TAYLOR: I don't exactly remember [probably on 10th Street, Atlanta]. But when I was six months old, they moved to Claire Drive.

PLASKER: Which is what part of Atlanta?

TAYLOR: What do they call it now? Mother used to call it Druid Hills but it was a little bit too close to Decatur to really be Druid Hills. It was between Druid Hills in the much poorer area [somewhat more modest area]. I think they call it Lake Claire now.

PLASKER: You were definitely north of the stadium² where so many people started.

TAYLOR: We were not on the south side of town. I think my parents were living somewhere on North Avenue [probably 10th Street] when I was born.

PLASKER: You lived in the Druid Hills area after you were about six months old? You stayed there for a pretty good while?

TAYLOR: I think until I was 15 or so [maybe 13 or 14].

PLASKER: Were there any siblings?

TAYLOR: No siblings.

PLASKER: An only child?

TAYLOR: An only child. I was a Depression child.

PLASKER: What did your mom and what did your dad do at the time when you were growing up?

TAYLOR: My father had a drug store. He was a pharmacist.

PLASKER: Your mom stayed at home and raised you?

TAYLOR: My mom did not work. Actually, when I was very young, Mother did work. I

¹ The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s or early 1940s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.

² Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium served as the home ballpark for the Atlanta Braves baseball team for 31 seasons from 1966 to 1996. In 1997, the Braves moved less than one block to Turner Field. It was built to serve the 1996 Summer Olympics. The Braves played their final game at Turner Field on October 2, 2016. In 2016, Georgia State University bought the ballpark and redesigned it for a college football stadium. The Braves played their first game in 2017 in their new home stadium, SunTrust Park, located in Cobb County, a suburb north of the city.

think she worked in the drugstore. I think she taught Hebrew and taught piano. Mother was involved in other activities.

PLASKER: Volunteer activities?

TAYLOR: I didn't see much of my mother.

PLASKER: Coming and going? What type of Judaism do you remember in your home? Did you have *Shabbat*³ dinners? Did you go to regular services every week or did you just go on the holidays? What was your family's Jewish connection and observance?

TAYLOR: My family was not at all observant. They were close to the Jewish community in a lot of ways. My mother was distantly related to Rabbi [Harry] Epstein,⁴ or rather, to his wife [Reva].⁵ She may have been involved in some way in bringing them here. My mother's father was one of the founders of Shearith Israel.⁶ My father's father was the first secretary of AA [Ahavath Achim].⁷ So, there was a connection with the synagogues.

PLASKER: You had some AA connection and Shearith Israel. Did you belong to either one of those?

TAYLOR: I think we probably just belonged just to AA, but Mother's brother belonged to Shearith Israel. I did the mandatory trips to the synagogues. On High Holy Days,⁸ I recall walking backward and forward between the two on Washington Avenue. I assume my parents went to services but not much.

³ *Shabbat* (Hebrew) or *Shabbos* (Yiddish) is the Jewish day of rest and is observed on Saturdays. *Shabbat* observance entails refraining from work activities, often with great rigor, and engaging in restful activities to honor the day. *Shabbat* begins at sundown on Friday night and is ushered in by lighting candles and reciting a blessing. It is closed the following evening with the recitation of the *havdalah* blessing.

⁴ Rabbi Harry Epstein (1903-2003) served as the rabbi of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Atlanta, Georgia from 1928 to 1982. Under his leadership the congregation began to shift to Conservatism, which they adopted in 1952. Rabbi Epstein retired in 1982, becoming Rabbi Emeritus and Rabbi Arnold Goodman assumed the rabbinic post.

⁵ Reva (Rebecca) Chashesman Epstein (1905-2001) was the well-educated daughter of an Orthodox rabbi. Her family immigrated to Chicago, Illinois from Poland after World War I. In 1929, she married Rabbi Harry Epstein. Reva served as an Atlanta *Hadassah* chapter president.

⁶ Founded in 1904, Shearith Israel began as a congregation that met in the homes of congregants until 1906 when they began using a Methodist church on Hunter Street. After World War II, Rabbi Tobias Geffen moved the congregation to University Drive, where it became the first synagogue in DeKalb County. In the 1960s, they removed the barrier between the men's and women's sections in the sanctuary, and officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement in 2002.

⁷ 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.

⁸ The two High Holy Days are *Rosh Ha-Shanah* (Jewish New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).

PLASKER: Do you remember your mother lighting candles in your house? Do you remember challah⁹ on Friday night or things like that?

TAYLOR: Probably not. Maybe when I was very young.

PLASKER: Only your parents live with you? Not grandparents or anyone else?

TAYLOR: That's correct. Remember, Mother taught Hebrew school, so she was well aware of all of the observances.

PLASKER: Where did she teach?

TAYLOR: I have no idea.

PLASKER: She just went and taught.

TAYLOR: That was very early on in her marriage, possibly before I was born.

PLASKER: Did you have a *bar mitzvah*?¹⁰

TAYLOR: Yes, I did.

PLASKER: Where was that?

TAYLOR: At the AA.

PLASKER: That was around 1941?

TAYLOR: Yes. I actually did not go to the AA Sunday school. I went to The Temple¹¹ Sunday school until they kicked me out.

PLASKER: Why did they kick you out?

TAYLOR: My parents were Zionists.¹² At that time, Rabbi [David] Marx¹³ had joined the

⁹ Challah is a special Jewish braided bread eaten on Sabbath and Jewish holidays.

¹⁰ Hebrew for 'son of commandment.' A rite of passage for Jewish boys aged 13 years and one day. At that time, a Jewish boy is considered a responsible adult for most religious purposes. He is now duty bound to keep the commandments, he puts on *tefillin*, and may be counted to the *minyan* quorum for public worship. He celebrates the *bar mitzvah* by being called up to the reading of the *Torah* in the synagogue, usually on the next available Sabbath after his Hebrew birthday.

¹¹ 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).

¹² Zionism is a movement that supports a Jewish national state in the territory defined as the Land of Israel. Although Zionism existed before the nineteenth century, in the 1890s Theodor Herzl popularized it and gave it a new urgency, as he believed that Jewish life in Europe was threatened and a State of Israel was needed. The State of Israel was established in 1948 and Zionism today is expressed as support for the continued existence of Israel.

¹³ 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.

[American] Council for Judaism¹⁴ and, apparently, I was too talkative.

PLASKER: You had different views than he had? What was the Council for Judaism?

TAYLOR: That was a group that a number of Reform¹⁵ rabbis joined. Not a number, but some. It was an anti-Zionist group that took the position that the Zionists were destructive to American Jews and it was problematic to them. I don't know enough about it to really describe it. [The council opposed Zionist efforts to establish the State of Israel as making American Jews seeming to have dual loyalties].

PLASKER: Your family was attending The Temple and had this break with Rabbi Marx over this philosophy?

TAYLOR: I am not sure whether they had the break or I had the break. I apparently talked up too much in class. Marx talked to me a couple of times and told me that I would have to redo the class or something of that sort. Basically, that I was anathema. About that time, he joined the Council for Judaism. My parents dropped out of The Temple in protest [the reason was the Council for Judaism position, not my learning at the Sunday school] expecting a lot of people to drop out with them. Nobody else did.

PLASKER: They were very great. They obviously had their feelings.

TAYLOR: Mother did not care a lot. We were Russian Jews, and there were not many Russian Jews there at that time anyhow [not many Russian Jewish Temple members].

PLASKER: Your father was a pharmacist and had a drug store. Did you ever work in the store with him?

TAYLOR: I did. I probably started during junior high school. Early on, I caught curbs. I know that has no meaning now, but people used to drive up in front of the drug store and order things from the soda fountain, and we would hang trays on the cars.

PLASKER: Yes. Like we used to go to The Varsity¹⁶ and they would hang the tray out.

¹⁴ The American Council for Judaism (ACJ) is an organization of American Jews committed to the proposition that Jews are not a nationality but merely a religious group, adhering to the original stated principles of Reform Judaism. The ACJ was founded in June 1942 by a group of Reform rabbis who opposed the direction of their movement, including the issue of Zionism.

¹⁵ Reform 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.

¹⁶ The Varsity is an iconic chain restaurant serving burgers, hot dogs, fries, shakes, and other American classics. The original location was opened in 1928 but soon grew so popular it was relocated to its present location on North

TAYLOR: Exactly. Curb service. I did that when I was very young. Later, I worked behind the soda fountain and finally got to where I could run the family store.

PLASKER: You were spending time with your father in the store. You said your mother was doing a lot of volunteer work. Were you closer with your father? Did you find that he was the one you talked to for advice and things like that?

TAYLOR: These were Depression days. You didn't see much of your father. He left before you got up in the morning. [He] came home for a late dinner and he was tired. I didn't see much of my father. My mother had too many activities. When I came home in the afternoon, she would be practicing the piano. She was one of the fortunate ones. She had a car. She was usually either away or at home and resting. She would rest in the afternoon and then practice. I saw my parents at dinner.

PLASKER: Where were you going to school?

TAYLOR: I remember they [my parents] had full-time help in those days who stayed over.

PLASKER: I was going to say, it sounds like somebody was taking care. Who did you confide in? Who gave you advice? Who did you turn to when you had a problem with a kid at school or something? The people who watched you or your parents?

TAYLOR: I don't think there was anyone in those days.

PLASKER: In those days, you just kept it to yourself?

TAYLOR: You weren't expected to be <unintelligible>.

PLASKER: Where did you go to school? Where did you go to grammar school?

TAYLOR: I went to grammar school. How much of this ought to be put in here? I went to grammar school at a school called Mary Lin [Elementary School]. It was named after the principal. It was just a few miles from home. It was close enough so that we walked home from school every day. We lived in Atlanta, DeKalb [County]. We were near the line between unincorporated Atlanta. Atlanta ran down the middle of the street that we lived on. At one end of the drive, everyone went to Atlanta schools. The other end of the block, everyone went to DeKalb County schools.

Avenue in Downtown Atlanta. Billed as America's largest drive-in, the present structure covers two city blocks and has the capacity to accommodate 600 patrons and 800 cars. The catchphrase, "What'll ya have?" once used by frazzled employees has become part of modern Atlanta culture.

PLASKER: Were there many Jewish kids in your school?

TAYLOR: There were no Jewish kids in grammar school. As soon as I got to junior high school, there were plenty. Mostly girls.

PLASKER: Where was that?

TAYLOR: That was Bass Junior High School. That was in Little Five Points. Mary Lin, if there were any Jewish children in the school, I was not aware of it.

PLASKER: There were not a lot of Jewish families living in the same area you were living in?

TAYLOR: At the other end of the street. When you go to the north end of Lakeshore Drive, there were two or three Jewish families at that end of the street.

PLASKER: Who was down that way?

TAYLOR: They did not go to the same school. Alfred [F.] Revson and [David] Steinhammer. I don't remember his name.

PLASKER: Steinhammer and Revson?

TAYLOR: A little bit further up as you began to get into the true Druid Hills, there were several others. Judy Alexander, who was the baby in the carpool. I think Ted Levy may have been in that car pool. They lived further up Ponce de Leon [Avenue] towards Atlanta back in what really is Druid Hills. I think there was somebody else. I haven't thought about that in a long time.

PLASKER: Was the Stein family over there?

TAYLOR: What Stein?

PLASKER: Jean Stein. Was her family over there? Stein Printing? I thought they were in the Druid Hills area.

TAYLOR: Which Stein are you talking about?

PLASKER: She became Jean Goldstein when she was married. I think she was Jean Stein. I think she lived over near where Louis Soloway's [sp] family lived, which might have been a little bit later.

TAYLOR: Once you got back into Druid Hills, there were a number of Jewish families. The Hirschs lived there. Gene Allan Klein lived there, but they were not in the same carpool.

PLASKER: Because there were so few Jewish families in this area, did you experience any antisemitism either in school or among the neighbors at all?

TAYLOR: Probably, but I don't remember much in the way of antisemitism. There weren't enough of us.

PLASKER: It didn't affect you directly. Your parents might have known, but you didn't find anything yourself?

TAYLOR: I really wasn't particularly aware of it.

PLASKER: That's good.

TAYLOR: I knew you kept a low profile. I know that we didn't have a Christmas tree and everybody noticed. I knew that my friends got Christmas presents and I didn't. I was reminded of that from time to time.

PLASKER: You had help in the house. This was a fairly nice economic area.

TAYLOR: We knew we were different. I knew we were different and I knew why, but I think I probably suffered the same kind of suffers. In other words, I think I probably encountered the same kind of thing young boys do as they grow up into different groups.

PLASKER: You felt you were part of any group you wanted to be friends with in grammar school or high school? You didn't feel ostracized from being invited to someone's house or anything like that?

TAYLOR: I'm not sure.

PLASKER: You had help in the house, so it was obviously a fairly affluent neighborhood. Nice size homes.

TAYLOR: I am not sure anyone else in the neighborhood had full time help. I don't know that for a fact. We were in a duplex. We lived on the top floor and rented out the bottom floor. Help was \$2 a week at that time. Stayed over two nights a week and got off every other weekend. They did everything. The woman who reared me really was a remarkable woman.

PLASKER: A black woman?

TAYLOR: She was a black woman. I just buried her last year.

PLASKER: Oh my goodness.

TAYLOR: She was a remarkable woman. She had two children of her own at the other end of the car line and a sister that helped take care of them. No husband. Had a husband. But she was really a remarkable woman with remarkable values. So, I was in good hands.

PLASKER: We talked a little bit about where your family belonged and there was this

conflict over the politics with the rabbi. Your mother was involved in most of the type of activities? Your parents were involved in were more political or more Zionist or more volunteer, helping community, or a little of everything?

TAYLOR: There was a group of very active women in Atlanta. She was one of them. They were each in turn president of *Hadassah*¹⁷ and each in turn. Mother had that activity, and then she had activities in the non-Jewish community. She was involved in music. She had a radio program from the Atlanta Music Club.¹⁸ Mother was involved in a lot of things. In my opinion, it was her acceptance in the non-Jewish community that permitted her to move between the Russian and the German Jewish communities to the extent she could.

PLASKER: Did your family belong to the Standard Club¹⁹ or the Progressive Club?²⁰

TAYLOR: Earlier on, they belonged to either the Mayfair [Club]²¹ or the Progressive. Later on, they joined the Standard Club.

PLASKER: [Is that] where they spent more time, at the social clubs?

TAYLOR: I don't think they spent a lot of time at either one.

PLASKER: Obviously your father had a college degree. It was a pharmacy degree?

TAYLOR: Yes, I am sure he went to pharmacy school. In those days, you went to pharmacy school for a year and a half or two years. If you stayed another half year, you could

¹⁷ *Hadassah*, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is a volunteer organization founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, with more than 300,000 members and supporters worldwide. It supports health care and medical research, education and youth programs in Israel, and advocacy, education, and leadership development in the United States.

¹⁸ The Atlanta Music Club is still in existence today. They provide musical entertainment for members of the club and the Atlanta Metropolitan area, performance opportunities for young musicians and support for the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra. They also provide scholarships to Georgia high school and college students.

¹⁹ The 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 the site of Georgia State Stadium (formerly Turner Field). In the late 1920s 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 1980s, the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta's northern suburbs.

²⁰ The Jewish Progressive Club was a Jewish social organization that was established in 1913 by Russian Jews who felt unwelcome at the Standard Club, where German Jews were predominant. At first, the club was located in a rented house until a new club was built on Pryor Street including a swimming pool and a gym. In 1940 the club opened a larger facility at 1050 Techwood Drive in Midtown with three swimming pools, tennis and softball. In 1976 the club moved north to 1160 Moore's Mill Road near Interstate 75. The property was eventually sold as the club faced financial challenges and the Carl E. Sanders Family YMCA at Buckhead opened in 1996.

²¹ The Mayfair Club opened in 1938 at 1456 Spring Street in Midtown Atlanta. The two-story club was a focal point of Jewish life in the city for more than 25 years. The club was founded in 1930 and first met at the Biltmore Hotel. Eleanor Roosevelt, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, mayors Ivan Allen and William Berry Hartsfield, senators Herman Talmadge and Richard Russell, and Governor Carl Sanders visited the club. Fire destroyed the Mayfair Club on December 4, 1964.

practice some sort of medicine. But Dad was practicing pharmacy before he went to pharmacy school. He got that . . .

