Sharon: This is Sharon Greenblatt interviewing Margaret Weiller on September 20, 1995 for the Jewish Oral History Project of Atlanta, co-sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, Atlanta Jewish Federation, and the National Council of Jewish Women. This is Tape 1, Side 1. We’re going to start off talking today. Let’s just get a little bit of background. Can you tell me your birthday and where you were born first of all?

Margaret: My birthday is November 10, 1933.

Sharon: Where were you born?

Margaret: In Atlanta at Emory University.

Sharon: Was it called Emory University Hospital then?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: 1933. That makes you . . . ?

Margaret: . . . almost 62.

Sharon: . . . almost 62, a ‘youngie.’ You’re the youngest person that I’ve interviewed.

Margaret: I wondered why they were doing it. I thought, maybe I was older than I am.

Sharon: No, it has nothing to do with age, actually. There is a list.

Margaret: I have it here.

Sharon: I won’t even tell you that then. I guess I don’t need to ask you your religious background.

Margaret: You can. I came from a very Reform[^1] background. I grew up at the Temple[^2].

[^1]: A division within Judaism especially in North America and the United Kingdom. Historically it began in the nineteenth century. In general, the Reform movement maintains that Judaism and Jewish traditions should be modernized and compatible with participation in Western culture. While the Torah remains the law, in Reform Judaism women are included (mixed seating, bat mitzvah and women rabbis), music is allowed in the services and
That’s how that was.

**Sharon:** Do you still consider yourself Reform?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Sharon:** Can you give me your parents’ names and their birth place? If they are funny names, can you spell them?

**Margaret:** My mother’s name was Margaret, although she was called ‘Peggy’ Hirsch. H-I-R-S-C-H . . . Strauss . . . S-T-R-A-U-S-S. She was born in Atlanta.

**Sharon:** She was born in Atlanta?

**Margaret:** Yes.

**Sharon:** What year was she born, do you know?

**Margaret:** Yes, 1910. Born on Washington Street. No, sorry. Capitol Avenue.

**Sharon:** She moved to Washington Street?

**Margaret:** No, my dad was born on Washington Street.

**Sharon:** What’s your dad’s name?


**Sharon:** Where was he born?

**Margaret:** In Atlanta on Washington Street.

**Sharon:** Do you know the year?

**Margaret:** 1908.

**Sharon:** Are they still alive?

**Margaret:** No.

**Sharon:** What about your immediate family?

**Margaret:** I’ve been married almost 43 years to . . .

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most of the service is in English.

2 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 1500 families (2015).

3 The area of Atlanta mentioned here is the Washington–Rawson neighborhood which was a center of Jewish community in the city. By the mid-1870’s, Washington Street was becoming one of the city’s finest residential streets. The neighborhood was wealthy at the turn of the twentieth century: *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1910 listed Washington Street as one of the finest residential areas of the city. The neighborhood included the area that is now the large parking lot north of Turner Field, until 1996 the site of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. It also included the intersection of the two streets for which it was named. That intersection’s location is now the site of the I-20-Downtown Connector interchange.
Sharon: . . . the same person?
Margaret: . . . yes. To Bill Weiller.
Sharon: Is it William or Bill?
Margaret: It’s William, but he is known as ‘Bill.’
Sharon: Weiller is W-E-I-L-E-R?
Margaret: Two L’s.
Sharon: I’m glad I asked.
Margaret: He’s from Minnesota. He came to Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology—Atlanta, Georgia] in 1947.
Sharon: And children?
Margaret: I have three daughters. Do you want their names?
Sharon: Please.
Margaret: Deborah. You want ages or just names at this point? Or do you want their birth years?
Sharon: Why don’t you just give me their ages?
Margaret: Forty.
Sharon: What’s Deborah’s last name? Still Weiller?
Margaret: No, not now. It was. Bock. B-O-C-K.
Sharon: Debi is the one who I met. She’s a Flying Nurse?4
Margaret: She was. Now she’s a mother.
Sharon: I met her in between, actually.
Sharon: Who is she married to?
Margaret: Shiel Edlin.
<general discussion, interview resumes>
Margaret: They are three brothers.
Sharon: He’s one of the three? He’s married to Karen, one of your son-in-law’s brothers?
Margaret: Yes. Andy’s the youngest. Shiel is the oldest.
Sharon: Andy is who Karen is married to?

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4 A Flight Nurse is a registered nurse who specializes in the field of providing comprehensive pre-hospital, emergency critical care and hospital care to patients, generally during aeromedical evacuation or rescue operations aboard helicopters, propeller aircraft or jet aircraft.
Margaret: Right. Todd is in between.
Sharon: Margo Edlin.
Margaret: You’ve got Edlin. She’s 39. Beth, who is 37. She’s married to Joel Arogeti. A-R-O-G-E-T-I.
Sharon: Lucky.
Margaret: Aren’t I lucky? Three Atlanta boys.
Sharon: Beth Weiller. I thought she was my age. I should know her.
Margaret: You probably do. You just don’t realize it.
Sharon: Just a little bit older. Any grandchildren?
Margaret: Nine.
Sharon: Wow! Lucky you. What are their names?
Margaret: You really want all of them?
Sharon: Yes.
Margaret: Aaron ... A-A-R-O-N ... Marty, Hannah.
Sharon: I love that name.
Margaret: ... and Elli ... E-L-L-I.
Sharon: Elli?
Margaret: Yes, that’s Bock.
Sharon: Is that a boy, Elli?
Margaret: No.
Sharon: Girl?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: That’s pretty.
Margaret: Adrienne ... A-D-R-I-E-N-N-E, and Ari ... A-R-I ... Edlin. Michelle ... M-I-C-H-E-L-E ... Jonathan, and Sarah ... S-A-R-A-H ... Arogeti.
Sharon: You’ve got boys and girls. What about your education? You said your husband went to Georgia Tech?
Margaret: Right. I went to the University of Michigan [Ann Arbor, Michigan].
Sharon: So you all met ... ?
Margaret: ... before. He’s five years older than I am. We met while I was in high school.
Sharon: We’ll come back to that story. Where did you go to high school?
Margaret: I went to North Avenue Presbyterian [Church Day] School.5 Bet you didn’t know that one.

Sharon: No. I just learned about all this Boys’6 and Girls’ High,7 North Avenue Presbyterian . . .

Margaret: It was not high school. It was just school, because it went from kindergarten through 12.

Sharon: Did you go to preschool here in Atlanta before then?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: Where did you go?

Margaret: It was Miss Matthews’8 on Oakdale Road.

Sharon: Miss Matthews. Is that the name of a school?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: Over in Virginia Highlands, that area?

Margaret: Yes. When I was growing up, it was ‘Highland Virginia.’

Sharon: I like that. Did you have Miss Matthews?

Margaret: Sure, of course. I think there was only one teacher.

Sharon: Only one class?

Margaret: No, I think there was more than one class, but . . .

Sharon: . . . she ran from class to class?

Margaret: I don’t remember that much, actually. I do have my certificate, though. It’s in the

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5 The North Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School was established in 1909 with 20 boys and girls. It stressed scholastic training, daily Bible Study, and Christian precepts. In 1920 the school moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue and grew. In 1942, reorganization occurred with resulted in the school becoming the ‘Napsonian School.’ In 1950 it merged with Westminster School.

6 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-A. It is located in Midtown Atlanta.

7 Girls’ High School was one of seven schools that were part of the original Atlanta public school system. It opened in 1872, and was the only public school in the area exclusively for girls. It was a superb school academically, and had 104 rooms including science halls, laboratories, sewing rooms, a library, and outdoor classrooms. In 1947, Atlanta high schools became co-educational and Girls’ High was renamed ‘Roosevelt High School.’

8 Antoinette Johnson Matthews (1894 – 1989) was born in DeKalb County, Georgia to Daniel and Willie Johnson. She was married to William Collins Matthews of Atlanta, Georgia in 1925. Her grandfather was John Gerdine Johnson (1817-1883) who owned most of the land where the Druid Hills neighborhood is now situated. She was the founder and headmistress of the Out of Doors School, the first private kindergarten in Atlanta. Many prominent Atlantans including Sam Massell and George and Jack Adair attended the school which she ran out of her home. Matthews wrote *Oakdale Road: Its History and Its People*, a pictorial presentation with commentary on past owners of the homes along Oakdale Road in the Druid Hills neighborhood of Atlanta.
Sharon: When did you donate stuff to them?
Margaret: Probably about nine years ago.
Sharon: The Jewish Archives, where? Here or in . . .
Margaret: Here. The Jewish Community . . .
Sharon: . . . New York?
Margaret: . . . no, here.
Sharon: These tapes are going to New York [City, New York] and Washington [D.C.].
Margaret: One copy goes to New York; one copy goes to the Jewish Community Archives.
Sharon: Where do they house that?
Margaret: Right now it’s in a building across the street from the Federation Building on Peachtree [Street]. The Federation didn’t have room for all of it. We’re moving to Spring Street where we’re going to have our Jewish museum. It will be part of that.
Sharon: Did you donate pictures and stuff?
Margaret: Yes, I did.
Sharon: Let’s go back now. Tell me a little bit about your parents and how they came to Atlanta. They were born here. What about their parents?
Margaret: My maternal grandmother was born in Savannah [Georgia]. My maternal grandfather was born in Richmond [Virginia]. They married and moved here. My grandfather was already living here. He was in the box business. Corrugated boxes. My father’s parents . . . my grandfather was born in Austria. My grandmother was born in Atlanta.
Sharon: How did they meet?
Margaret: Actually, I’m not sure how they met, but he came to Atlanta with his older brother.
Sharon: He came to Atlanta from Austria and met your grandmother in Atlanta. And they stayed in Atlanta?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: That’s how you all ended up here?
Margaret: My maternal grandparents were here, too. They weren’t born in Atlanta.

[In 1992, M. William Breman gave the lead gift, ensuring the creation of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum. In 1996, the museum opened at the Selig Center on Spring Street in Midtown Atlanta. The Museum features a permanent exhibit called Absence of Humanity: The Holocaust Years, 1933-1945 as well as exhibitions about Southern Jewish history and Jewish culture. The Breman Museum also includes the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, the Weinberg Center for Holocaust Education, and a library of research materials.]
Sharon: Savannah and Richmond.
Margaret: They moved here, yes.
Sharon: They came to Atlanta. People say that it’s so weird when they meet a native Atlantan. They’re so surprised to hear there’s really a lot of us walking around.
Margaret: Absolutely. As a matter of fact, my grandmother—my father’s mother’s parents—are buried at Oakland Cemetery. I really go back four generations, even though they weren’t born here.
Sharon: You said that your grandfather was in the box business? What did he do?
Margaret: Yes. He owned the company. I think it was called Empire Box. I’m not positive about that, but I can look it up. I think that was the name of it. My other grandfather had a furniture company.
Sharon: A furniture company here in Atlanta?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: What’s the name of it? Do you know?
Margaret: I don’t remember at this point.
Sharon: Do you remember where it was located in Atlanta?
Margaret: No, but the archivist knows all this. I can look it up and let you know next time.
Sharon: That’s okay. Did you know your grandparents pretty well when you were little?
Margaret: Yes. My grandfather on my dad’s side died when I was six. My other grandparents lived for a long time. I knew them very well.
Sharon: Did you all celebrate holidays and everything together?
Margaret: We did not do much celebrating of Jewish holidays. As I said, we came from the Temple and it was ultra-Reform. The German-Jewish community just didn’t seem to do much celebrating of Jewish holidays, so we didn’t.
Sharon: You say the German-Jewish community? Is that what the Temple was mainly comprised of then?
Margaret: Yes, it was started by the German Jews, as was the National Council of Jewish