PLASKER: Kind of an apprentice type thing, I guess. Your mother, also was college educated?

TAYLOR: No. Mother never went to college.

PLASKER: Pretty self-educated. A remarkable woman.

TAYLOR: Mother went to [The] Julliard [School] in the summertime to study music. She also studied French. I think she was always unhappy about the fact that her brothers were both professionals, and she never got college because she was a girl.

PLASKER: What do you remember about the first day of school when you were little? Anything?

TAYLOR: The first day of school is about the only one I remember because there was a little girl up the street, and the two of us were taken to school together.

PLASKER: Was it kindergarten or first grade, do you remember?

TAYLOR: It was kindergarten. Atlanta [Public School] was K, C, 3, 3. Whereas, DeKalb County schools were K, 7, 4, so we had an extra year of school. Except they accelerated us because of the war, so we ended up getting out at the same time.

PLASKER: Very early. Yes. What was the first day of school when you and this little girl were taken, do you remember anything?

TAYLOR: No.

PLASKER: Just that you went together?

TAYLOR: The only time I can remember is when my mother took us. It's the only time I can remember her going there.

PLASKER: Was there a graduation in the 6th grade when you left Mary Lin?

TAYLOR: I have no idea.

PLASKER: Then you went on to Bass High?

TAYLOR: Bass Junior High. That's the second 3. K, 6, 3, 3.

PLASKER: What was after Bass Junior? Boys High?

TAYLOR: Boys' High School,²² yes.

²² Boys' High School was founded in 1924 and is now known as Henry W. Grady High School. It is part of the Atlanta Public School System. It has had many notable alumni, including S. Truett Cathy, the founder of Chick-fil-

PLASKER: Which became [Henry W.] Grady [High School]?

TAYLOR: After I left.

PLASKER: [Do] any particular teachers stand out over the years?

TAYLOR: Sure. A lot of teachers stand out.

PLASKER: Who were the stand outs and why?

TAYLOR: Oh my gosh. The stand-out teachers in grammar school would be the pretty teachers. The stand-out teachers in junior high would be the mean teachers. The stand-out teachers in high school were the chemistry teacher and one English teacher. Eidson was the English teacher.

PLASKER: Eidson?

TAYLOR: Eidson. [He] just died last year.

PLASKER: English teacher at Boys' High.

TAYLOR: A teacher by the name of Heichow. In his field, he was the chemistry and physics teacher, but he was a superior teacher. He was crazy as a loon, but he was a superb teacher.

PLASKER: What type of influence did they have on you?

TAYLOR: Just recognizing them as very good teachers.

PLASKER: Obviously paying more attention to them then. They didn't have any particular influence on where you chose to go to school or what you chose to do?

TAYLOR: No. They didn't do that kind of consulting in those days.

PLASKER: When you came home and did your homework and that kind of thing, you did it all on your own? You got together with friends? Did your parents ever help you?

TAYLOR: No. You did whatever you did on your own.

PLASKER: You were at school all day. Did you come home for lunch?

TAYLOR: Never.

PLASKER: It was all day at school?

TAYLOR: All day at school.

PLASKER: The fact that it was the Depression or war time didn't affect any of the timing of school? I mean, it didn't affect the way the school was run?

TAYLOR: No. They just tried to get you through school faster.

PLASKER: I guess they wanted the boys ready for war.

TAYLOR: I'm not sure why, but they accelerated it.

PLASKER: You were *bar mitzvahed* in 1941. By the time you were graduating high school, World War II²³ was over. There was never any . . .

TAYLOR: World War II was over after I had gone to college. I was turning 17 when I went to college.

<interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: In some of the areas we have covered, you mentioned you had some little thoughts that we might not have touched on. Why don't you talk about those?

TAYLOR: Let me go back and do a little recapping, partly because it may not have recorded and partly because some of the things that I think follow from some of the questions you asked. We lived on Claire Drive, which was in Lake Claire, which was Atlanta-DeKalb. The DeKalb County line ran down the middle of the street. The Atlanta line ran down the middle of the street, so the other end of the street was DeKalb. At the other end of the street, there were Jews. At our end of the street, there weren't. In Mary Lin School, there were no Jewish kids that I know of. Looking back at the pictures, I have never been able to identify any Jewish children. At the other end of the street, there were the Steinhammers and the Revsons. Further back towards town, you got into the real Druid Hills, this is really Lake Claire. You got back into what was Druid Hills or the east most end of Druid Hills, and you picked up other families. The Levys and the Alexanders, all of whom were part of a carpool to The Temple Sunday school. You asked me about my grammar school, which was Mary Lin. It was a short distance. We could walk home from grammar school. Maybe it was a mile and a half away. You asked me about junior high school, which was Bass in Little Five Points.

PLASKER: Did you ride the bus to go?

TAYLOR: You sometimes rode the bus, sometimes rode the bicycle because it was

²³ World War II (often abbreviated to WWII or WW2), also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945, although related conflicts began earlier. It involved the vast majority of the world's countries—including all of the great powers—eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. Marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust (in which approximately 6 million Jews were killed) and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centers (in which approximately one million were killed, and which included the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), it resulted in an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.

within bicycle distance. I could take a bicycle from there over to my father's drug store, which was at Ponce de Leon and Highland [Avenue] at that time. The Plaza Drugstore.²⁴ You need to fill that in because it works into that period of time.

PLASKER: As we know it, Plaza Drug . . .

TAYLOR: Let me pull it together. When you do it that way, you pull me away from it. Little Five Points was sort of a center. It's where we went on weekends to go to the movies. Again, it was within bicycle distance. You passed the Mary Lin School on the way to the Bass Junior High. The Bass Junior High had Jewish kids, almost all of whom seemingly enough were girls. There were a few Jewish boys, but there were a fair number of Jewish girls, half a dozen anyhow. My father had had a drug store downtown when I was a kid at Peachtree [Street] and Cain Street [now Andrew Young International Boulevard]. It was Atlanta's first open-all-night drugstore, which was very interesting for a kid, and I was a small kid at that time, a very small kid at that time. The Henry Grady Hotel, where the legislators stayed during legislature, was across the way, so they were around the drugstore. Occasionally, a gypsy would wander into the drugstore. I was never there at night, but that was where they took people at night, usually when they got hurt and they couldn't get them to Grady [Hospital]. The Masonic Temple²⁵ was actually above. Then, and I have no idea when, probably when I was eight or ten years old, my father moved his drug store into what I guess was the first small shopping strip. It was at Highland and Ponce de Leon. One of the Candler's developed it and my father was funding with one of the Candler's. He opened the Plaza Pharmacy, which was in a shopping center with a grocery store and a small duck-pin bowling alley. That was the drug store that I was telling you that I worked in. I could ride my bicycle from home to junior high school, and then I could ride it from there to the drugstore. On some nights I could go across the street to Louie Newton's²⁶ Druid Hills Baptist Church in the backyard, where the [Boy] Scout Hut was, and go to a scout meeting and then ride my bike

²⁴ Located at the corner of Ponce and N. Highland in the Poncey-Highland neighborhood of Atlanta, Briarcliff Plaza was designed by architect George Harwell Bond and opened in 1939. Today, it is anchored by the historic Plaza Theatre and Urban Outfitters, the former iconic Plaza Drugs. Adjacent to Briarcliff Plaza is the equally iconic Majestic Diner, open since 1929.

²⁵ The Masonic Temple was located at the northwest corner of Peachtree Street and Cain Street (now Andrew Young International Blvd.) in downtown Atlanta from 1909-1950. The architect was John Robert Dillon. In September 1950 a fire gutted the building. It was replaced by a parking structure which still stands today.

²⁶ Louie D. Newton (1892-1986) was a prominent Baptist preacher, author and denominational leader who served as the pastor of Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta for 40 years. He was well known for his stand on temperance, social reform, and fairness. He was often called 'Mr. Baptist.'

home late at night. Still, it was clearly within bike distance back home. It was a pretty good ride, but I could do it. I didn't work at the drug store on a regular basis, but I worked there, I guess, starting from the time I was 10 or 11 years old. But I never worked there on a regular basis. There were two or three bases on which I worked at the drugstore. On Sundays, the people from the church across the street would come over to the drugstore for a Coke between church services and Sunday school or vice versa. You would have hundreds of people piling in. My father and I would go into the drugstore and I would be the soda jerk.

PLASKER: This is the old days of the soda fountain and pharmacy.

TAYLOR: Later on, when I got a little older, I would work on the other side of the store, usually when other people didn't want to work. I worked Christmas Eve. I worked those times when there were large volumes of business and nobody else would work it. As a little kid, I was efficient. I could spell two or three people. That's what I meant when I said I worked at the drug store. I wasn't a full-time employee.

PLASKER: Your father paid you even though you were his son? You were paid for your time, I assume?

TAYLOR: I have no idea. I don't think so. I may have been, but I don't think so.

PLASKER: But it was expected, so you worked there.

TAYLOR: Yes. I didn't work near full-time at all. I just worked when I was needed. By the time I was a teenager, in the summertime I went to summer camps most summers because my mother was in New York.

PLASKER: Where was the summer camp? Here in Georgia?

TAYLOR: I started very early on when I was really very young going to something called Camp Highland Lake, which was GMA's [Georgia Military Academy] summer camp.²⁷ Christian.

PLASKER: Georgia Military Academy?

TAYLOR: Georgia Military Academy Summer Camp.

PLASKER: It was here in the Georgia mountains?

TAYLOR: It's in the Georgia mountains. Later, when I was in junior high school, one of

²⁷ Woodward Academy, formerly Georgia Military Academy, was founded in 1900 as a military boarding school for boys. In 1964, the school became co-educational. The military program was dropped from the curriculum in 1966 and the school name was changed to Woodward Academy. The boarding program was discontinued in 1933. Today 2,700 students are enrolled from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

the teachers in junior high school had a camp called Camp Sky Lake. It was just being built and they let us help them build it. That was summer camp. Plus, the fact that there was polio by then, so they wanted you out of the city during the summer. There was something connected with the drug store. I'm still trying to stay below 13 because at 13, you start going to Hebrew School. I didn't work much except for that occasional work. I was the life guard one summer at the Standard Club because Jimmy Kahn wanted to go somewhere else and they couldn't find anybody else. I think I may have turned 16 that summer, so it made me almost legal.

PLASKER: That was when the club was already at . . .

TAYLOR: It was on Ponce de Leon.

PLASKER: Yes, the old club.

TAYLOR: As I was saying, when we lived on Claire Drive, we lived there until I was almost 14. We lived there while I was in grammar school and junior high and probably into high school because I can remember taking the streetcar to go to high school.

PLASKER: When you talk about the church that was across from our father's drugstore, was it Plaza? Did a lot of people come in?

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: This was a white congregation?

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Was the soda fountain . . . I know in those days there was definitely segregation here in the south.

TAYLOR: That was not an issue.

PLASKER: Was there really no black population in the area to speak of?

TAYLOR: That was not an issue.

PLASKER: Not in this area?

TAYLOR: We can talk about the racial issue mainly because I have been interested in it and involved in, but it was not relevant at that point. There were no black kids anywhere in any schools and no black kids in the drug store.

PLASKER: No help in the drugstore that were black?

TAYLOR: I think the kid that caught curb was black. As a matter of fact, and it really is a bad point to fill it in, but it may have been the first feeling I got about the resentment in the

black community, because the kid that caught curb with me, I could begin to sense why some of the things he said, he was fantasizing about a world when blacks would be dominant and probably began to tell me something about it. I was still at home. I was still a kid. I was pre-15, and my father began to dabble a little bit in some building, and he would send me on the streetcar into the black community to find his plasterer, get him there the next day. It was paternal but it was comfortable.

PLASKER: The expression "caught curb" as you explained it before was the equivalent of being a carhop?

TAYLOR: It was car hopping.

PLASKER: Somebody would pull up to order from the soda fountain outside.

TAYLOR: That's correct.

PLASKER: That's a new expression I've never heard.

TAYLOR: Yes. But that led me on to something that I thought might be interesting. As I say, we lived in a duplex. We lived on the top floor and rented out the bottom floor. My mother had a car, which was very unusual. The people that lived downstairs worked for General Motors, so he would drive a car for a short period of time. My father would buy it for my mother at a discounted price. Mother would drive it for a period of time until another came along and then pass it on to my father.

PLASKER: It was roughly demos being passed on?

TAYLOR: Passed on.

PLASKER: Your father had a car and your mother had a car.

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: That's very unusual.

TAYLOR: At one time, my father had an old Packard. My reason for remembering that was Dad did two things around the house to make our house . . . to bring kids to our house because basically the kids in the neighborhood tended to play away from our house. A lot of reasons. Mother didn't want any noise around the house because she slept in the afternoons and what have you. These were two things to try to bring kids to the house. One was Dad got some old elevator cables. Elevator cables have to be changed periodically. He got some surplus elevator cable and strung it between two trees. The man that lived in the basement was one of the things that we went past too fast. I want to go back to it. [He] built a car

that would ride down the cable. Then they built a badminton court. We built a badminton court simply by flattening out a piece of the yard and they did that with a mule and a drag pan. I was just old enough so that the guy would let me try to use the drag pan. It was just a pan that goes behind the mule that tips up. This is how they graded at that time. You were talking about help, and that's something I needed to elaborate on. As I say, I was really reared by the maid, by Zoe Osceola Rogers. She was a remarkable woman in all sorts of ways. Very, very devout. Very, very ethical and just really everything you would want in terms of a person for a very young child.

PLASKER: Tell me what you said her name was again.

TAYLOR: Her name was Osceola Rogers.

PLASKER: Osceola Rogers.

TAYLOR: They called her Zoe. She was there most of the time. She was on a couple of nights a week. She was on every other weekend. She would get there very early in the morning. I would let her in because no one else would be up. She would stay until late in the evening before she went home. The streetcar system in Atlanta was very, very good at that time. Later on, before I was able to drive when I was 15 years old, I could still visit friends. Dated a girl all the way in West End. I would take the Walker West View streetcar line that ran a block and a half from my house to a block and a half from her house all the way on the other side of town.

PLASKER: These were the old streetcars with the above power lines that were attached.

TAYLOR: Yes. Later, we had trackless trolleys, but at that time there was a rail. The rail was taken out during the war. Of course, the help would ride from there to downtown where they would usually have to transfer to another line to get home. So, it took them a long time to get there and a long time to get home. They worked from early morning until late at night.

PLASKER: What part of town did she come from, do you know?

TAYLOR: You know, I was never there. I think she was close enough so that she could use the Walker West View, but she may not. She may have had to transfer downtown. We also had living in the basement, a man by the name of Norton, who was a handyman. He lived in the basement, and I think we fed him. I don't know whether he was paid much. He was paid something. He worked other places when he could get work. He was sort of lame in one leg. He said it was an accident working on the high line. Dad said it was syphilis.

I'm not sure which it was.

PLASKER: What was the high line?

TAYLOR: On telephone lines. Whichever it was, he was the sort of a guy who was terrific for a young kid to have around. He made things with his hands. He could fix things. He lived in the basement. He rolled his own cigarettes and saved the tin foil off the tobacco, like gum wrappers, and made balls of tin foil. He made lamps by cutting up cigar boxes and then nailing them into . . . he was just one of those . . .

PLASKER: Very creative. He basically lived there for room and board. It was exchange for . . .

TAYLOR: It was hardly room and board. It was part of the basement.

PLASKER: It was a dry place to sleep. It's better than being homeless.

TAYLOR: It was a dry place to sleep. I don't remember exactly why. One of my chores was to go down from the top floor at night . . . I was frightened when I was very young. [I] would go down the back stairs and into the basement where I would load the coal into what they called an iron fireman which was the dispenser that then went through a screw and ran coal into the furnace. Of course, we used bituminous coal back then.

PLASKER: Bituminous?

TAYLOR: Bituminous coal.