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10 Oakland Cemetery is the oldest cemetery and one of the largest green spaces, in Atlanta. Many notable Georgians are buried at Oakland including Margaret Mitchell, author of Gone with the Wind; Joseph Jacobs, owner of the pharmacy where John Pemberton first sold Coca-Cola as a soft drink; Bobby Jones, the only golfer to win the Grand Slam, the United States Amateur, United States Open, British Amateur and the Open Championship in the same year; as well as former Georgia governors and Atlanta mayors. Oakland is an excellent example of a Victorian-style cemetery and contains numerous monuments and mausoleums that are of great beauty and historical significance.
Women,\textsuperscript{11} the Atlanta Chapter. That met at the Temple. It was an outgrowth of a group.

Sharon: What kind of memories do you have of your grandparents on either side?

Margaret: I was much closer to my father’s parents. They moved very near us, in fact on the same street. When my grandfather died when I was six, we moved into my grandmother’s house which was just down the street.

Sharon: What street was that?

Margaret: Fairview Road.

Sharon: Where is that near?

Margaret: It’s in Druid Hills.\textsuperscript{12} It runs off of Moreland [Avenue] and it ends up at Ponce [de Leon Avenue] right across from where Lullwater [Road] starts. You live in that area?

Sharon: I grew up in North Druid Hills. Let’s talk about your parents for a little while.

What did your mom do? Did she work, or did she take care of you all?

Margaret: No. She did a lot of volunteer work.

Sharon: Her name was Margaret also?

Margaret: Yes, but she was always known as ‘Peggy.’

Sharon: What kind of volunteer work did she do?

Margaret: She did it in the general community and also some in the Jewish community. I remember during the war [World War II], she was in the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{13} She did all kinds of things for them.

Sharon: What did she do? Did you ever go with her?

Margaret: No. It was . . .

Sharon: You were pretty young.

Margaret: Yes. Not that young. But she always was doing what they called then ‘charity work.’

Sharon: Is that where you got it from? Followed in her footsteps?

Margaret: Right, and my kids are the same way. I’m so glad.

\textsuperscript{11} An organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into advocacy and philanthropy inspired by Jewish values. They strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and families.

\textsuperscript{12} Druid Hills is an historic affluent Atlanta community containing some of Atlanta’s historic mansions from the late 19th and early 20th century as well as the main campus of Emory University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The planned community was conceived by Joel Hurt, and developed with the effort of Atlanta’s leading families, including Coca-Cola founder Asa Candler.

\textsuperscript{13} The American Red Cross (ARC) is a humanitarian organization that provides emergency assistance, disaster relief and education inside the United States. It is the designated US affiliate of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
Sharon: You must have passed that on pretty well then.
Margaret: I must have.
Sharon: There are so many people who don’t do anything.
Margaret: I know. I don’t understand it. I really don’t. Later when my dad started a business, she also worked for him.
Sharon: What kind of business?
Margaret: I don’t think I mentioned this before. My great-grandfather on my maternal grandmother’s side was one of the three Rich brothers who started Rich’s. My dad always worked for Rich’s until he was about 40 or 45 maybe. Then he started a furniture business. That’s when my mother worked.
Sharon: What kind of furniture business did they have?
Margaret: Occasional tables. Modern.
Sharon: So your father was related to the Rich’s of Rich’s Department Store? Tell me once again how they are related.
Margaret: My grandmother was a Rich. In other words, her father, Emanuel Rich, is one of the three Rich brothers. That’s the one that’s Gary.
Sharon: I didn’t realize it was started by three brothers. I knew it was the Rich’s family. Your grandmother was the daughter . . . ?
Margaret: . . . of Emanuel.
Sharon: Did you get a discount at Rich’s?
Margaret: Yes. We can’t figure out why, but we do. There are not very many of us left.
Sharon: Now that it’s sold, seems like it.
Margaret: We’re not arguing.
Sharon: I don’t blame you. Your father worked in Rich’s in some capacity until he opened his own furniture store.
Margaret: Correct.
Sharon: Would you know where his furniture store was?

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14 Rich’s was a department store retail chain, headquartered in Atlanta that operated in the southern United States from 1867 until 2005. The retailer began in Atlanta as M. Rich & Co. dry goods store and was run by Mauritius Reich (anglicized to ‘Morris Rich’), a Hungarian Jewish immigrant. It was renamed M. Rich & Bro. in 1877, when his brother Emanuel was admitted into the partnership, and was again renamed M. Rich & Bros. in 1884 when the third brother Daniel joined the partnership. In 1929, the company was reorganized and the retail portion of the business became simply, Rich’s. Many of the former Rich’s stores today form the core of Macy’s Central, an Atlanta-based division of Macy’s, Inc., which formerly operated as Federated Department Stores, Inc.
Margaret: Yes. It was on Howell Mill Road, right near the [Atlanta] Water Works. Not a store, a manufacturing company. He manufactured tables.

Sharon: Did he like doing that?
Margaret: Yes, he did.

Sharon: Did they do furniture in Rich’s at that point?
Margaret: Yes. In fact, when he worked there, he did everything at Rich’s. He started in advertising. In fact, he started the Atlanta Ad Club.\footnote{Founded in 1959, the Atlanta Ad Club serves the Greater Atlanta advertising community and is affiliated with the American Advertising Federation (AAF).}

Sharon: What is the Atlanta Ad Club?
Margaret: Since I’m not in advertising, I don’t know. But it’s an association of people in advertising.