PLASKER: What does that mean?

TAYLOR: Well, the good coal is anthracite coal. It's hard coal. It's a coal you are familiar with. But we had in the south something called bituminous coal. It was a very soft coal. It threw off an awful lot of soot. The whole city always covered.

PLASKER: Obviously it was cheaper and that's why it was used.

TAYLOR: Much cheaper and much more available. The whole city always had a film of black on it from the burning of bituminous coal. I don't know when they quit burning bituminous coal in the south.

PLASKER: But that's what heated your house?

TAYLOR: That's what heated most houses. They either had that or they had an oil tank in the front. We actually converted from oil to bituminous coal when we bought the iron fireman.

PLASKER: Did that also run the stove and the cooking? Was coal also for cooking or

was that electric?

TAYLOR: No, the cooking was, I believe, electric.

PLASKER: Do you remember an ice man with an ice box or was it an electric refrigerator?

TAYLOR: No, we had a very early refrigerator. I don't think we ever had an ice box. My grandparents had an icebox, but I think we had a refrigerator, the one with the coils on the top. A small refrigerator.

PLASKER: Did you visit your grandparents since they lived in Atlanta?

TAYLOR: Every Friday night.

PLASKER: You had Friday night dinners there?

TAYLOR: Every Friday night. I guess that's probably, going back to your question, a little bit evolved, that's probably why Mother never lit *Shabbos* [Yiddish] candles²⁸ because we were probably over at my grandmother's.

PLASKER: Did she have candles there? Did you have candles, challah, and wine?

TAYLOR: They would wait until my father got there to say the *Kiddush*.²⁹ Which is it? *Kiddush* or *Kaddish*?³⁰

PLASKER: *Kiddush*.

TAYLOR: To say the *Kiddush*, which he would chant. I guess my grandmother probably lit the candles. It probably did happen every Friday night. It just didn't happen at our house.

PLASKER: Which grandparents were those? Your mother's?

TAYLOR: My mother's parents were dead before I was born.

PLASKER: These were your father's parents where you had *Shabbat*?

²⁸ Women traditionally do the lighting of the candles on Friday evening before sundown to usher in the Sabbath. After lighting the candles the woman waves her hands over them, covers her eyes and recites a blessing: "*Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light Shabbat candles.*"

²⁹ Hebrew: 'Sanctification.' A blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. In many synagogues congregants gather for *Kiddush* reception after the Friday night or Saturday morning service to recite the blessing over wine or grape juice and have something to eat.

³⁰ *Kaddish* (Hebrew for 'holy') is a hymn of praises to G-d found in the Jewish prayer service that is recited aloud while standing. The central theme of the *Kaddish* is the magnification and sanctification of G-d's name. Along with the *Shema* and *Amidah*, the *Kaddish* is one of the most important and central elements in the Jewish liturgy. Mourner's *Kaddish* is said at all prayer services and certain other occasions. Following the death of a parent, child, spouse, or sibling it is customary to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* in the presence of a congregation daily for 30 days, or 11 months in the case of a parent, and then at every anniversary of the death. It is important to note that the Mourner's *Kaddish* does not mention death at all, but instead praises G-d.

TAYLOR: My father's parents. My father's father died when I was six or seven years old. So, it was really just my grandmother, her oldest daughter, and an unmarried daughter who lived with her. One daughter, Lena, and her husband also lived with her. There was a family in that house. That family is probably something we ought to make a separate session on because none of them will be interviewed, so the only way you will get them is from me.

PLASKER: Your father had two sisters. You had two aunts and an uncle there?

TAYLOR: Unless you want to do [interview] Frances Makover, in which case you don't have to bother.

PLASKER: I'll check on that.

TAYLOR: If you do Frances, don't bother doing it with me because she'll have it much more accurately. Turn that off for a second.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: We're back from a short break.

TAYLOR: Let me do just a tiny little bit about the cousins and what have you. I don't want to get into it if there is any chance you can get to Frances. She really knew what was going on with the family much more than I did.

PLASKER: You just mentioned to me that Frances Makover was Frances Katz.

TAYLOR: Frances Katz.

PLASKER: She is a daughter of your father's sister?

TAYLOR: She is the daughter of my father's oldest sister. The oldest sister, Lizzie, lived in the house with my grandparents as did Frances and her sister when they were growing up, and my father's sister Sarah and Lena, together with Lena's husband, Ed Rubin, and their son. There was one cousin [after Frances and Ida left] living in the house. There were a number of other cousins in town. The cousin that lived in the house [Marvin] was close to my age. He was about six months older. The other cousins were older than that [except for Randman/Cohen/Cohen.]

PLASKER: None of you went to the same school because you were in different areas?

TAYLOR: No, we didn't go to the same schools, and they didn't all come over on Friday night, but there were usually several of them on Friday night. I didn't see that much of my cousins. It wasn't that often that we got together.

PLASKER: Did you gather for Thanksgiving, *Hanukkah*,³¹ or other holidays?

TAYLOR: I think we probably gathered for Passover.³² There was a Passover at my grandmother's house. She made the wine for the AA, so we all drank. They all let the kids drink too much wine and made that a Passover. I think that was probably the only thing that we gathered for.

PLASKER: You said that your grandfather died when you were fairly young. Who led the *seder*³³ after he was gone?

TAYLOR: You're going to lead me off this.

PLASKER: I was just curious as long as you are talking about Passover.

TAYLOR: The Passover *seder* was run by . . . I never remember it being run by my grandfather because he was too old by the time I can remember it. The men in the family ran it. Although Dad was the one who did the *Kiddush* every Friday night, he was not particularly well versed. Dad was not religious. He never went to synagogue. But he was able, I am sure, to participate because he was sort of a . . . there's someone in every generation that holds the family together. My father was it in his generation and probably in my generation. He probably was at the head of the table, but he probably had those that were more familiar, some of the uncles. I can't remember any particular uncle that was particularly a leader. I do know they did the thing out of the Maxwell House Coffee [*Haggadah*].³⁴ They

³¹ Hebrew for 'dedication.' An eight-day festival of lights usually falling around Christmas on the Christian calendar. *Hanukkah* celebrates the victory of the Maccabees in 165 BCE over the Seleucid rulers of Palestine, who had desecrated the Temple. The Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple altar to Jewish worship by rekindling the *menorah* but could only find one small jar of ritually pure olive oil. This oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days, enabling them to prepare new oil. The *Hanukkah menorah*, or *hanukiah*, with its nine branches, is used to commemorate this miracle by lighting eight candles, one for each day, by the ninth candle.

³² Hebrew: *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 bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled 'kosher for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

³³ *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.

³⁴ A Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover *seder*. Reading the *Haggadah* at the *seder* table is a fulfillment of the scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the *Torah*. The Maxwell House *Haggadah* debuted in 1932 as part of a

did the whole thing. I think what they did was probably very traditional because my grandmother kept a kosher³⁵ house. She lived on Clark Street, catty-corner across from the Clark Street School, which I am sure some of your interviewees actually went to. I remember <unintelligible> telling me this past weekend he went to Crew Street School.

PLASKER: Crew Street?

TAYLOR: Yes. She [referring to grandmother] lived on Clark Street. It was across from the Crew Street School. Catty-corner.

PLASKER: My mother went to Crew Street School.

TAYLOR: Did she?

PLASKER: That's down in the stadium area that we talked about.

TAYLOR: You could call it that. Yes.

PLASKER: Third base at the stadium. Everybody lived near third base.

TAYLOR: Yes. Something of that sort. Stop it for a second. Let me take a look at the .

..

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: We are continuing with Mark talking about some more of the family and those family ties.

TAYLOR: No. I will get to that in a moment. I wanted to pick up some things that I had missed. You had asked me very early on about the relationship with the kids in the neighborhood. And it was good. Those Christian kids played with me like I was Christian. We ran strings across the . . . just ordinary strings across the top of the telephone wires with a can on each end so we could talk to each other across the street. We played in the woods. There were woods everywhere at that time. We made clubhouses in the woods and the ground. Why we didn't kill ourselves, I don't know. One of the kids in the neighborhood whose father was a used car dealer, his name was Pat Gillentine. His father bought him ponies. One of the

marketing campaign for Maxwell House kosher for Passover coffee by Joseph Jacobs Advertising of Teaneck, New Jersey. Copies were distributed in-store with the purchase of Maxwell House Coffee. While other kosher for Passover food companies, such as Manischewitz and Streit's, also distributed their own *Haggadah*, the Maxwell House *Haggadah* became the best known and most widely used in American Jewish homes.

³⁵ Kosher/*Kashrut* is the set of Jewish dietary laws. Food that may be consumed according to *halakhah* (Jewish law) is termed 'kosher' in English. Kosher refers to Jewish laws that dictate how food is prepared or served and which kinds of foods or animals can be eaten. Food that is not in accordance with Jewish law is called '*treif*.' The word 'kosher' has become English vernacular, a colloquialism meaning proper, legitimate, genuine, fair, or acceptable. Kosher can also be used to describe ritual objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

ponies was about the size of a horse. We used to take the ponies over to Ponce de Leon and race the streetcars when they went downhill. There was a place that was between Ponce de Leon and South Ponce de Leon from Clifton Road going east. The streetcar line ran in a park area. The streetcar conductor would see us and he would open it wide open and it would just clang down. We would race him down. I talked earlier about Camp Highland Lake when I was younger, which was a GMA camp. Mother went to New York in 1939. My father and I went up to join her in New York, so we went to the New York World's Fair. I think I mentioned that Mother was involved with the *Hadassah* in the Jewish community but also in the music club, and that gave her entree into the wider community. One thing that might be interesting. You asked me about the Jewish matter. There was a public swimming pool on Ponce de Leon closer to Decatur. The name [Venetian] keeps almost coming to me but not quite. It was restricted. I went with my mother down there one time and saw the kids sitting around the swimming pool. She asked what was necessary to join it. They said, "No, anyone can join. You have to be a member, but anyone can join. It's \$2," or whatever it was, "as long as you are a good Christian person." I remember my mother saying, "I'm sorry, we are not qualified" and leaving. We did, however, use a swimming pool over at the Candler Place on Briarcliff, which was sort of a zoo and a much larger swimming pool. It was apparently not restricted because we used it. I must have been very young because I remember being taken into the ladies' locker room. I mentioned The Temple Sunday school. I went to The Temple Sunday school, but I went to the AA Hebrew School. That's almost to that age. Let me stop, go back, and answer your questions about the family.

PLASKER: Before you do that, you mentioned going up to the New York World's Fair. When you and your father traveled north, did you go by train?

TAYLOR: Of course.

PLASKER: And to camp and things, you went by car? Your parents would drive you to camp, but when you went far away, your mother always went by train up to New York?

TAYLOR: Everything was by train, sure, which was a very nice way of going. You got on a train, you went to bed, you went to sleep. You woke up the next morning in New York or vice versa coming home. There were two trains. You will have this on somebody else's.

PLASKER: Go ahead.

TAYLOR: I am trying to remember the name of them. There was a morning train and an

evening train. They each had a name. They were considered fast trains.

PLASKER: Like Silver Streak?

TAYLOR: No, it's not coming. Maybe it will come at another time.

PLASKER: You were talking about the family.

TAYLOR: Yes, the family. My father had a number of siblings, one of whom I never met, Jessie, who died before I was born. Then there was Lizzie. Trying to put them in order. Lizzie, I.H. [Isaac], Mose, my father [Herbert], Sarah, Lena, Celia, and the youngest. They had varying number of children. Most of them had a single child. Lizzie and I.H. each had two children.

PLASKER: That's a son, I.H.?

TAYLOR: Yes, and one in Dunwoody. I'm sorry. I skipped him. Had two children. Everyone else had one. Let me leave that for Frances if she can do it. If she doesn't do it, then I will try to go back and do it. We had gotten to about age 13 and Hebrew school. I probably was still in The Temple Sunday school when I started Hebrew school. The first Hebrew school was on what's now Monroe [Drive].

<End Tape, 1 Side 1 >

<Begin Tape 1, Side 2 >

PLASKER: You were going to the AA Hebrew school and you said it was on Monroe [and] Boulevard.

TAYLOR: When it was on what was then Boulevard, now Monroe, just north of Ponce de Leon in a little white church. Then it moved to an old building south of Ponce de Leon. Then it moved to another house on North Avenue. There, of course, was antisemitism. We sometimes got chased on our way to the streetcar after Hebrew school.

PLASKER: Who were your teachers?

TAYLOR: I only remember one. His name was Schwartz [sp], and he was terrible. He was afraid of his shadow, afraid of the kids, and afraid of being there.

PLASKER: Couldn't control anybody?

TAYLOR: Couldn't control anybody. All we did was read. Hebrew school was really absurd. I won the *seder* the first year I was there.

PLASKER: Some of this was before your *bar mitzvah* to train you?

TAYLOR: This was only for *bar mitzvah*. Believe me. *Bar mitzvah* and I stopped it.

PLASKER: You were out of there.

TAYLOR: I don't think I've been in a synagogue since.

PLASKER: Do you remember any contact with Rabbi Epstein?

TAYLOR: Rabbi Epstein was a friend of the family, so I had plenty of contact with Rabbi Epstein all my life.

PLASKER: Did you spend either *Shabbat* or holiday with him or just visiting back and forth?

TAYLOR: I guess the most contact I had with him was just when they were at the house. I sort of had my own relationship with him when I was older to the extent that . . . I want to put this story in here because I think it's worthwhile. It's totally out of context.

PLASKER: That's okay.

TAYLOR: Rabbi Epstein was a brilliant man and a wonderful speaker. Some people thought he was a little arrogant, so I want this story in here to give you an idea. He had retired. There was a wedding for a member of his congregation. The parents were dead. This was at an aunt's house. It was way, way out at the end of nowhere. I was going to be the godfather of the child that was being . . . I was later a godfather of the child. But this was the wedding, I believe . . . no, this may have been . . .

PLASKER: The bris³⁶ or a baby shower?

TAYLOR: It may have been the bris. I remember driving out there. It was an awful drive. It was raining. I got there, and I parked my car. Rabbi Epstein pulled up in his car by himself. He was an old man at that time or an older man at that time. The boy is 16 now, so that will give you an idea of time. He pulled up on his car. He starts taking the *chuppah*³⁷ out of the back of the car. Of course, I ran over and took the *chuppah* out of the car and went in. He called Reva to tell her he had gotten there all right. He said, "Don't worry, Mark Taylor is here. He'll help me out." He did the ceremony. It must have been a marriage because there was a *chuppah*.

PLASKER: You are saying the child of this marriage is now 16. That's probably a good 20 years ago.

³⁶ A *bris*, formally known as the '*brit milah*' (Hebrew: Covenant of Circumcision) involves surgically removing the foreskin of the penis. Circumcision is performed only on males on the eighth day of the child's life. The *brit milah* is usually followed by a celebratory meal.

³⁷ Hebrew for 'canopy.' The canopy under which a Jewish wedding takes place.

TAYLOR: Yes. Probably 18 years ago. So, the marriage was over. Again, we take the *chuppah*, unfold it and put it in the back of the car. He gets in his car and he drives home. I know they didn't pay him for it. It just was an old member of his congregation and here he was, an old man out on a rainy night.

PLASKER: To honor them and help them out.

TAYLOR: To help them out. Yes.

PLASKER: He was very warm. As you said, he was a brilliant man. He had his definite views. Your parents and he, do you remember discussions, like you said, about Zionism or any type of thing like that?

TAYLOR: No. Their relationship was a social relationship, not a political relationship at all. I think Dad helped him. Dad would take care of things for him. They were just great close friends. We did Hebrew school. We did summer camp. We did the World's Fair. We did the swimming pools.

PLASKER: Who were your good friends at this time in your junior high and high school days? Who were the boys and girls that you hung out with? Did they come more from the Jewish community or the Christian kids?

TAYLOR: No. They came mostly from the non-Jewish community. Whoever was in my class or whoever was in my neighborhood.

PLASKER: Did you make some friends from this Hebrew school group at AA?

TAYLOR: No, and I don't even know, aside from my wife's cousin, who was in it the first year.

PLASKER: Who was that?

TAYLOR: Sally Travis. She was just there the first year, whom I knew. I don't remember a single soul from Hebrew school. I don't think I knew anybody in that class.

PLASKER: You mention these swimming pools. Yet, you said earlier that you belonged to either the Mayfair or the Progressive and then the Standard Club? Did you do any swimming or any social activities there?

TAYLOR: The people in the Standard Club were people that we knew, so sure. We knew that community.

PLASKER: You spent some social time there?

TAYLOR: But I did not know the community . . . I don't think kids spent much social

time at the Standard Club. They did at the Mayfair around the pools. Where was I going? I don't think there is anybody in that Hebrew school class that I could even remember.

PLASKER: That's interesting. We talked about work a little bit. You worked in your father's store.

TAYLOR: A little bit.

PLASKER: You said one summer you worked as a life guard when you were a little bit older.

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Before you went away to college, any other jobs?

TAYLOR: I was 16 when I went away to college. Actually, there was. My father had picked up a business with cigarette machines during the war. I would drive around, as soon as I could drive, and help stock those machines. You could drive at 15 in Atlanta.

PLASKER: Oh my goodness. You would take your father's car and drive and fill the machines?

TAYLOR: No. Actually, he bought a vehicle to do it with. It was a car with a great big trunk. When I was 15, I did that one summer. Actually, that was the same summer. I must have had to stop that because that was the same summer I was at the Standard Club. I turned 16 in 1944. That's right, I would have been 15 when I was at the Standard Club.

PLASKER: 1943 and 16 in 1944.

TAYLOR: I went to college. I got out of high school in January 1945.

PLASKER: Was there a big graduation for that?

TAYLOR: No. It was a mid-year graduation. I went right to college.

PLASKER: At Cornell [University], you said?

TAYLOR: Yes. For the summer of 1945. What I did between January and the summer of 1945, I'm not sure.

PLASKER: Probably, Dad had you working in the store!

TAYLOR: I don't remember. Let's see, 1945 I would have been 16 before May and 17, so I went to school probably as I was turning from 16 to 17.

PLASKER: Was that unusual for someone? Not just getting out early, but was it unusual for a young man from the south to be going to Cornell?

TAYLOR: People went out of our high school to all of the eastern schools.

PLASKER: Boys' High was very college prep in those days?

TAYLOR: Yes. It was the college prep.

PLASKER: What was the experience of going? Discuss a little bit about going to Cornell coming from the South.

TAYLOR: I know why Judith [Grossman Taylor] mentioned something about Vanderbilt [University]. I am not sure of this because it was too many years ago and it was only a general impression that I had. Vanderbilt came to Atlanta. At this time, we were in the middle of a war. There were very few males around of college age. Remember, I was a year or so younger than most of the high school graduates. I had started a half year or year early and I cut out another year. Vanderbilt came through giving a test for scholarships to males only. They gave it in Boys High School. In Boys High School, the valedictorian was not Jewish. The next three or four people in standing were Jewish. There were a lot of Jewish kids in Boys High School. In terms of the standing in the school, I would say out of the top ten in the class, five or six of them were Jewish. I think, I'm not sure, I think my academic average was second or third in the class. I'm really not sure. I know that we were all grouped there at the top. Not a single Jewish boy got a scholarship.

PLASKER: They weren't looking for Jewish students. They were looking for other students.

TAYLOR: That's correct.

PLASKER: You went to Cornell?

TAYLOR: I went to Cornell.

PLASKER: You spent four years there?

TAYLOR: About three, three and a half instead of five. Again, they were rushing you through. You did a five-year course in three and a half years.

PLASKER: Discuss a little bit about life there, if you did fraternity, academics, and impressions versus the South.

TAYLOR: First of all, it was nice to be there with a southern accent. Everybody wanted to hear you talk. I did not go fraternity, which was a mistake, which meant that the associations that I made were outside the fraternity group. They turned out to be with an older group so that my friends were the returning veterans and the school teachers and librarians in the city. In a sense, I missed the college experience entirely. I'd get up every morning, put

on a suit and tie, and go to school instead of going to work. Otherwise, I may as well have been living and working in Ithaca, New York.

PLASKER: You sound like you were a pretty serious student.

TAYLOR: Which was sort of a pity. Can you stop that a moment?

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: Mark is continuing filling in some of his earlier years.

TAYLOR: Yes. I mentioned the Camp Highland Lake which was a GMA camp. I learned a lot of Christian songs at that camp. It was a good camp. I mentioned Mother because of her music and involvement and because of the time she spent in New York, I suppose, when musical personages would come through town, they would come to our house. So, I met a lot of those people.

PLASKER: Who were some of the people you remember?

TAYLOR: Don't do that to me. I don't remember a single name. I remember a teacher whose name was Mayer [sp]. I remember Ted. I'm sorry. I can't do that. I mentioned the church across from my father's drugstore. Louie Newton was a very interesting guy. He and my father were buddies. Louie Newton was one of the . . .

PLASKER: He was the pastor?

TAYLOR: He was a pastor. He was an institution unto himself. But he was one of the fine movers for the Protestants and other Americans United for the separation of church and state, now called AU. Americans United.³⁸ He was one of the moving forces in that. He used to tell Dad, "I'll run mine. You run yours. You leave me alone. I'll leave you alone." He did take care of that church crowd. The other thing that that leads back to was one of the other things that we did at the drug store that had an impression on me as a kid is we would come in once a year and feed the National Guard doughnuts and coffee before they went out to do the Empty Stocking Fund in the morning. This was Atlanta's first shopping center, this Plaza.

PLASKER: Little strip.

TAYLOR: This little strip. I was talking about Boys' High School. When I was young, the thing that I looked forward to more than anything else every week after I got back from

³⁸ Americans United for Separation of Church and State (Americans United or AU for short) is a nonprofit organization that advocates separation of church and state. The separation of church and state is a legal doctrine set forth in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

the Sunday school carpool, which was not pleasant, because although the kids didn't know we were Russian Jews, the parents apparently did. So, the carpool to Temple was not a pleasant experience.

PLASKER: Parents would make comments?

TAYLOR: The parents, after they got the other kids dropped off, they would stop somewhere and let me wait. They were not . . .

PLASKER: Not respectful of you?

TAYLOR: They were very respectful of my mother but not particularly respectful of me. When I would get home, I would wait for my Uncle Louie. My Uncle Louie would take me out to his farm. His farm was a piece of hard scrabble land out in what is probably now a subdivision, out where the Yellow River runs into . . . I don't remember the other river. But there we could shoot guns and we could . . .

PLASKER: Yellow River. That's up toward Lake Lanier.

TAYLOR: No.

PLASKER: Not that far out?

TAYLOR: I don't think that far out.

PLASKER: That sounds like out towards Stone Mountain.

TAYLOR: It's in that general area. But we would go out and we would walk in the woods. We would stop on the way out and buy some cheese and some soft drinks. It was just . . .

PLASKER: Boy's afternoon out.

TAYLOR: Yes. My father worked all day, everyday. It was my recreation and association with an older man. My Uncle Louie was a real uncle to me. He did heavy drinking. He taught me to drive when I was 12 years old. He had a little English Austin. He let me drive it out to the farm and back.

PLASKER: Was this your father's brother?

TAYLOR: My mother's brother. I mentioned the Walker Westview Ponce de Leon and Druid Hills car line that went from practically Decatur all the way over to West End. A single car line.

PLASKER: Sounds like your life line.

TAYLOR: It really was in a sense. You asked me to mention the Victory Garden.³⁹ I tried one and I didn't do very well. When we were 15, I guess 15, we moved to Darlington Road, which at that time was on the suburban bus line route. Darlington Road is where the Home Depot used to be on Piedmont [Road]. You couldn't get there on the Georgia Power Company public transit, what's now the Atlanta Transit. You had to take a streetcar downtown, and you had to wait and take a suburban bus which could not stop anywhere in town except that one place downtown. It would come right back by where you came from and it would take you out to Darlington Road. Interestingly enough, there was a trackless trolley going all the way out past Buckhead, which is further out Piedmont than Darlington Road. That area in Garden Hills, you could only get to on the suburban bus line.

PLASKER: This is around 1943? This is war years and little expansion.

TAYLOR: This is war years 1941, 1942, I would guess. By then I was in high school. That was a good neighborhood. There were no Jewish kids there either. It was a good play neighborhood. You could get up a good football game. From there we moved back to Orme Circle, which was right down the street from where I went to school. Of course, I was practically out of school by then.

PLASKER: Orme?

TAYLOR: Orme Circle. It runs off Boulevard, which is now Monroe, a block or two north of Piedmont Park. It is walking distance to Boys' High School. We talked about the Standard Club, the Mayfair Club, and the Progressive Club.

PLASKER: Do you want to talk a little bit about Cornell?

TAYLOR: Yes, we can. I don't have much that I can tell you about Cornell.

PLASKER: What did you study there?

TAYLOR: I did a BCE, which is the professional degree in civil engineering.

PLASKER: You knew you wanted civil engineering all along?

TAYLOR: No.

PLASKER: What guided you there?

TAYLOR: The choices I was offered. My parents had not been to college and I guess I didn't have enough sense to talk to other people. I really wasn't aware of what was available. I

³⁹ Victory gardens, or war gardens, were grown at home during WWI and WWII. They were grown at people's homes so that the soldiers in the armies could have plenty of food. They were also grown in Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and Germany.

don't think my parents wanted to spend a lot of money. What I was offered, I could go to Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology] and take the short architectural course. They called it building construction, which was a four year instead of a five-year degree. That was a dead-end degree. It wasn't a full architecture degree. Or, I could go to Emory [University] and take arts and sciences. Or, I could go to Cornell or whatever other out of state school I could get into and do engineering. I figured, in those days, anything that you were sure was going to give you a job, you took. I remembered all of the Jewish men in town that had come out of college at the beginning of the Depression and had not been able to get jobs. So, I opted for the civil engineering. It's the broadest of the engineering. You can do most anything from it, so that's what I took.

PLASKER: Talking about college experiences, this made me think. One thing you didn't mention was if you were dating any girls or any dating kind of activities in high school and then what that was like in college.

TAYLOR: By the way, to finish out the college thing, I'm not sure why I did the master's in engineering when I came back. Years later I regretted it and went back to Georgia State [University] and made up for it by taking philosophy courses. Basically, I didn't have an education, when you get right down to it. A five-year engineering course is not an education.

PLASKER: You are saying it was not broad enough? You didn't get enough liberal arts?

TAYLOR: There just wasn't an education to it. It was just professional training. The girls I dated. My girlfriend in high school was not Jewish. Mary Lemon was her name. We were very close. It was a close relationship. I dated Jewish girls for Jewish affairs, of course.

PLASKER: Were you part of any Jewish clubs? Or did you go to the Jewish [Educational] Alliance⁴⁰ like some people did? Where did your social life hang around?

TAYLOR: I was a member of AZA [Aleph Zadek Aleph].⁴¹ It was Morris Lichtenstein. Chapter 518, is it? I think that's right. I knew most of that community. I don't know how, you

⁴⁰ The Jewish Educational Alliance (JEA) operated from 1910 to 1948 on the site where the Atlanta- Fulton County Stadium was located. The JEA was once the hub of Jewish life in Atlanta. Families congregated there for social, educational, sports and cultural programs. The JEA ran camps and held classes to help some new residents learn to read and write English. For newcomers, it became a refuge, with programs to help them acclimate to a new home. The JEA stayed at that site until the late 1940's, when it evolved into the Atlanta Jewish Community Center and moved to Peachtree Street. It stayed there until 1998, when the building was sold and the center moved to Dunwoody. In 2000, it was renamed the 'Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta.'

⁴¹ Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) is an international youth-led fraternal organization for Jewish teenagers, founded in 1924. It currently exists as the male wing of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, an independent non-profit organization. AZA's sister organization, for teenage girls, is the B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG).

just knew the Jewish people in town.

PLASKER: Well, the fact that you were in an AZA chapter.

TAYLOR: But you knew them anyhow. For the Jewish affairs, you dated Jewish girls. And for everything else, I dated Mary Lemon and a few other girls. Mary wasn't the only girl. In college, I did not go fraternity, which was a mistake. I sort of fell in with a group of librarians and school teachers in town. This was in the immediate post-war period. Most of my friends were returning veterans. I don't like to say adult things, but we did things that were not particularly connected with the school.

PLASKER: You weren't necessarily doing dances or football games and things like that?

TAYLOR: Probably went to the football game. Went to the big school dances, but that was all. I was not involved with any particular group, except this one I was living with.

PLASKER: You came back from Cornell [and] came directly back to Atlanta?

TAYLOR: Came directly back to Atlanta and went to work the next day.

PLASKER: Doing what?

TAYLOR: My father, while I was gone, had sponsored and developed some apartments. I reviewed the contract to be built, and there was one group that that had not been built, so I came back and built it. He assumed I went to college, I knew how. I didn't, but I didn't tell him.

PLASKER: Where were the apartments that you were building?

TAYLOR: Those were the Rock Springs Apartments. We just kept going from there. I was back. We could do it ourselves. I did the next one by myself.

PLASKER: So y'all were building them? You were not only the builder, but you were the owners and you rented them?

TAYLOR: Yes. It didn't turn out to be the smart thing to do, but it was fun. It was the way I think Dad preferred to operate. I'm not sure I didn't. Instead of being the kind of developer that some of our friends are, where they were able to do a lot of work, we got everything but the squeak out of a pig. I would find the piece of land, option it, find the tenants, we designed the building, leased the building, managed the building, which kept us in smaller projects than we would have been if we had used architects to do, which we did later on. We used architects to design them instead of designing them ourselves. We did make more use of agents as time went on.

PLASKER: You were the agents, you were the developers, you were the architects, you were the contractor, you were the lease. You were the whole package.

TAYLOR: Manager of the whole package, with a lot of exceptions. I mean, a lot of them were. Adam Cates did a lot of the leasing for a number of them. Did most of the financing. We used architects. In the later buildings, we were able to pay for architects. In the earlier ones, we designed the whole house.

PLASKER: Did you stay with apartments or did you move into something else?

TAYLOR: No, we did everything.

PLASKER: Where did you move from Rock Springs? That was kind of close in, almost close to where you lived, I guess, coming in a little bit.

TAYLOR: We did a number of apartments on the other side of town in East Point and in East Atlanta. We did some small commercial buildings down around Fifth and West Peachtree. We did an industrial development or two. We built, I guess the first office building downtown after the war except the Fulton National Bank. We did a few other office buildings. We also did retail stores and shopping centers, small and medium-sized shopping centers.

PLASKER: What areas were the shopping centers in?

TAYLOR: Various. Mostly on the south side of town. Campbellton Road and Stewart Avenue. [I forgot several on this side of town].

PLASKER: Stewart Lakewood?

TAYLOR: Stewart Lakewood. The Mall West End, which I sold and my son re-bought.

PLASKER: Could have saved him some trouble.

TAYLOR: No. I sold it for more than he paid for it.

PLASKER: You came back from school, I would assume, roughly 1948, 1949.

TAYLOR: I finished school in 1948. Went back for graduation in January 1949. Came back home and went to work.

PLASKER: When did this cover the apartments into the shopping centers? What time period would you say you are covering? Ten years or more?

TAYLOR: Forty years.

PLASKER: Forty.

TAYLOR: The apartments were all through by 1952.

PLASKER: Then you moved into office buildings?

TAYLOR: Then I divorced. Left town for a little while. Came back. Left town and went to work in Wilmington, Delaware, for a year. Came back. I think I did one commercial building before then.

PLASKER: You just mentioned you divorced. You didn't mention getting married.

TAYLOR: We had to get married first.

PLASKER: Tell us about that. You haven't mentioned that.

TAYLOR: Okay. Turn it off.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: We are going to touch briefly on . . . Mark mentioned divorce. I said there had to have been a marriage, and he's going to tell us about it,

TAYLOR: Perceptive of you. I was married, I guess, in 1951 to Sheila Barstein, who was from North Carolina, Tennessee. I'm not sure. She had a lot of family here. Klein. They were South African on her mother's side, some of whom I remained close to until they died. Harry, her oldest uncle, and I were very close. Her father was Mr. . . .