Sharon: This was your dad?
Margaret: Yes. I forgot what you asked me. He did all kinds of things. I have memories of him when he was in the area where all the rugs were. We would go to Rich’s on Sunday. . . no, they weren’t open on Sunday then. I can remember playing on all the rugs, my father and I. We just had a ball. Then we’d go around the whole store. We could have everything we wanted. We’d get to my daddy’s office and he would ring it up the next day. It was fun.

Sharon: It sounds great.
Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: Where was Rich’s? That was the one downtown?
Margaret: Yes. That was the only one.

Sharon: The only one? Let’s get back. Your parents met and . . .
Margaret: . . . they married in 1930.

Sharon: Did they get married at the Temple?
Margaret: Yes, but the Temple was being built, so it wasn’t quite finished. They were married at a church on Peachtree Street [First Presbyterian Church—Atlanta, Georgia]. The one right almost next door to the High Museum,\footnote{The High Museum of Art in Atlanta is the leading art museum in the Southeastern United States. Located on Peachtree Street in Midtown, the High is a division of the Woodruff Arts Center. It was founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association and renamed after the High family donated their house as an exhibit space in 1926. In 1983, a new 135,000-square-foot building designed by Richard Meier opened to house the Museum. In 2002, three new buildings designed by Renzo Piano more than doubled the Museum’s size.} right on the other corner. It’s a beautiful church. I guess they didn’t have weddings in hotels then.
Sharon: You have pictures from when they got married?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: They got married at that church on Peachtree in 1930. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Margaret: I have one brother.
Sharon: What’s his name?
Margaret: Oscar Richard Strauss III.
Sharon: I thought that Jews didn’t name after . . .
Margaret: . . . this is a very prevalent [thing] with German Jews . . . Reform.
Sharon: I think the Sephardics¹⁷ do, too.
Margaret: Yes, they do.
Sharon: Oscar Richard III. Does he still live in Atlanta?
Margaret: No. He lives on the West Coast.
Sharon: Where does he live? In California?
Margaret: The State of Washington.
Sharon: Are you all close?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Does he have kids?
Margaret: He has two kids here.
Sharon: Is one of them Hannah?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Do you see them a lot?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: There was the two of you all. Tell me about your school, East Presbyterian.
Margaret: I went to grammar school at Highland Elementary School. When I was in the fourth grade, during World War II, we moved to Jacksonville, Florida. My daddy was in the navy. We were there when I was in fifth and sixth grade. When I came back to Atlanta, it was

¹⁷ Sephardic Jews are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants. The adjective “Sephardic” and corresponding nouns Sephardi (singular) and Sephardim (plural) are derived from the Hebrew word ‘Sepharad,’ which refers to Spain. Historically, the vernacular language of Sephardic Jews was Ladino, a Romance language derived from Old Spanish, incorporating elements from the old Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula, Hebrew, Aramaic, and in the lands receiving those who were exiled, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian vocabulary.
the first year that all the schools were changed, when Girls’ High and Boys’ High became co-ed. My parents just felt like there was a lot of turmoil in the schools and they wanted me to go to a private school. I had cousins that had also gone there. It was a girls’ school. Very old-fashioned, but we learned a lot. It was a very good school. They merged with Washington Seminary\(^\text{18}\) which is another girls’ school. That became Westminster\(^\text{19}\) about three years after I graduated, in 1951.

**Sharon:** Were there any other Jewish children at school?

**Margaret:** Very few.

**Sharon:** How did that feel?

**Margaret:** It felt not great all the time, but I had a lot of wonderful friends. They accepted me, but it was hard. I remember the year that everybody went into a sorority.\(^\text{20}\) They don’t have them now, but they had sororities in high school. That was very hard because, of course, I couldn’t be asked into that.

**Sharon:** How terrible.

**Margaret:** Right. But actually I would say it was definitely a positive experience. I was very popular and I did a lot of things in school . . . president of this . . . and I just did everything.

**Sharon:** Did you ever feel antisemitism?

**Margaret:** Oh yes.

**Sharon:** Do you remember any of those incidents?

**Margaret:** The one year when everybody was in sorority that was very hurtful.

**Sharon:** Did they just tell you?

**Margaret:** No. You knew it.

**Sharon:** You just knew?

**Margaret:** Yes. Then there were times when the teacher would . . . we had to take Bible.

Actually, I learned a lot about Judaism because we studied the *Old Testament* a lot. But I also studied the *New Testament*. At that time in my life it didn’t bother me that much. It would now.

\(^{18}\) The Washington Seminary was founded in 1878 by Anita and Lola Washington, two great nieces of George Washington. The original school, which was conducted in their parlor, was called the ‘Misses Washington School for Girls.’ In 1882 the name was changed to the ‘Washington Seminary.’ By the late 1940’s, Washington Seminary was housed in a campus covering eight acres with seven buildings. Washington Seminary merged with the Westminster School in 1953.

\(^{19}\) A private school in Atlanta’s Buckhead community founded in 1951 as an affiliate of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church and Washington Seminary.

\(^{20}\) A social organization of female students at a college or university; usually identified by Greek letters. Some high schools had sororities, as well.
Sharon: How would you feel if one of your grandkids was going to . . . I don’t know if they have that any more. Even Westminster has Jewish children now.

Margaret: They always have, but I wouldn’t like it. I’m very thankful I have four of my grandchildren at the Epstein School.\textsuperscript{21} I couldn’t ask for anything more.

Sharon: You said you were involved with the newspaper and president of . . . ?

Margaret: . . . like student council, and those kinds of things.

Sharon: What about the dating scene back in high school?