PLASKER: Harry Klein. The jeweler?

TAYLOR: Harry Klein. The jeweler. Yes.

PLASKER: This was his sister?

TAYLOR: This was his sister's daughter. Yes.

PLASKER: So, she had come to Atlanta and was just visiting or whatever, and you met her?

TAYLOR: We met. We were married for a very short time with one daughter, Janet, who lives in Boston now. We just came back from her 50th birthday party.

PLASKER: Marvelous.

TAYLOR: She looked marvelous. She looked great. She's more attractive than her daddy. Anyhow, we were married for a very short time, and I left town and went to Wilmington, Delaware, where I had a friend, and where there was a very active young community of young scientists and other professionals. I had a wonderful time. Stayed there a year, year and a half. Then I came back to Atlanta and went back to work.

PLASKER: The girl side of me has to ask. You were married by Rabbi Epstein at the AA?

TAYLOR: I was married by Rabbi Epstein in my parents' house.

PLASKER: Everything was at that point very traditional? I mean, it's just the way everything was done in the 1950s?

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Very short marriage and one daughter. You went away for a little while and came back. You said you stepped right back into the same business and continued building office buildings and then branched to shopping centers.

TAYLOR: Yes. I did that too.

PLASKER: Lenox Square was built around 1959, 1960. [Built and managed commercial and industrial simultaneously]. The centers you were building were after that?

TAYLOR: About the same time. I remember the guy that built Lenox Square [Ed Noble]. I can't remember names any more. The guy that built the building [his developer, Vic Shroeder] called me at one time to try to borrow my superintendent because he was having some problems. Yes, it was about the same time.

PLASKER: This was when Atlanta was truly starting to expand, spread more to the suburbs.

TAYLOR: It has grown, hasn't it?

PLASKER: When you were first married, where did you live? When you went away to Wilmington and came back, where did you live in Atlanta?

TAYLOR: When I was first married, I took an apartment at Rock Springs Apartment.

PLASKER: Good rent.

TAYLOR: It was cheap!

PLASKER: Did you live at home when you first came back from school?

TAYLOR: Yes and no. The first project I built after Rocks Springs, I got myself an apartment in it, but I kept a room at home too. Actually, the first two projects I built, I built myself an apartment . . . it was a basement apartment. The extra space.

PLASKER: A way to keep an eye on things?

TAYLOR: Just a pad. Sometimes I went back to my parents' house and sometimes I didn't, depending on what I was doing that evening. In Wilmington, I stayed at the Y [YMCA] for a few months and then rented an apartment. Back in Atlanta, I basically came back to the same circumstance I left.

PLASKER: Sharing between your parents or having an apartment wherever you were working?

TAYLOR: Having an apartment. I guess I wasn't working there anymore but it was still there. I'm trying to remember, it was a long time before I was remarried that I had anything other than those two pads. Yes, that's right. I rented an apartment at the Paces Ferry Towers, which is now an elderly [home] in Buckhead. A one-room apartment. I had that for a good long while. I guess I must have gotten that shortly after I came. I may have moved right back into it when I got back. I'm not sure.

PLASKER: You came back from Wilmington about 1952, 1953?

TAYLOR: Yes, 1952, 1953. From then to 1957, I must have been at the Paces Ferry Towers in a one-room apartment.

PLASKER: You said you and your dad were doing the building together?

TAYLOR: I was the builder. He was the rainmaker.

PLASKER: Was he still involved with the pharmacy or he left there?

TAYLOR: No, he closed the pharmacy, I think before I got back to town.

PLASKER: And decided to move into real estate and was developing?

TAYLOR: Yes. He had done conversion work during the war. He had built a few houses and converted some old buildings into multifamily during the war. He had started these Rock Springs Apartments. He was well into it when I got back.

PLASKER: Where do you want to go from here?

TAYLOR: He was the rainmaker. I was the designer/builder.

PLASKER: You are saying he was providing the financing.

TAYLOR: He was providing. He had the contacts. He had the people who, early on, all the work came from his contacts.

PLASKER: The finding the land or the building?

TAYLOR: People that wanted something done. Sometimes it came with the location. Sometimes it didn't.

PLASKER: Was it very easy to find land?

TAYLOR: Sure.

PLASKER: Everything was, like you said, a lot of woods around your house when you were growing up? There was just so much open space to start developing?

TAYLOR: That's essentially right. There's not an easy answer to that, for sure.

PLASKER: Especially apartments, I guess, was a natural after the war because so many people were coming back. The baby boomers.

TAYLOR: That was all over. We did that in a very short period of time, 1949-1951. It was all done and over. Still had them to manage, but we had built lots of apartments and that's all we were doing then.

PLASKER: You mentioned you were very involved with the Urban League⁴² and for a long period of time. How did that come about? How did your connection start and tell us something about that?

TAYLOR: I don't know how I got started with the Urban League. I really don't. I remember it was in the . . . I thought it was before I got married [Judith assures me that I was on the Urban League Board when I married her in 1957], but the earliest thing we can find down there with my name on it was 1959. It was sometime in the mid to late 1950s. I was simply on the board from then on. It was sort of the little thing you did. Don't know exactly when because in those days we didn't put our names on the letterhead.

PLASKER: What was the premise behind the Urban League? What was its mission?

TAYLOR: It was bi-racial. It was supposed to be representative of both communities, the black and the white community. It was supposed to help mainly with housing and job placement for the minority community.

PLASKER: You mentioned three shopping centers that y'all built. Campbellton Plaza, Stewart Lakewood, and The Mall West End, which were all in that area. Is it likely that maybe some people that you dealt with building those, that's how the involvement came?

TAYLOR: Not likely. The construction crews in Atlanta were bi-racial but racially divided. The plumbers would be white, and the plasterers would be black. One of the things that the Urban League was working so hard on in the 1960s was to try to get blacks into the trade unions. They made all sorts of compromises and deals to try to get them into the training programs of the trade unions. Most of the construction workers were white except for certain trades.

⁴² Formerly known as the 'National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes,' is a non-partisan civil rights organization based in New York City that advocates on behalf of African- Americans and against racial discrimination in the United States.

PLASKER: There was somewhat of a control by certain people?

TAYLOR: Whenever the job had any kind of a union, if it was a union job, or had a union. For larger jobs, the plumbers and your electricians pretty much had to be union, which meant that you had a touch and go situation with your other trades. We didn't have the kind of open shop jobs that they do now. That's a whole dissertation in itself.

PLASKER: Did you feel that you were in competition with or just going along parallel with other developers? Were there a lot of other real estate men in the Jewish community? Who were your contemporaries at the time? Who did you work with?

TAYLOR: At the beginning, there really wasn't anybody else but Ben Massell.⁴³

PLASKER: Ben Sr.?

TAYLOR: Yes. As the others came along, we stayed very modest and they moved fast because we were not risk takers. I was talking to Charlie Ackerman the other night. He said, "You know, can you imagine what you could have done, Mark, if you had been a risk taker?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We should have been partners" because he really was a risk taker. There wasn't a community of developers that we knew. We knew socially most of these people. Dad and Ben were good friends. Morris Arnovitz and I and dad were good friends.

PLASKER: Did Max Kuniansky come along later?

TAYLOR: I've known Max, of course, most of my life. I did an industrial subdivision with Max. I did the subdivision work. He did most of the buildings out there. A pleasure to work with. Always a nice guy. I have always liked Max. We did some industrial but very little. He was really in a different area. Halpern was, in those days, sort of off by himself. He came into the mainstream much later.

PLASKER: Judith had mentioned a man, Reverend Joseph Boone?⁴⁴

TAYLOR: Boone. In what connection?

PLASKER: She mentioned it right after the Urban League and said to ask about your

⁴³ Benjamin (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.

⁴⁴ Joseph Everhart Boone (1922-2006) was a minister, business owner, and civil rights leader who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a key organizer of the Atlanta Movement, which led to the integration of lunch counters and department stores in Atlanta during the early 1960's. Boone was the Director of the Metropolitan Atlanta Summit Leadership Congress Inc. (MASLC). During this tenure, Boone negotiated with the Atlanta Public School Committee for the desegregation of the Atlanta Public School system.

experience. You'll have to tell me.

TAYLOR: I don't know why she brought Boone up. Boone was an activist in the 1960s. Actually, I don't know whether I want to put it on tape, but he was really sort of a shake-down artist in one sense and a civil rights activist in another. It depended on where he was and what he was doing. We had built this shopping center in the West End, which was an inner-city shopping center. It was a black shopping center in a neighborhood that had been white. At the time we started, there was still a white business community there even though the surrounding community was fairly black. But there was still a sort of a strong white community. There was a segregated white country club, but we knew the community we were building it for and organized it accordingly. We made our connections with the black community and kept them in mind and built the shopping center. At one point, the largest store out there, which was a Sunshine Store. was boycotted or picketed by Boone. I don't want to go into the circumstances. It's not relevant. But, in effect, they formed a circle around the store and joined hands and sang, "We Shall Overcome." They didn't close the center. The rest of the center continued to operate. As a matter of fact, I had a Christmas party there one night when my manger and I were pouring champagne for everybody, and the people would look at me, and I would stop pouring the champagne when they sang, "We Shall Overcome," and then we'd start again. Considered it a prayer. But it was fairly well controlled. We were helped through it all by other friends that I had in the community.

PLASKER: Andrew Young.⁴⁵

TAYLOR: Andrew Young and through some other friends that I had in the community, we arranged a meeting between . . . we weren't directly involved because the complaint that they had was with the owner of the department store. A meeting was arranged between Boone and me and the owner of the department store, who was Phil Sunshine. The problem was to get the black entrepreneur that came along to keep those \$100 bills in his pocket because I did not want to know about them and to persuade Phil Sunshine not to try to tell Reverend Boone how he sent his black warehouse manager to his own doctor because I really didn't think that would sell. So, we simply went to see Boone. I sat there and let him beat on

⁴⁵ Andrew Jackson Young (b. 1932) is an American politician, diplomat, activist and pastor from Georgia. He has served as a Congressman from Georgia's 5th congressional district, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Mayor of Atlanta. He served as President of the National Council of Churches USA, was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) during the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, and was a supporter and friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

me for a while and everything was settled. We made a very strong effort to make all of our local tenants minority. We developed it. It meant that an awful lot of people . . . there was an awful lot of turnover, but we were finally able to establish a lot of minority business owners. Now, of course, they're all national people. But then we had a group of locally owned minority tenants.

PLASKER: All local tenants.

TAYLOR: We had a lot of mom and pop stores, a couple of those kind of stores.

PLASKER: You managed to do it peacefully. That's the main thing. Is this part of some of the Urban League involvement or was he totally a splinter of his own?

TAYLOR: No. He was an individual entrepreneur during the Civil Rights Movement.⁴⁶ He was never really taken into the fraternity of the civil rights activists. I remember a Jewish female on the Urban League board, and I'd rather not use the name, when she was saying something about Boone at an Urban League board meeting to Lyndon Wade,⁴⁷ who was the director, what do you call it when you simplify what is actually being said? You want to thumb nail it. What she was really saying (she was saying it much nicer), "He's black. You're black. Why can't you do something about Reverend Boone?"

PLASKER: Sounds like nobody wanted to claim him.

TAYLOR: Right. That kind of a remark was utterly naïve and so insulting. I got up and I explained to her that Reverend Boone was one of the most helpful things we had because as long as he was out there making trouble in the streets, Lyndon Wade was a lot more effective in the types of reasonable things we were trying to do. She didn't like that at all. She didn't speak to me for a year.

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin Tape, 2 Side 1>

PLASKER: I'm with Mark Taylor on October 22 for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, cosponsored by American Jewish Committee, Atlanta Jewish Federation, and

⁴⁶ The American Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them. The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Noted legislative achievements during this phase of the Civil Rights Movement were passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

⁴⁷ Lyndon Wade (1935-2017), native of Atlanta, Georgia, was former president of the Urban League.

National Council of Jewish Women. This is our second interview. We finished about the time on the first tape where Mark had finished college and came back to Atlanta. It's about 1949.

We also talked about a first marriage and the beginning of business.

TAYLOR: Right.

PLASKER: We are going to pick up where we left off.

TAYLOR: I got back in 1949. I got back the end of 1948. Started in 1949 building that last Rock Springs group we talked about. Started night law school, which I stopped after a few years to go back and do a master's at Tech.

PLASKER: Where did you do your night law class?

TAYLOR: I forget now. Whatever was the night law school in Atlanta.

PLASKER: Something here in Atlanta.

TAYLOR: Atlanta Law School. Yes. Did my master's at Tech. Got married and continued working. We did a number of other apartments all over town, mostly in East Point. Then we finished all of the apartments. We finished a group called Fort Homes, Valley Home. Did the Wherry Housing for Fort McPherson, which I guess is what kept me out of the Korean War. I was a reserve officer, but I was building the Wherry Housing, and the South Atlantic Division engineer didn't want to lose me. I found out later that my 201 File⁴⁸ was pulled and locked in his desk until I finished the job. I was a reserve officer for 15 years but never got called up. That's interesting. I probably ought to do some of that reserve before we finish because I was in a lot of different units and did a lot of interesting things, I thought, for a reserve officer.

PLASKER: Do you want to cover that now?

TAYLOR: No, I will make a note of it and pick it back up. I did the Wherry Housing for Fort McPherson. Did some other development out there in East Point. Did a group called Points Apartments. Did a group called Battle Courts Apartments in East Atlanta. Did a small commercial building at 4th and West Peachtree. Did two small commercial buildings at 4th and West Peachtree. Then got a divorce and left town for about a year and a half. Went to Wilmington, Delaware, which was a wonderful place for a young technical person to be in the early 1950s. The DuPont Experimental Station was there. All the physicists, chemists,

⁴⁸ A military personnel file in the United States Army, which is a set of documents maintained by the US government for members of the United States armed forces. A 201 file usually contains documents describing the member's military and civilian education history.

engineers were working there. It was a very stimulating place to be. I was there for about a year and a half. I came back to Atlanta and started some small commercial buildings. I'll run through the work and then come back and pick up the life, I suppose. I built a lot of small commercial buildings, a couple on Piedmont Road, a couple at 4th and West Peachtree, I guess I had done before I went to Wilmington. Built one of the early shopping centers in Atlanta called Campbellton Plaza, then one called Stewart Lakewood. Built one of the first downtown office buildings in the early 1960s, the Title Building.

PLASKER: You said your father was involved with doing this. Who else did you work with?

TAYLOR: That was it. It was just my father and me. We worked with real estate people. We did a lot of work with Adam Cates. Then I bought the Peachtree Palisades Building. It had already been built. We bought it and sort of turned it around and put it back into business. We built a First National Bank Building in Marietta. Then very late, I went back and built a few more apartments. We had some land left over, and I built some apartments back out near the Rock Springs Apartments. Over the years, we did industrial buildings. We did industrial subdivisions. Built a lot of free-standing retail stores. Did a few specialty buildings. The last shopping center I did was The Mall West End, which I did in the early 1970s. It was an urban renewal job, which I sold after a number of years and my son rebought recently. I finished Tech about 1952, I believe. Shortly after that, I started teaching just a single course over there in the management school for Architects, which was fun. I got involved with a sort of debating club over there, professors from Tech and Emory, and stayed in that for many, many years. That was an interesting thing. Stop it for just a second and let's see what we have.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

TAYLOR: Anything particular about the few years I taught that course at Tech. About the only thing that would be interesting to the Jewish Community is Ben Massell would come over every year and talk to my class for me. I would bring people from various segments. It was a building investment course, and I'd bring people from various segments of the community. Uncle Ben would come over. Whenever he came over, people from all over the school were interested, so we could get in the main auditorium. He spun a wonderful yarn, as you know, then he would take questions. One of my students, who must have been bucking

for an A, asked him some very technical question based on something I had been trying to teach. Ben Massell looked at him sort of funny. He said, “Son, somebody brings me a deal, I whip around once in my chair and I tell them what I'm going do.” He killed a whole year's instruction for me.

PLASKER: It's that shoot from the hip type of style.

TAYLOR: Believe me, he did everything I taught them and much more. He just did it very quickly.

PLASKER: I imagine at that point you're talking the early 1950s, Ben Massell was a well-known name, not only to the Jewish community but in the Atlanta general community.

TAYLOR: Absolutely. Actually, this was middle-late 1950s by then. Because the last year I was over there, Judith came to the classes. I know I was married. I married in 1957. Judith and I did marry in 1957. What came before that? Not a lot came before that. Judith asked me to talk about the theatre groups in Atlanta, but I don't think there were a lot of Jewish people involved except maybe Jennings Hertz, who I am sure you will interview. There were a couple of theatre groups. One was called Civic Theatre. One was called [Atlanta] Theatre Guild. Lila Kennedy was the inspiration behind the Theatre Guild. They combined into something called Theatre Atlanta, which did very well for a while and then overstepped itself.

PLASKER: Were you always interested in theatre? How did you get involved in being part of the inner circle of this and, I imagine, a main supporter or organizer?

TAYLOR: By dating a woman who was involved in the inner circle of it. I wasn't that much of an organizer of it.

PLASKER: Before that point, there just wasn't much quality theatre in the Atlanta area? Not much art?

TAYLOR: By the time I got back, there were always several good amateur theatres in Atlanta.

PLASKER: We're going to stop for a minute because there are some sirens out there.

TAYLOR: All right.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: At the time you came back to Atlanta, what was the theatre scene here?

TAYLOR: As I say, the amateur theatre. I had done some amateur theatre in

Wilmington.

PLASKER: Participating?

TAYLOR: I participated in the local theater group in Wilmington. Then a friend of mine and I opened a sort of . . . could almost call it stock theatre. We got an old theatre building, and we promoted some shows. It's interesting, some of the old-time radio actors from New York would come down and be willing to work for minimum equity just to get back on stage. Anyhow, when I came back to Atlanta, I had some interest and there were two groups. There was Civic Theatre and Theatre Guild. They combined to become Theatre Atlanta. That wasn't the only theatre, but that was the civic theatre. Atlanta has always had a lot of things coming through, as you know.

PLASKER: [Did] you help promote and get this moving along and be part of the scene?

TAYLOR: Yes. Judith and I married in 1957.

PLASKER: I know men don't have much interest in this, but let's talk about how you meet to start with.

TAYLOR: Okay. You're leading me off, but all right. We met when I . . .

PLASKER: We touched on this. We've got to get her into the scene.

TAYLOR: I was getting you into the scene, but that's all right. We met [when] she was in a baby carriage and I was pushing it.

PLASKER: Literally?

TAYLOR: Literally. Her cousin and I grew up together. Her cousin, Sally Travis, and I were sort of reared together. Our parents were very close. Judith is about eight or nine years younger, so I had known the family. I've known her all her life.

PLASKER: Obviously didn't take much notice of her in her little bitty day.

TAYLOR: Yes. I noticed her from the time she was about 13, but I was married at the time. She was a very precocious child. Where was I going? Something to do with that.

PLASKER: How did you finally start making a romance out of it?

TAYLOR: Just a moment. Turn that off.

PLASKER: Sure.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

TAYLOR: We were married in 1957. I had a bachelor apartment at Paces Ferry Towers, a one room apartment. We moved into the one room apartment. I bought a piece of property

and started building us a house on West Roxboro Road. When the house was about half built and Judith was pregnant with our first son, first child . . . now I know what I forgot. Judith was visiting the house. She looked around and she said, “Where are the children?” This was a neighborhood of small empty nesters, small two bedroom one bath bungalows that had been built probably during the Depression or shortly before or shortly after, mostly empty nesters. Judy said, “Where are the children?” The mandate was to create some children for our kids to play with. There was a piece of property across the street with a little shack on it that an elderly black couple lived in. I knew people had tried to buy it and I checked on it. The reason no one had bought it was because the title was poor. A number of people had died intestate. About 32 people owned fractional pieces. So, I worked out a way, and it's too much for the tape, of cleaning up the title. Cleaned up the title and built a street. You could do that in those days. I said, “I'll sell lots at my cost to anyone who, number one, has or intends to have young children, and number two, will use an architect to design their house.” This created Judith Way with seven families that really became an extended family. All of the children grew up in each other's homes. You treated the other children on the block the same way you treated your own. And they have remained close. They are business partners. They work with each other in business. They are godparents of each other's children. They are still very close after all of these years. It was a wonderful experience.

PLASKER: You had the real estate savvy to know how to make a piece of property work.

TAYLOR: We got it done and it turned out to be . . . we had a neighborhood pool. It just turned out to be one of the wonderful . . . where necessity was the mother of great invention. It worked out exceedingly well. What slipped me before is we jumped my first marriage which, although it didn't last but a few months, produced my oldest daughter.

PLASKER: What's her name?

TAYLOR: Her name is Janet.

PLASKER: Did she grow up in Atlanta?

TAYLOR: Janet grew up in . . . actually, she moved around the country a good bit with her mother and her mother's husband. She lived on the west coast. She lived in a number of places. When she was 16, she sort of ran away and came back to us. She was with me from then until she went to college. She went to college in New Orleans. Taught at in an inner-city school in New Orleans and then in a Catholic school in New Orleans. Then went to New

York. Went to Boston. Did a master's [degree]. Was involved in the early days of the hcom business. Ran the large computer conventions all over the country for a while. She is now married, married twice actually, but is now married with a five-year-old son. She's 50 years old with a five-year-old adopted son. Just had her 50th birthday. We just came back from there. Now we're with Judith, and our three children were born there on West Roxboro Road.

PLASKER: Who is your first son?

TAYLOR: My first son is Charles. Chuck.

PLASKER: He was born, you said, late 1950s?

TAYLOR: 1959.

PLASKER: Then who was next?

TAYLOR: Kenneth was next, born in 1962. Then Elaine, born in 1964. Elaine was so pleased. I think she was so pleased with the Judith Way thing that she went up the street and bought another piece of property and she developed a street.

PLASKER: What's the name of her street?

TAYLOR: Her street is something Garden [Edison Gardens]. Sorry.

PLASKER: We'll come up with it later.

TAYLOR: It will come back to me in a moment.

PLASKER: But is it the same idea?

TAYLOR: It's named after Judith's mother's maiden name. I'll think of it in a moment. But, it's the same thing.

PLASKER: Just like a cul-de-sac street with several families.

TAYLOR: Yes, it's a cul-de-sac with several families. I don't think they're as close as the Judith Way group was. The Judith Way group was almost all . . . or was it all, Jewish? Yes. It was all Jewish. It turned out that way. That was not a criteria, but that's the way it worked out. I guess after the first two or three lots were bought by Jews, why . . .

PLASKER: One friend tells another about the street. That was close to the Standard Club.

TAYLOR: It was.

PLASKER: It was close to several synagogues.

TAYLOR: Although at the time that they built, not a single person on the block belonged to the Standard Club. Later, three or four of us joined. Four? Yes. Four of us joined. I'm

doing a lot of jumping around.

PLASKER: You were members of The Temple also when you were married, weren't you?

TAYLOR: No. We were initially members. Traditionally, as I think we talked about last time, my family belonged to the AA and The Temple. When we were married, we were involved with a group forming a synagogue called Beth El.⁴⁹ We contributed some land, and they built a building. It was Reconstructionist.⁵⁰

PLASKER: Where was that?

TAYLOR: It was off University [Drive] not too far from the present Shearith Israel. It had its problems, financial as well as others. It was supposed to be Reconstructionist. Like a lot of synagogues where the people that are most interested are the people that are the most devout. It began to get more and more . . .

PLASKER: Traditional?

TAYLOR: Traditional might be a good euphemism for it. It finally just died.

PLASKER: I don't remember hearing of a Beth El, so I know it must not have been around very long.

TAYLOR: Yes, it finally just died. It was important at the time. At one point, Judith and I were fairly active in it. I think Judith was president of the Sisterhood⁵¹ for a while. We had a commitment from The Temple that if we wanted to become Reform, that they would give us any support we wanted. The Reconstructionists really didn't have any representation here at the time. I guess we were careless and didn't pay much attention by the time it decided it was going to become Orthodox,⁵² something other than the Reconstructionist. More Orthodox. We either weren't there or didn't pay attention. That was pretty much the end of it.

PLASKER: Did you have a spiritual leader or a rabbi? You had a president of the

⁴⁹ Congregation Beth El was founded in Atlanta, Georgia in the mid-twentieth century. Among its leaders were Holocaust survivor Helen Spiegel. It was located on University Drive on land donated by Herbert Taylor. The synagogue was dissolved for financial reasons within a few years of its charter

⁵⁰ Reconstructionist Judaism is a modern American-based Jewish movement based on the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983). The movement views Judaism as a progressively evolving civilization. The movement developed from the late 1920's to the 1940's and it established a rabbinical college in 1968. *Halakhah*, the collective body of Jewish laws, customs and traditions, is not considered binding but is treated as a valuable cultural remnant that should be upheld unless there is reasons to the contrary. It aims toward communal decision-making through a process of education and distillation of views from traditional Jewish sources

⁵¹ A group of women in a synagogue congregation who join together to offer social, cultural, educational, and volunteer service opportunities.

⁵² Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written *Torah* and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.

congregation?

TAYLOR: Actually, we had a member of the community who had a good voice, learned the liturgy without any other rabbinical training. He was our cantor. I can't remember what we did for a rabbi.

PLASKER: Who was that who led, the cantor?

TAYLOR: I was hoping the name would come to me while I was mentioning him, but it doesn't [Sid Gotler].

PLASKER: Maybe it will. We'll work on it through the hours.

TAYLOR: It will come to me. I mean, he's a friend of mine for years. That's terrible.

PLASKER: You said that you and Judith, your families knew each other. Obviously, your parents were both very happy when you met, I mean, decided to fall in love and get married.

TAYLOR: Who knows?

PLASKER: Where was the wedding?

TAYLOR: The wedding was in New York.

PLASKER: Destination wedding long before your time.

TAYLOR: What's that?

PLASKER: Now they call them destination weddings when you get married in a city other than where you live.

TAYLOR: No. Judith lived in Brooklyn.

PLASKER: I thought because you said you knew each other when you were young that she lived here.

TAYLOR: No. She lived in Brooklyn.

PLASKER: You were married there in New York.

TAYLOR: We were married there in Brooklyn.

PLASKER: Was it in a synagogue or was it in a social hall?

TAYLOR: It was in one of those synagogues that . . .

PLASKER: Has the whole nine yards.

TAYLOR: That provides the whole thing. Yes.

PLASKER: A rabbi and very traditional?

TAYLOR: It was a rabbi. Not traditional by my standards. Stop it for a minute. I want to go to the men's room.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: Judith and . . .

TAYLOR: We were talking about the rabbi at the congregation there. Apparently, he was a very well-known rabbi, so my father-in-law was very pleased. You had asked me before how our families felt. I think probably Judith's family was not crazy . . . Judith's mother was not crazy about her marrying someone who already had a child. She was convinced the child would come back at some point, which fortunately she did. Judith's father, I think, was delighted. Judith's grandmother was particularly delighted. They didn't want us to hurry. We were engaged in the fall and wanted to marry before the end of the year. I had made a lot of money that year. When I showed my father-in-law how much money I would save on taxes, he moved the wedding right up. The rabbi, they were very pleased to get him. He was very well known. He was one of those liberal New York bigots. He assumed that I was from the south and everybody from the south hated blacks and were bigoted, so he spent the whole time lecturing Judith on how she was going to go to this terrible place where people were all bigoted and whipped slaves and picked cotton and how she had to maintain her . . . he was horrible.

PLASKER: If she wasn't liberal before that, it certainly turned her liberal.

TAYLOR: He was just about as bigoted an old man as I think I ever encountered.

PLASKER: How sad.

TAYLOR: But we went through it anyhow, and it was a lovely wedding. My cousin's husband in New York was my best man. Friends came in from New York. Friends came in from Atlanta. It was a lovely wedding.

PLASKER: Then you definitely honeymooned and came right back to Atlanta?

TAYLOR: We honeymooned and came back to Atlanta.

PLASKER: Where did you honeymoon?

TAYLOR: I wanted to say something else about that. We went to somewhere down in the Caribbean. I can't remember where now [Jamaica]. Hang on just a second. I'm going to untangle.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

TAYLOR: Went to the Caribbean. Came back through New Orleans and came back to Atlanta. The cantor's name that I forgot came back to me and now I've lost it again [Sid

Gotler]. We were talking about organizations in Atlanta or had started to. We talked about theatre. My interests were in several things. I was interested in the Urban League, which I had mentioned to you before, from about the time I got married, maybe a little bit sooner, maybe a little bit later, and stayed involved with it. I was finally chairman of it and then had to hire the successor to the executive director. After that, it wasn't too good an idea for me to stay around. I get calls from them occasionally, but I am no longer on the board. I was on the board for 40-odd years, which I guess was enough. I was involved with the Piedmont Arts Festival. That had Lenny [Lenore] Gold and Peggy Janus and other members of the Jewish community very involved with it. [Isaac] Ike Saporta, I think, probably was involved with it earlier and longer than most anyone else.

PLASKER: Ike. I'm sorry?

TAYLOR: Ike Saporta. Ike was an interesting guy. He was a Greek Jew who spoke five or six languages, including German, without accent. He managed to move around in the underground during the war and survive. He came over to Georgia Tech and taught at Tech. He was a friend of my folks first and then a friend of mine. His wife, Nora, taught mother French. Ike was involved with the Piedmont Arts Festival. It may have been Ike that asked me to come. The thing fell apart. The board got in a fight many, many years ago, and the thing came apart. Dick Forbes was Atlanta city planner. I'm not sure. We went over. I put in the money. [Carolyn Feldman Fisher was one of the founders, I believe]. Dick put in the effort, and we brought it back that year.

PLASKER: Do you know when that arts festival actually started?

TAYLOR: It had started long before this. Carolyn Feldman Fisher was one of the founders, I believe.

PLASKER: The early 1950s or something like that?

TAYLOR: Yes, something of that sort.

PLASKER: This is around the 1960s. You're saying it was starting to fall apart and you all helped bring it back together?

TAYLOR: We put it back together. As I say, I put up a little money and Dick ran it that year just single handedly. Then CETA [Changing Education Through the Arts] came along. We went down and we got a CETA position and hired a director. Then it moved on very well

from that for many years. At one point, it became a larger and larger organization. I was on the honorary board by then. I think I had already been chairman for a couple of years, and I became concerned about what they were doing. It looked like they were over organizing it and building up something that they couldn't sustain. I said so, so I left that.

PLASKER: You said your piece and left.

TAYLOR: I said that if you do what you are doing, I don't know whether it's four or five years, but sooner or later, it will collapse. It turned out to be prophetic, although not for exactly the reasons I had told them it would. I was involved with them for many, many years and enjoyed it. There was a group of us that were involved in contemporary art in Atlanta, and that was sort of the nexus of it. It was out of the Piedmont Arts Festival first and then later through the 20th Century Group in the High Museum. The group got a little larger, a little more mature in terms of what we were doing.

PLASKER: What's the 20th Century Group?

TAYLOR: That is where I was going. The group of people around Atlanta who were interested in contemporary art got a little bit larger, a little more knowledgeable, a little bit more sophisticated in what they were doing and formed a group which was initially more a social group than anything else. It was a support group for the High Museum of Art and was the 20th Century Art Society. Genevieve Arnold and I chaired it the first year, the first couple of years, and sort of got it started. They had a new curator of contemporary art at the museum. Like the arts festival, where Lenny was the driving force in the 20th Century art society.

PLASKER: Lenore Gold?

TAYLOR: Lenore. She was also the driving force in the 20th Century for a number of years. It turned out to be a very social group. We all got together for other things. We did things together. At the same time, we were able to provide a support group for contemporary art at the museum at a time when the museum was not particularly hospitable to either Jews or contemporary art. We finally got Lenny on the board. At the time, she was chairman. We were finally able to get them to agree that the chairman of our support group would be an ex-officio member of the board. There had been Jews involved. I mean, the Uhrys had been involved. The Regensteins had been involved. But it was still a pretty . . .