Margaret: I did date very few non-Jewish boys, but mostly I dated Jewish boys.

Sharon: Where did you meet them?

Margaret: Emory [University—Atlanta, Georgia] and [Georgia] Tech were all boys, so it was a dream situation for Atlanta girls. Believe me.

Sharon: I have heard other people say that.

Margaret: I can remember at age 13, I went to a party at the AEPI [Alpha Epsilon Pi]\textsuperscript{22} house at Emory. I can’t believe it. I would never let my kids do that, I can assure you. But it was just the way it was, because when you graduated from high school, the girls left town. There was no one for them to date except high school kids. So that’s what we did.

Sharon: What do you mean, the girls left town?

Margaret: When you graduated from high school, they all left. All that were left in Atlanta were girls that had not finished high school. So that’s who they dated.

Sharon: Where did all the girls go?

Margaret: They went away to college.

Sharon: Because there were no girls’ colleges in Atlanta?

Margaret: They are actually, but they didn’t go.

Sharon: They didn’t seek those people?

Margaret: No. Nurses sometimes, but not then. But it was heaven, it really was. I dated at Tech, Emory, and [University of] Georgia [Athens, Georgia]. I think that’s why I got married so young, because I had dated for so long.

\textsuperscript{21} The Epstein School (also known as the Solomon Shechter School of Atlanta) is a private Jewish day school in the Atlanta area located in of Sandy Springs. In 1973, Rabbi Harry H. Epstein and the leaders of Ahavath Achim synagogue wanted to create a Conservative Jewish day school. The first campus was housed at the synagogue. In 1987 the school moved to Sandy Springs.

\textsuperscript{22} Alpha Epsilon Pi is a national Jewish fraternity founded in 1913 at the School of Commerce of New York University by eleven Jewish night school students.
Sharon: BBG [B’nai B’rith Girls], did you all have that? Was that popular?
Margaret: Yes, it was popular, but the Temple girls were not really invited to that. We had our own sorority, which was a national high school sorority called Sigma Beta Pi. It was similar to what the girls did at BBG. Although, besides BBG there was another sorority that the Conservative girls were in. That was called DOZ [Daughters of Zion].
Sharon: Yes, I had somebody else tell me about that.
Margaret: There was a lot of rivalry. But Sigma Beta Pi, the difference was that we did not have sports like the BBG girls. They would meet over at the [Jewish Community] Center, but us Temple girls didn’t go to the Center. Things have changed, thank goodness.
Sharon: Where did you all meet?
Margaret: In people’s houses. We met every Sunday afternoon. I think every Sunday, maybe every other Sunday. We did good things. I remember working at the Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital in the afternoons after school. I know I did work for . . .
Sharon: You did that through . . . ?
Margaret: . . . some through school and some through the sorority. We had to do a certain amount of hours for a month.
Sharon: At school?
Margaret: No, in the sorority.
Sharon: Did most of the girls live around where you lived?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: You could walk to each other’s houses?

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23 B’nai B’rith Girls or BBG is the women’s order of BBYO (B’nai B’rith Youth Organization), an international youth-led high school sorority for Jewish youth. BBG has tens of thousands of members in chapters worldwide. (2016)
24 Margaret may be talking here about Sigma Omega Pi, a national Jewish high school sorority that is no longer in existence.
25 A form of Judaism that seeks to preserve Jewish tradition and ritual, but has a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the law than Orthodox Judaism. It attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture, while preserving a commitment to Jewish observance. They also observe gender equality (mixed seating, women rabbis and bat mitzvahs).
26 A chapter of B’nai B’rith Girls offering social, athletic, and community service activities for Jewish girls.
27 The Atlanta Jewish Community Center (AJCC) was located on Peachtree Road in Midtown. As many Jewish families moved to the city’s northern suburbs, the Center followed. Now the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta is the primary Jewish community center in Atlanta. It is located in Dunwoody, north of the city, and offers family-centric programs and events with programs, events, and classes that enrich the quality of family life. Their programs include preschool, camping, fitness and sports, Jewish life and learning, arts and culture and social and educational programs. It was named in honor of Bernard Marcus, one of the co-founders of Home Depot, who gave a major gift to the capital campaign.
Margaret: Maybe not walk, but they were all pretty close. We mostly all lived in Druid Hills.
Sharon: You all could car pool, or whatever, until you could drive?
Margaret: Right.
Sharon: Or your parents could take you?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Did you get a car when you were 16?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Was that the driving age then, 16?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: You got a car?
Margaret: I did, a 1939 Ford.
Sharon: What color?
Margaret: I think it was blue, dark blue. I can’t remember. Isn’t that terrible? It’s been a long time.
Sharon: Hardly anyone had cars when I turned 16, including myself.
Margaret: My kids didn’t either. But I had a grandmother who decided that’s what I needed.
Sharon: I agree with your grandmother.
Margaret: You do?
Sharon: How did you meet your husband?
Margaret: I went to a fraternity party at Georgia Tech. He was a Phi Epsilon Pi.28
Sharon: Can you speak up just a little?
Margaret: Sure. He was dating my cousin at the time, actually.
Sharon: He was at Georgia Tech and you were in high school?
Margaret: Right.
Sharon: What grade were you in?
Margaret: I was 15, whatever grade you’re in when you’re 15. We just sort of were friends because he was dating my cousin. Then I had a party. My parents had a farm in Dunwoody. That sounds like its right around the corner, but then it was a long way away. I had a party at my

28 The Phi Epsilon Pi (ΦΕΠ) fraternity was active between 1904 and 1970 with a predominantly Jewish membership. It was founded in New York and eventually opened at least 48 chapters on college campuses across the United States and one in Canada. In 1961, another fraternity, Kappa Nu, merged into PEP. In 1970, PEP was absorbed into the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity.
farm. I asked a bunch of the Phi Ep’s to come, and he was one of them. He and my mother hit it off. She liked him a lot. That’s sort of how it all happened.

Sharon: Then in between you went away to school?
Margaret: I just went away for one year. We got married when I was a week away from being 19. Very young, very young.

Sharon: Had he graduated?
Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: From Georgia Tech? What was he doing?
Margaret: He was in the service then. It was during the Korean War. We got married and moved to Baltimore [Maryland] for a year, and then came back here. He went into business with my daddy, the furniture business.

<general discussion, interview resumes>

Sharon: You and Bill got married. You were 19 and he was 24. He was in the service. You all went away. What did you do while you were in Baltimore?
Margaret: I went to work the first week I got there.

Sharon: What did you do?
Margaret: I had to. I was a secretary. I had gone to business school the summer I came home from Michigan and learned how to take . . . it was called ‘speedwriting’ then. I already knew how to type. I took typing in high school. I got a job right away because we could not live otherwise.

Sharon: Didn’t most women work then during the war because there were no . . . I thought the men were gone, so the women . . .

Margaret: . . . I think that was truer during World War II. During the Korean War, I don’t think as many men were in. I don’t know. I don’t think they did work. I was one of the few in my grade to work any. Then when we came back here, I worked here, too, for the same company. They opened an office here and they had . . .

Sharon: What was the name of the company? Do you remember?

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29 The Korean War began when North Korean forces invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. American troops entered the war in defense of the Republic of Korea to the south against the Soviet-backed Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the north. Fighting ended on July 27, 1953, when an armistice agreement was signed maintaining a border between the Koreas near the 38th Parallel and creating the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Korean nations that still exists today.
Sharon: You came back to Atlanta. What was your husband doing in the Army?

Margaret: He was in the Air Force. He did supply. He was in the supply area. It had to do with how many people they needed at one base and deciding when to move people around. Something like that. He was an engineer. I think they thought that was the closest thing they could figure out.

Sharon: Where did you all live when you came back to Atlanta?

Margaret: We lived in Colonial Homes Apartments right off Peachtree [Street].

Sharon: Yes. They’ve redone those.

Margaret: I know. They’re still not so great.

Sharon: They were big, though, compared to the boxes.

Margaret: Absolutely. They were nice. Up and downstairs, so you had a lot more room. We stayed there for three years until our first daughter was coming along.

Sharon: That would be Deborah.

Margaret: Yes, Debi.

Sharon: Then where did you all move to?

Margaret: We built a house on Pine Lake Drive which is off of Lake Forrest [Drive] in Sandy Springs. 30

Sharon: Sandy Springs was still kind of far out there at the time?

Margaret: Yes, but we had decided that we wanted our kids in public school. We liked the Fulton County schools, so that was where we were going. I think we stayed for three years also, and built another house on Marbury Circle. By then we had three houses . . . three children . . . M-A-R-B-U-R-Y Circle.

Sharon: Where is that?

Margaret: It runs off Londonberry [Road].

Sharon: Which is in Sandy Springs?

Margaret: Yes. We have stayed in Sandy Springs.

Sharon: Are you still members of the Temple?

Margaret: Yes. One of my three daughters is also.

Sharon: What do you remember about Atlanta?

Margaret: It sure is different now. I think the thing that I really remember was that wherever

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30 Sandy Springs is a suburb of Atlanta, located just north of the city at the northern arc of Interstate 285.
we went . . . it was a very small German-Jewish community. Your parents were friends of other people like them. We, the children, were friends with their children. Wherever you went, whether it was if you were going to Temple or to the Standard Club, you knew everybody and everybody knew you. At the time, it was fine with me. It was a very secure place to grow up. I guess when I moved away to Jacksonville during the war, I really got my first taste of more of an independent kind of a life. It was interesting.

Sharon: Did you like that?
Margaret: I did. We rode our bikes to school. We didn’t have any help in the house. My mother did everything. It was entirely different. It really was.

Sharon: You were young then. You’re talking about when your whole family moved to Jacksonville?
Margaret: Yes. I was not that young. I was nine, ten. It was a good experience for us.

Sharon: What about the way Atlanta looked?
Margaret: It was just so entirely different that you can’t even imagine. No highways, nothing.

Sharon: You said your parents had a farm in Dunwoody?
Margaret: Yes. They had 105 acres. I wish my dad had kept it. It would have been great. We had a farmer that lived there that sort of was an overseer. They used it really for weekends and fun. They didn’t do farming. There was a lake there with a boat. It was fun. When I had a date on the weekend when I was a teenager, I would stay at my aunt’s house because the boys would not come all the way to Dunwoody from Georgia Tech. That was a long way so I stayed there a lot at my aunt.

Sharon: Which aunt did you stay with?
Margaret: This was one of my mother’s sisters.

Sharon: Was she single?
Margaret: No.

Sharon: You just kind of hung out there?
Margaret: Right, because it was close to [Georgia Tech].