PLASKER: Closed group.

TAYLOR: A closed group. It began to open shortly after we became involved. It began to open and then opened entirely when the director changed.

PLASKER: You mentioned Jennings Hertz before. That was more on the theater end of arts in Atlanta.

TAYLOR: Jennings was theatre. Jennings, as you know, was in New York and was on Broadway and had to make a decision. Left it and came back and went into the family business. Jennings was a very talented actor. This had to do only with the visual arts. This had to do with the High Museum. There was a nexus group in Atlanta, which my son was involved with. We sort of left that province to him. We gave our efforts to the High Museum. We accomplished a lot of things. Lenny pulled together a national group which I think was probably very useful in terms of providing loans and what have you. Judith and I managed to, by a lot of luck and a lot of help from Ned Rifkin, to finish the work that fills the atrium. We accomplished a lot. It's not that [Gudmund] Vigtel wasn't easy to work with. I had worked with Vigtel early on with some tax things where he wanted certain artworks. There was an industrial park that had a lot of contemporary sculpture that went broke. He wanted two of the pieces. I bought one in Dad's name, which gave him enough money to buy the other one. Then I held it for a couple of years and then donated it and Dad took the tax deduction. This kind of thing.

PLASKER: Who was that?

TAYLOR: Vigtel, the director, now director emeritus. You may not even have noticed it, but across from the entry to the Woodruff Arts Center, there's a tall red thing. That was the piece that I bought. That was our involvement with the High Museum and the Piedmont Arts Festival. Judith told to be sure I mentioned the board of zoning adjustment. Sam Massell,⁵³ when he was mayor, put me on the board of zoning adjustment. I seem to have become a permanent fixture. I stayed there for about 15 or 16 years. Chaired it from time to time.

PLASKER: That truly makes a difference in how a city . . . the zoning is really what controls . . .

TAYLOR: No. This is zoning adjustment. This is not the zoning board.

⁵³ Samuel Massell, Jr. (b. 1927) is a native Atlantan and former commercial real estate broker who served from 1970 to 1974 as the 53rd mayor of Atlanta. He is the first Jewish mayor in his city's history. A lifelong Atlanta resident, Massell has had successful careers in real estate brokerage, elected office, tourism, and association management.

PLASKER: What does that mean?

TAYLOR: Variances, primarily, and other contentions between the building department and other people.

PLASKER: A variance could make or break something in a neighborhood, that's for sure.

TAYLOR: Yes, we made some mistakes.

PLASKER: Hopefully you made some good moves too.

TAYLOR: Absolutely.

PLASKER: Any particular projects that came through that you really regret something going one way or the other?

TAYLOR: Everything that came through for 15 years that had to be varied at all, in other words, every tall office building. Most of it . . .

PLASKER: What was the time period you were involved?

TAYLOR: From the beginning of Sam Massell's administration for about 16 years. If you are going to ask me when Sam came into office.

PLASKER: That's what I am trying to remember. The 1970s?

TAYLOR: I'd have to work backward.

PLASKER: I wonder if it's 1970s, 1980s?

TAYLOR: Judith and I did it the other night. We worked backward to that time, but I don't remember what it was now.

PLASKER: That was definitely when Atlanta was truly burgeoning out to the suburbs and the inside was rebuilding?

TAYLOR: No. It's been happening for 60 years.

PLASKER: Yes.

TAYLOR: You asked that we mention the public art project. This was a little piece of land over the Presidential Parkway, just a scrap left over from a property that we'd had. The rest of it had been condemned, and it left a little tiny scrap of land. I thought it might be nice to put a piece of public art on the Presidential Parkway. I talked to my son, Chuck, who was on the Fulton County Arts Commission, because if you put something in there, it doesn't make any sense unless there is somebody to maintain it. Put it in a museum, and the museum will maintain it. You put it outdoors, somebody's got to take care of it. He said, "That's wonderful. We're doing public-private art projects." He said, "I'll make this work." We ran,

not a competition, but just asked artists to submit art work. We set a budget and looked at a lot of art works, some of which were fair, some of which were terrible. I had seen a small piece by Sol LeWitt.⁵⁴ Sol LeWitt is a 20th century master. He's an important artist. Most of these were local artists. I think one or two had some reputation, to buy one of these smaller pieces. I asked Sol LeWitt about this. We had already worked with him in the High Museum. He told me about some concrete block stuff he was doing, some really large-scale work. So we worked trying to get the DOT [Department of transportation] to let us move it partly onto their right of way. He designed something, and we were on our way. He was very generous, so we were able to afford it by increasing our budget a bit. He was very, very generous to the point that in the final analysis, he never got paid anything. I don't think he expected to, but he needed to do it in a way that didn't appear to be a giveaway. He was extremely generous. Depending on what it cost to build, he was going to get the rest of the budget. Of course, it ran up two and a half times over budget.

PLASKER: What else is new?

TAYLOR: What happened was he designed something that was magnificent. We had got all of the clearances. Then someone decided that it could be climbed [on] and it was dangerous. And they were right. He being the marvelous guy he is, designed them another one that could not be climbed, but it was too big to go on the site. I had to go out and buy some more property. I went out and bought some more property. Then the neighborhood began to object. Not the neighborhood. There was a political situation there. White homosexuals were moving into the neighborhood. The black power structure in the neighborhood, who were [Mayor William] Campbell's⁵⁵ people in the neighborhood, were concerned that they needed an issue. First of all, they thought when they heard that this statue was worth so many dollars and so forth, they figured they ought to have the dollars for the neighborhood and not for the statue. They went to work on that. Of course, that wasn't available. Then they just opposed the darn thing. It was a small group of very politically active, and it was near election time. No good deed goes unpunished. It took us a long time to get it done. It's now done. Everybody's happy with it. Most of those people aren't there.

⁵⁴ Solomon 'Sol' LeWitt (1928-2007) was an American artist linked to various movements, including Conceptual art and Minimalism. He came to fame with his wall drawings and sculptures but also working in printmaking, photography and painting.

⁵⁵ William (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.

The basic neighborhood group was very supportive, both black and white. So, it's there. It's one of the wonderful pieces of art in town, but it took a lot of doing. Chuck was terrific.

PLASKER: Perseverance.

TAYLOR: Yes. It got done. [We] figured out a way to do it. The first one took me a long time just to figure out a way to design it and build it. The second one was fairly easy. It was just a structural matter. Got a friend to design it and got a contractor to build it. That was it. Where do we go now? Do we talk about children or do we talk about other little business things?

PLASKER: You had mentioned there were some other parcels of land that you might have donated.

TAYLOR: The parks.

PLASKER: Some of them may or may not have been successful?

TAYLOR: Actually, they were mine. There were three of them, three different parcels at three different times, four if you want to count combining them that we donated as parks. One was immensely successful. It was the least valuable piece of property, probably could not have been used for anything else. It was sort of a valley next to a freeway out in East Point, about 15 acres. Maybe someday it could have been apartment project, but it was not a lovely piece of land. They did a wonderful job. They went to the federal government. They got matching funds. They built a park in there. They rebuilt a scout hut that was had been there. And it's just a delightful little park. One was in DeKalb County in the Emory area at the end of a street called North Emory.

PLASKER: Called what?

TAYLOR: North Emory. It was about a 6.5-acre piece of ground.

PLASKER: Where was that? You said same street.

TAYLOR: It's at the end of a place called North Emory. At the, I guess, the western most end of North Emory. Hard to access. Again, topographically rough. About 6.5 acres. My Uncle Louie had bought it and told me I should buy it from him because it would become valuable someday, so I did.

PLASKER: Who's Uncle Louie?

TAYLOR: My mother's brother.

PLASKER: Louie.

TAYLOR: Kahn. The Louis Kahn Home.⁵⁶

PLASKER: Yes.

TAYLOR: That Louis Kahn. I thought it would be nice if that just remained open space. I didn't think it ought to be developed. I had offered it to the DeKalb County Parks Department. They didn't want it. They didn't want any additional property. The Druid Hills Civic Association said they would take it and keep it as open space. The Botanical Gardens heard about it. They came and they said, "Give it to us." They said, "We may be able to get matching funds. If not, we'll at least make a nature walk out of it or someday we'll make a nature walk out of it if we can." I gave it to them, and they sold it.

PLASKER: What did they do with it?

TAYLOR: They sold it.

PLASKER: Somebody developed on it?

TAYLOR: Eventually it resold for \$2 or \$3 million dollars, and somebody built an apartment project on it.

PLASKER: That's terrible.

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: They definitely reneged on their promise.

TAYLOR: I got wind of it and I called their attorney. An appraiser called me because he wanted to appraise it. The next door neighbor called me to see if the price was reasonable. I called the attorney and said, "You're not selling the land I gave you for the park?" "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no." But, one board doesn't know what the previous board did, so they sold it. That one wasn't very successful. The third one was a very large piece of land right in the middle of Morningside or rather at Johnson Estates. It's still there. I gave it to the City of Atlanta at the time that Sam was Mayor. Then gave an additional piece. It's very nice for a real large piece of property now worth an extremely large amount of money if it were not a park. We had wanted to come back with our little family foundation and make something similar to the park out on Houston Mill Road, just a walk-through park. No parking, just where people could come and maybe eventually a bike path, but [it was] basically just a walking path.

PLASKER: Picnic. That kind of thing.

⁵⁶ The Louis Kahn Group Home is assisted living and Alzheimer's care for elderly adults in Atlanta, Georgia.

TAYLOR: No, not even picnic. Just nature where you walk through. We allocated some money and the neighbors thought it was wonderful. Then people that lived right around it figured uh oh, other people would be coming in. Right now they had all of this free buffer to their property. Other people are going to come in. There are going to be people there, so they opposed it and we never did it.

PLASKER: Where was that one?

TAYLOR: That one, it's called the Herbert Taylor Park. Of course, it's still a park. It's on Johnson Road just at the north fork of Peachtree Creek. One of these days, there are several Jewish people in the neighborhood that would very much like a park there who would probably help us. One of these days, we'll probably go back. No good deed goes unpunished again. We'll probably make a park out of it. We've had different levels of success in our effort to give back a little something in terms of land in town.

PLASKER: You wanted to talk a little bit about reserve? Would you like to talk about that now?

TAYLOR: I have it down. I'm not sure it's important enough to get in. If we leave anything out, that's probably what we'll want to leave out.

PLASKER: Tell me about when you first . . . if you have something else. Otherwise, I was going to take you on another path.

TAYLOR: Yes, I was just going to talk about other business interests that didn't amount to anything but just to toss them in to show that Jewish guys that lived in the south did hunt, and they did fish, believe it or not, some of us at least. I had a farm in Clarkesville, Georgia, with a friend of mine as partner. We did cattle breeding for a while. Not very successful, but did very sophisticated cattle breeding, we did.

PLASKER: Was this 1960s?

TAYLOR: No, this is 1980s and 1970s and 1980s. We did sophisticated stuff. We would do fetus implants. We would do very, very sophisticated cattle breeding. It finally got too expensive and we quit it. Early on, I played with radio stations. I had a radio station in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and one in Buffalo, New York. For a while, it looked like I was going to have a little chain of radio stations, but my college friend turned out to be an alcoholic and one of our managers turned out to be a crook.

PLASKER: Does not help business.

TAYLOR: It's not a good idea to be that many miles away from a business. Five of us owned Executive Aviation for a while. I started flying in 1955 in a Taylorcraft.

PLASKER: [Do you have] a pilot's license?

TAYLOR: Yes. In 1956 or 1957, I bought a Cessna 180 airplane which I courted my wife in. Her parents wouldn't let her fly with me, but I courted her in it just the same. I had a lot of different airplanes. I liked to fly. I had a T-28 surplus with a special license, a military aircraft. I had a UPS 7 bi-wing, rotary engine. Between the war, fabric aircraft, which was wonderful for aerobatics, at which I was not very good. I was very good at everything else, but I was not very good at aerobatics.

PLASKER: That gets a lot of people, that upside down stuff.

TAYLOR: It was a wonderful little plane. The T-28 was dangerous, and I quit it. I had a Brantly Helicopter which I crashed. That's another story. Then I got in with this group with a small twin or medium-sized twin. We had two or three planes, all the same basic plane. They were Twin Bonanzas. Before we knew it, we owned Executive Aviation out at Peachtree-DeKalb Airport. The best pilot in the group was Ted Levy. Have you done Ted's [interview]?

PLASKER: I don't know if I know him personally.

TAYLOR: Yes. He was the best pilot in the group. The five of us owned the aircraft and then owned the air service for a number of years. All of these things were not particularly successful, but they were a lot of fun. I played Judo from about the time I was 32 or 33 years old until I messed up my back in the 1970s. I went back recently and tried it again, and I can still do it. I am a third-degree black belt.

PLASKER: It helps keep your children in line, I'm sure.

TAYLOR: What's that?

PLASKER: When they know that dad knows Judo.

TAYLOR: Actually, we tried to teach the kids some Judo in the basement. Chuck wasn't too interested. Kenneth was too much of a natural. He was a little bit too good as a kid, and we sort of backed off it. He used some of the Judo holds when he first got into Lovett [School] on the wrestling team. He pinned a couple of people. Then he learned to wrestle. He was two-time state champion, wrestling, which I am sure helped him get into Williams [College], which I am sure helped him get into medical school, which I am sure helped him get the really good residency he got, which I am sure helped him get the very good fellowship

he got and so forth and so forth. Maybe the Judo did something if you want to talk about from the nail to the shoe to the horse to the cause.

PLASKER: Do you think in business you accomplished your goals that you set out for?

TAYLOR: In business? No, I think I was probably much . . . I think I mentioned that to you. I was talking to . . . what's the matter with my mind? I was talking to Charlie Ackerman the other night. He said, "Can you imagine what you could have done if you had been willing to take risks?" I never took any risks. No, I didn't do nearly what I might have been able to do. I had a lot of fun in the sense that I, number one, had a lot of variety in the work that I did.

<Phone rings>

TAYLOR: We forgot to unplug them today. I'll do that when this quits. Number one, I got a lot of variety. I was able to do residential and commercial and industrial. I did everything but a dam and a bridge. I was able to do all aspects. I was able to do the design and the construction and the leasing and the management and what have you. That's the good part. The bad part is I never set up a formula and did things of the scope I might have done if I had picked something and been willing to take a few risks. I was there really first and could have done a much, much larger part of what was done than I did.

PLASKER: You sound like you felt good about urban renewal with The Mall at West End. You were building apartments at a time when people were just burgeoning, young couples were getting married after the war with the Rock Springs Apartments and providing a lot of housing. There's got to be a certain amount of satisfaction in a job well done.

TAYLOR: It was a lot easier. Would you turn that off for just a second?

PLASKER: Sure.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

PLASKER: We covered a lot of the work area and whether you think you could have been a bigger mega mogul than you were. You sound like you were a very successful man because you had the opportunity to do all these. You gave an awful lot to the community in a lot of different aspects and made some big inroads. I am going to go back to some family life. Just for the record, your wedding date was?

TAYLOR: December 8, 1957.

PLASKER: We talked about your three children. Do you remember anything like the first

birthdays? What do you remember about your style of upbringing? When you talked about your own, you said how your mother was not around a lot. You were raised more by a housekeeper. Your father was at work all the time. How did that impact the way you and your wife handled your children versus how you were each brought up?

TAYLOR: Judith grew up in a very close family. She is very family oriented. She gave her children a lot of time. I gave them the evenings and the weekends. My guess is if you asked their psychiatrist, if they had one, they would tell you that I was not as successful a father as I might have been, but I did all the usual things. We had all the weekend activities, and we ate together every night, of course. We did a lot of weekend activities, actually. Our house was sort of the center. We barbecued. In the back yard I had an archery range, a pee-wee golf course, and a swimming pool.

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2>

PLASKER: I'm with Mark Taylor. We just started talking about his family and his children. He was describing their house as the center of the weekends with all the amenities.