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31 The Standard Club is a private, country club, with a Jewish heritage dating back to 1867. The club originated as Concordia Association in Downtown Atlanta. In 1905 it was reorganized as the Standard Club and moved into the former mansion of William C. Sanders near where Turner Field is now located. In the late 1920’s the club moved to Ponce de Leon Avenue in Midtown Atlanta. The club later moved to the Brookhaven area and opened in what is now the Lenox Park business park. It was located there until 1983 when the club moved to its present location in Johns Creek in Atlanta’s northern suburbs.
Sharon: Where was this farm? Where would it be like now if it was still . . . ?
Margaret: It was in Dunwoody right now. It wasn’t the name of a street then, but it’s called Dunwoody Country Club Lane or Dunwoody Country Club Road [Dunwoody Club Drive], or something.
Sharon: Behind Spalding [Drive]. Back there? Where all those trees are? All those new houses?
Margaret: All those huge new houses. Absolutely.
Sharon: When did your parents sell that?
Margaret: I think they sold it probably in the late 1940’s. No, it had to be later than that because Bill and I were dating. It must have been maybe around 1950.
Sharon: Did they sell it all off at one time?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Where did they go?
Margaret: They didn’t live there.
Sharon: That was their weekend house?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Were they still living in town?
Margaret: Yes. Then in about 1955, they moved to Florida, to Fort Lauderdale.
Sharon: That must have been weird after living in Atlanta and having all those connections.
Margaret: Right. My dad sold his business. He represented a furniture line in the state of Florida. I don’t think my mother ever really liked it. That was really hard for her to leave, particularly since I had children by then.
Sharon: Was your brother still in Atlanta at that point, or had he already moved?
Margaret: No, he did not move until about five or six years ago. He and his wife lived here until they divorced, and then he moved. I think he’s been gone about six years.
Sharon: What about the parks? Do you remember Piedmont Park? 32
Margaret: Sure. Piedmont Park is over 100 years old. Yes. I do remember going there as a child. I always wanted to swim there. I’m sure you never even thought about this, but when I was growing up, particularly, the polio scare 33 was horrible. Everybody said you can’t go

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32 Piedmont Park is a 189-acre park located just north of downtown Atlanta. It was originally designed by Joseph Forsyth Johnson to host the first Piedmont Exhibition in 1887.
33 Early in the 20th century polio would become the world’s most feared disease. The consequences of the disease
swimming because that was one of the places where they thought you could catch polio.

Sharon: From the water?

Margaret: From the water, which is not quite what happened. Even when I went away to camp, they would sometimes quarantine the camp because there was so much polio. It was very frightening. I’m sure, as a parent, it was horrible, because it really had a lot of [unintelligible]. I do remember Piedmont Park a lot. There was a gentleman named Olmsted34 who designed Druid Hills, actually. There are a lot of parks. I don’t know if you are aware of it. All up and down Ponce de Leon between Moreland and all the way up to Brookleigh [sp], or even past Brookleigh. Those were the parks we played in, because it was right behind our house.

Sharon: Kind of up near Fernbank [Museum of Natural History—Atlanta, Georgia]?35

Margaret: That’s further. My house was on Fairview [Road] between Springdale [Road] and Oakdale [Road], so that’s much closer to . . .

Sharon: . . . Virginia Highlands?

Margaret: . . . yes. We played in all those parks. All of my parents’ friends lived on Oakdale, Springdale, Lullwater, that whole area.

Sharon: Now their houses are worth . . .

Margaret: . . . millions. We just went to our old house up there. It was fun. I took one of my daughters. In fact, I’ve taken them all at one time or another. After we sold it, the street sort of went down. My grandparents had built it in 1917 when they moved from Washington [Street]. It’s not the same. It was a beautiful house. It was a Neil Reed36 design. After my grandmother left polio victims marked for life, leaving behind vivid images of wheelchairs, crutches, leg braces, breathing devices, and deformed limbs. In 1916 an official announcement of a polio epidemic was made in New York. From 1916 onward, a polio epidemic appeared each summer, with the most serious occurring in the 1940’s and 1950’s when polio paralyzed or killed more than half a million people worldwide every year. Two polio vaccines are used throughout the world to combat polio. The first was an injected vaccine developed by Jonas Salk. In 1954, the vaccine was tested for its ability to prevent polio; the field trials involving the Salk vaccine would grow to be the largest medical experiment in history. Eight years later, Albert Sabin developed an oral polio vaccine.

34 Frederick Law Olmsted (1822 –1903) was an American landscape architect, journalist, social critic, and public administrator. He is popularly considered to be the father of American landscape architecture. Olmsted was famous for co-designing many well-known parks including Central Park in New York City and the Capitol Grounds in Washington D.C. In 1890 Atlanta businessman Joel Hurt engaged Olmsted to prepare a plan for developing the area now known as Druid Hills. The design of Druid Hills soon became the standard by which other Atlanta developments were measured.

35 The Fernbank Museum of Natural History opened in Atlanta in 1992 in the Druid Hills area of Atlanta. The museum is built on the edge of Fernbank Forest, the largest old-growth urban Piedmont forest in the United States spanning 65 acres. The museum’s permanent exhibitions include the world’s largest dinosaurs in the Giants of the Mesozoic, as well as Native American and European artifacts.

36 Joseph Neel Reid (1885 –1926), also referred to as J. Neel Reid or Neel Reid, was a prominent architect in Atlanta, Georgia in the early 20th century. Reid specialized in fine homes, but also designed the 1908 Atlanta
moved to the Georgian Terrace [Hotel] and my mom and dad bought a house in Sherwood Forest, the neighborhood sort of went down. They turned all these big houses into apartment houses. My house, I think, had seven apartments in it. It was just awful. I didn’t go for a long time. I got a call, I guess in maybe late 1960’s or early 1970’s that a young couple had bought it. They wanted me to come to look and show them what it was like when I grew up there. That was really fun. We’ve been back there a couple of times.

Sharon: That’s interesting.

Margaret: It was just a really neat street because that whole block between Springdale and Oakdale, except for one house, was our family. My grandfather’s sister lived next door, and beyond him my grandmother’s brother lived.

Sharon: That’s a real extended family, all right there.

Margaret: It was very nice.

Sharon: You said you didn’t do a lot with Jewish holidays, but did you spend a lot of... 

Margaret: ...other kinds of holidays. Yes, we did.

Sharon: Hang on. I just want to check the time.