TAYLOR: Yes. We played a lot at the house when they were young. As we got older, I have a piece of property up on the river and we had a mobile home up there. We would go up to the river. A long frontage on the Chattahoochee River above Lake Lanier in White County, we would go up there.

PLASKER: Did boating and fishing?

TAYLOR: Whatever one does in the woods with kids. That's where they learned to drive.

PLASKER: Is that yours? That deer up there on the wall?

TAYLOR: But not from there.

PLASKER: Good.

TAYLOR: That came off Cumberland Island [Georgia]. I can tell you about that if we get to it.

PLASKER: There was a lot of family time spent.

TAYLOR: That's a whole other story and probably not very Jewish.

PLASKER: There was a lot of time spent with the children, like you said, weekends and at the lake.

TAYLOR: There's one story relating to that animal that you may want to hear if we finish

everything else. I bought a property up on the lake on Lanier, just a little small cabin up on Lanier which I bought in the early 1970s. That became the center because then we had a boat and we had water skiing and what have you. Yes, we spent the weekend with the kids in a lot of activities.

PLASKER: Did you travel with your children?

TAYLOR: We traveled with our children a good bit. We took them to Spain. We took them to Africa on Safari.

PLASKER: As young people or as they got older?

TAYLOR: Fairly young. I think when we were in Africa . . . Africa was 1973, so the kids were still pretty young. Spain was before that. Spain, Janet was 16 and she was born in 1952, so that would have been before. That would have been 1968. It may have been 1969. We traveled with them a fair amount until they went to college. We took two large trips, one to Europe and one to Africa, rather extensive trip to Africa with our own safari and so forth.

PLASKER: Where did they go to school, the children?

TAYLOR: They started in the public schools. I was a strong advocate of public schools. Then, of course, it became impossible, so we moved them to Lovett. They all went to Lovett. They didn't particularly love it, but they all went to Lovett.

PLASKER: I heard a lot of that.

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Did they go to Hebrew school after school or just Sunday school on the weekends? Do you remember?

TAYLOR: They certainly did go to Hebrew school. Where did they get it? Who prepared them for their *bar mitzvah*? They were all *bar mitzvahed*?

PLASKER: At what synagogue?

TAYLOR: [Temple] Sinai.⁵⁷ They clearly had to go to Sinai for coaching. They must have done that on Saturdays. [Per Judith, this is incorrect. They did go to Hebrew and Sunday schools].

PLASKER: When the Beth El group didn't pan out . . .

TAYLOR: Or Sundays. They must have done that on Sundays.

⁵⁷ 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).

PLASKER: When that kind of fell apart, you went to Temple Sinai?

TAYLOR: No, no. We were one of the founders of Sinai. Sinai wasn't around. If Sinai had been around, that's where we would have been.

PLASKER: You helped form it.

TAYLOR: There was a need. At that time, as you recall there was no *bar mitzvah* at The Temple. Jack said there would be a *bar mitzvah* at The Temple over his dead body, and it worked out that way.

PLASKER: Jack?

TAYLOR: Jack [Rabbi Jacob M.] Rothschild.⁵⁸ It worked out that way. If you interview Judith, you will have to ask her about Janice.⁵⁹ Janice was a wonderful gal. There's a lot of interesting stories there. Anyhow, we were among a large group that formed Sinai because someone wanted a Reform synagogue that provided some of what that group thought were the basics, and that is *bar mitzvah*.

PLASKER: A little more tradition.

TAYLOR: Not more tradition. Well, you can call it more tradition and you can call it some of what we considered basic things that Jews needed to function in a Jewish society.

PLASKER: Your children, that was where they really grew up with their worship there?

TAYLOR: They all grew up in Sinai.

PLASKER: What were the Jewish observances in your house, Friday night *seder*, or whatever?

TAYLOR: Not an awful lot. I am sure that at the appropriate time when the children were the appropriate age, Judith did the appropriate things on Friday night. But it was not a . . . my children all do it, so they must have learned it somewhere. My children were probably far more interested or observant than we were. Judith did, of course, all holidays that brought family together. That's her focus.

⁵⁸ Rabbi Jacob Rothschild (1911-1973) born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 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.

⁵⁹ Janice Oettenger Rothschild Blumberg married Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, a prominent and well-known rabbi of the Temple in Atlanta. Rabbi Rothschild died in 1974. Janice later remarried and moved to Washington, D.C. with her second husband, David Blumberg. She has held leadership positions in numerous organizations, including the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, and served as president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. She has lectured at universities, synagogues, museums and academic conferences across the country. In addition to authoring and contributing to several books, she has written articles for the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, *Southern Jewish History*, *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Sunday Magazine*. In 2012 she returned to Atlanta to live.

PLASKER: *Hanukkah, Rosh Ha-Shanah,*⁶⁰ *Passover?*

TAYLOR: *Hanukkah. Passover principally. Rosh Ha-Shanah. I suppose, yes.*

PLASKER: You said they do in their own homes now. Do each of your children have Judaism.

TAYLOR: To varying degrees, but they all do something.

PLASKER: They're all three married?

TAYLOR: Of course. We have eight grandchildren.

PLASKER: Did they intermarry? Have they married Jewish?

TAYLOR: Chuck married a non-Jewish woman, but the children are reared Jewish. My other three children are married to Jewish people, yes.

PLASKER: As we all see *Father Knows Best* in the 1960s and the 1950s, mom kind of ran the show as far as disciplining and child rearing, more or less? You said you were more of a come home in the evening dad?

TAYLOR: No, I think I was probably the disciplinarian.

PLASKER: You got left with the bad work.

TAYLOR: Whatever.

PLASKER: It sounds like there was a whole much closer family type situation than what you came up with yourself?

TAYLOR: Yes. No comparison. Different times.

PLASKER: Absolutely. Because you and your wife are so community involved, caring about the world and such, did you find that that was just part of the upbringing to imbue this into your children? Did they take to it or did they buck the system? How did this kind of interaction go on with the kids?

TAYLOR: They got it somewhere because they are all already devoted in one way or another to the kind of things that every parent would like their children to be devoted to.

PLASKER: Your aspirations for them, [has] everything come true that you would want?

TAYLOR: Wherever it came from, it worked out very nicely.

⁶⁰ *Rosh Ha-Shanah* [Hebrew: head of the year; i.e. New Year festival] begins the cycle of High Holy Days. It introduces the Ten Days of Penitence, when Jews examine their souls and take stock of their actions. On the tenth day is *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. The tradition is that on *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, G-d sits in judgment on humanity. Then the fate of every living creature is inscribed in the Book of Life or Death. Prayer and repentance before the sealing of the books on *Yom Kippur* may revoke these decisions.

PLASKER: You built the house on West Roxboro and this was near Judith Way. Is that where the kids were brought up? Is that the neighborhood?

TAYLOR: That's the neighborhood.

PLASKER: That's where you stayed until the kids were out of the house?

TAYLOR: That's where we stayed until we moved here two years ago.

PLASKER: That's about 40 years.

TAYLOR: Yes. A little over 40 years.

PLASKER: Wow. Talk about any involvement you have had, and we might have covered a little bit of this, it might cross over, but involvement with the community, political, synagogue, UHA, other connections. Are there any things that we haven't covered? Any connections that you might have had?

TAYLOR: Judith didn't miss any of it. She was on every board and did everything one might do. I didn't do much.

PLASKER: What were your feelings about Israel, in traveling there and have you, and support or not?

TAYLOR: I remember from our first interview, I was thrown out of The Temple Sunday school because we were Zionist when it wasn't popular. But, no particular involvement. I've been there once. Judith has been there, I think, twice.

PLASKER: Have you ever taken . . . you have not been there with the children?

TAYLOR: Not been there with the children, no. Don't intend to.

PLASKER: This is an interesting question they put down here. Do you remember voting in your first presidential election?

TAYLOR: Absolutely.

PLASKER: When was it?

TAYLOR: 1948.

PLASKER: Do you remember who you voted for?

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Do you want to tell us?

TAYLOR: Norman Thomas.⁶¹

⁶¹ Norman Thomas (1884-1968) was an American Presbyterian minister who achieved fame as a socialist, pacifist, and six-time presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America.

PLASKER: Who was that? That's a name I've never heard.

TAYLOR: He was the socialist candidate.

PLASKER: What point in your life were you at and what led to that?

TAYLOR: Georgia had passed the 18-year-old voting law, I think it was, because I was only 20 years old in 1948. That was Harry Truman⁶² and Thomas Dewey.⁶³ That was the one where Thomas Dewey was supposed to win and didn't. A friend of mine at school was the socialist party elector for that part of New York State. He brought Norman Thomas up to the school, and I met him and voted for him.

PLASKER: You were an impressionable college kid.

TAYLOR: No, I wasn't impressionable at all.

PLASKER: Really?

TAYLOR: No, I wasn't. I had very strong feelings and not easily changed. I was like most . . .

PLASKER: Idealistic?

TAYLOR: No, I was just a know-it-all. It's interesting because I remember checking, going through some material and finding that the platform, the Socialist Party platform for 1948. By the time I found it, 20 odd years later, 25 years later, everything on it was law.

PLASKER: You really were a very forward thinker.

TAYLOR: No, I was just involved with something at the time.

PLASKER: It's interesting that that happened. Do you want to talk about . . . you mentioned something about Cumberland Island? Did you want to touch on that?

TAYLOR: A friend of mine, the one that was in the cattle business with me was also in a business with one of the Candler boys. We would fly down to Cumberland Island in my plane, land on their little strip, and hunt. That's where we shot this. But the reason for the story is the groundskeeper or the keeper of the lodge down there, we were sitting around dinner one night, and he was talking about some of the mothballed Navy ships. He was talking about how all the

⁶² Harry S. Truman (1945-1953). He succeeded to the presidency on April 12, 1945 on the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt and was president during the final months of World War II. He made the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. He was elected in his own right in 1948. He was a Democrat.

⁶³ Thomas Edmund Dewey (1902-1971) was an American lawyer, prosecutor, and politician. He served as the 47th Governor of New York from 1943 to 1954. In 1944, he was the Republican's party's nominee for President. He lost the 1944 election to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was again the Republican presidential nominee in 1948 but lost to President Harry S. Truman.

Jews were coming in and stealing the money or what have you. I said, “You know I’m a Jew. How do I go get mine?” It seemed to change the whole attitude of the guy, at least for the rest of our visit. It’s very interesting how a little confrontation in the right way at the right time sometimes works. I was in an ambience where no one expected a Jew to be.

PLASKER: Yes. What was the change in his attitude?

TAYLOR: He spent the rest of the time trying to make friends with me.

PLASKER: Oh, my goodness. What about this gun collection? Is that a passion of yours?

TAYLOR: I used to love guns I guess the same way I love art, in that it is not modern weapons but up through the time these guns were made, gunsmithing was really one of the finest crafts. If you go back through history, the finest crafts were often in arms. These are just examples of the fine, in this case, German handicraft probably right after the First World War.

PLASKER: Something I just thought of, the same thing as we talked something flashes back. When we spoke before, we talked about where you remembered going to your grandparents for *seders* and who led and who had the proficiency and who didn't. When it came to you being the matriarch and patriarch of the family, who led your *seders* at your house?

TAYLOR: I did.

PLASKER: You did?

TAYLOR: I did.

PLASKER: You obviously picked it up somewhere.

TAYLOR: No, that was just assigned to me. But do you know what, I didn't do it the same way. I do now, but initially I didn't. Initially, I would try to give it a theme every year. I would go back and either do the history of the time or pick a particular philosophy. I would find some sort of pedantic theme and do the *seder* around it. I got tired of that after eight or ten years. But, I did it that way for a while.

PLASKER: Something to be a little more interactive?

TAYLOR: No, just something to be a little more . . .

PLASKER: Interesting?

TAYLOR: Interesting or intellectual rather than just sitting and rereading the same rote stuff that I had remembered sitting and being bored with when I was a kid.

PLASKER: Who do you think have been the most important influences in your life?

TAYLOR: That's a tough one. You mean in terms of immediate family type of things?

PLASKER: I think in any way, if there might be.

TAYLOR: One or two teachers. I suppose my father. My wife. Those are probably the major influences.

PLASKER: You have nice influences.

TAYLOR: Yes.

PLASKER: Another question. What historical events have had a major impact on your life? The Depression? World War I? You said the Depression definitely colored the way your life was led at the beginning. You mentioned World War II having an effect on you getting out of school earlier.

TAYLOR: That's a strange question. Anyone who is my age who has lived here for 75 years has been affected by precisely the same events. So the only real question would be, "Would they have affected me any more or less than anyone else?" Certainly, the Depression had. We weren't dirt poor, so I guess it affected me less than it affected a lot of people. My father was in the pharmacy, and although it certainly made it hard scrabble for him, I am sure that we were a lot better off than most.

PLASKER: Did Vietnam⁶⁴ make any effect on your life at all?

TAYLOR: Vietnam had no material effect on my life any more than it effected everyone else in the country.

PLASKER: You chose not to be affected, and you were too old.

TAYLOR: Yes. I thought it might had more or a different effect, but it slips me now. Basically, I was here and effected just the same way anybody else was.

PLASKER: What about the late 1960s, the way it was, I don't know if you'd call it a cultural revolution, but how, I guess revolution against authority and such.

TAYLOR: People. The neolism of the 1960s affected people raising young children at the time and about the same way. You had the same concerns about your children and that general neolism. It started in the colleges, and that didn't hurt anything because those kids went

⁶⁴ The Vietnam War occurred in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia from November 1, 1955 to the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. This war fought between North Vietnam—supported by the Soviet Union, China and other communist allies—and the government of South Vietnam—supported by the United States and other anti-communist allies.

on and got their degrees and got back into society. It spread to the high schools, and that blew a few of the kids out. Those were the ones that you saw whose teeth had been straightened but they were still doing menial jobs. But you knew that if you could keep your kids off drugs, then that was really the main concern. You looked around and some of your friends who you thought, you could not imagine how their kids could have gotten caught, got caught. You knew your kids were doing certain things. You just had to limit it as much as you could. It was a touch and go time, yes. It was a touch and go time for anyone who was rearing children, and you were affected only if you were rearing children, I think.

PLASKER: You've seen Atlanta and the Jewish community go through this time of, as we started talking, they were very separate. As you said, you made inroads into Jews in the arts in Atlanta and such. Do you see . . .

TAYLOR: There was economics that changed it. It was the Second World War and the economics that resulted from it that I think broke down those German-Russian barriers. I'm sure that's what it was.

PLASKER: What is your feeling about the future of the American Jewish community, Atlanta Jewish community, and Atlanta?

TAYLOR: That's too big a question. Probably, in the long pull, I would have guessed, if you had asked me the question 50 years ago, that by now religion would not be much of a factor. There would just be association with communities. I would have been very wrong, clearly. But at any time, the best guess would be that the more observant Jews will remain Jews and the less observant Jews will begin to wander away, though that has not happened either.

PLASKER: Seems to be resurge in traditional.

TAYLOR: Yes. But what I had thought was the traditionalists would stay within the religion and the others would assimilate to a greater or lesser degree. That hasn't happened. The less observant Jews, it appears to me, have continued to associate. So, I don't know. I'll tell you in 50 years.

PLASKER: I hope you can. I hope I am here and we can talk again. List your most important values and then tell me if you think you've transmitted them to your children. If you think that their priorities are the same as your priorities.

TAYLOR: I've always tried to have integrity, and I think all of my children have integrity.

My father once said something to mother, and dad pretty well did anything mother wanted. There was something that we wanted to do and mother didn't want it. He said to mother, "Mark said such-and-such." Mother said, "That's a lie." Dad said, "He's never told a lie in his life." That's not true either. But that was my father's concept of my integrity. I hope that's my children's. I think my children are the same way. I think they have total integrity. I think they are humanists. I think they have integrity. That's all I would want.

PLASKER: Any other comments you want to make or anything else you want to touch on or tell us about?

TAYLOR: Oh, goodness. Let's turn it off for a second and see if we can think.

INTERVIEW ENDS

<End Tape 2, Side 2>