<End Tape 1, Side 1>

<Begin, Tape 1, Side 2>

Sharon: This is Side 2, Tape 1. I’m interviewing Margaret Wheeler.

Margaret: Weiller.

Sharon: As soon as I said it, I turned around and looked at you. Today is September 20 [1995]. We were just talking about old Atlanta. You were telling me about different parks and the extended families. I was going to ask you something about government. Do you remember anything about what was going on in government? Has that ever been something you’ve been interested in?

Margaret: I was very interested in it—we used to call it ‘civics’—because I had a wonderful

Amtrak station, the Reid House in Midtown Atlanta, and the Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital in Oakhurst. Reid designed a number of the early homes in the historic Druid Hills neighborhood as well as many grand homes in Buckhead. Several buildings designed by Reid are listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

37 The Georgian Terrace Hotel in Midtown Atlanta was designed by architect William Lee Stoddart in a Beaux-Arts style intended to evoke the architecture of Paris. Construction began in 1910 and the hotel opened 1911. A 19-story wing was added in 1991 and major renovation was completed in 2009. The Georgian Terrace is a member of Historic Hotel of America, the official program of the women’s Trust for Historic Preservation.

38 Sherwood Forest is a neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia, bordered by the Ansley Park neighborhood on the south and east, and on the northwest by the Downtown Connector across which is the Brookwood Hills neighborhood. It was established in 1949. It is one of the most affluent neighborhoods of the city.
teacher. The school was called ‘NAPS’ which is an acronym of ‘North Avenue Presbyterian School.’ I had a wonderful teacher who, in fact, taught my mother at Girls’ High. It was kind of neat.

**Sharon:** What was that teacher’s name?

**Margaret:** Her name was Emma Gregg.

**Sharon:** Gregg?

**Margaret:** G-R-E-G-G. She was from an old Atlanta family. She was just fabulous. I loved studying about [Vladimir] Lenin and all of that. I was always interested. My dad and I would always talk politics. We would always watch the [Republican and Democratic National] Conventions which weren’t so fixed, as they are now. You already know what’s going to happen when you see the National Convention. Then it was very suspenseful and it was fun. We did a lot of that. In the 1960’s, a friend of mine who I grew up with, Sam Massell, ran for vice-mayor. We have been very good friends ever since. We married a week apart and we have been very good friends all this time. Bill and I got very involved in his campaign for vice-mayor. I worked a lot in that campaign and his subsequent two campaigns for mayor. That was very, very much fun. We really enjoyed that.

**Sharon:** You went to school with him, you said?

**Margaret:** I didn’t go to school with him, because I went to a girls’ school. But he ran in the same crowd. He belonged to the Standard Club and the Temple, so we always knew one another.

**Sharon:** You all are about the same age? I thought he was older.

**Margaret:** He’s older. A little.

**Sharon:** You hung out with older boys.

**Margaret:** Right.

**Sharon:** What did you do at the Standard Club? Where was it?

**Margaret:** When I was growing up, it was on Ponce de Leon near Charles Allen Drive. Actually, almost across the street from my high school, from my school where I went.

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39 Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924), alias Lenin, was a Russian communist and social democrat revolutionary, politician, and political theorist. He served as head of government of the Russian Republic from 1917 to 1918, of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic from 1918 to 1924, and of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1924. Under his administration, Russia and then the wider Soviet Union became a one-party communist state governed by the Russian Communist Party. Ideologically a Marxist, his political theories are known as Leninism.

40 Sam Massell (b. 1927) is a businessman 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.
Sharon: Is your high school still standing?
Margaret: It’s not there. I think it’s a Presbyterian center now. They tore down all the buildings and built a Presbyterian center. Now I think it is something with AIDS, I think. I’m not positive. I don’t really go over there very much.
Sharon: Is it on North Avenue?
Margaret: It backs up to North Avenue and it fronts on Ponce [de Leon]. It’s a block east toward Highland [Avenue]. You know where Krispy Kreme\footnote{Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Inc. is an American global doughnut company, and coffeehouse chain founded by Vernon Rudolph in 1937. The first Krispy Kreme opened in what is now historic Old Salem in Winston-Salem. The reference here is to the Krispy Kreme store on Ponce de Leon Avenue in Atlanta. Opened in 1965, the restaurant features old-fashioned, diner-style swivel seats and an open view of the conveyer belt moving hundreds of doughnuts an hour.} is? That’s where it is, in that block. The Standard Club was in the same block, but across the street.
Sharon: What did you do when you used to hang out at the Standard Club?
Margaret: In the summer we went swimming.
Sharon: You could swim in that pool?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Jewish people didn’t have polio?
Margaret: Yes, they did actually. No, there were times when we couldn’t. They would close the pool. But we played tennis and just sat around flirting, and whatever. We would go there every Saturday night after we went to a movie, or whatever we did.
Sharon: Like on your dates, or your groups of friends?
Margaret: Yes, dates. We didn’t do group things then. The boys called you up two weeks in advance, or more. You didn’t go out if they called too near the night. We kept a little book. I gave those to the Archives, too.
Sharon: What did you all do after you went to the movies and you went to the club?
Margaret: We would talk.
Sharon: You didn’t drink?
Margaret: I don’t think I did. I don’t think so.
Sharon: Did they serve alcohol?
Margaret: Yes. We played slot machines. They had those there. Lots of dances. I’m sure other people have talked about this, but a big thing was over the Christmas holidays. They had
something called ‘Ballyhoo.’ It’s a series of parties, like maybe four days. Parties all day, all night. All the Jewish kids from all over the Southeast would come. Then over the Fourth of July, I think we all went to Birmingham for the same kind of thing. That was called ‘Jubilee.’ There was another one in Memphis [Tennessee] or Mobile [Alabama], or somewhere. That’s the way you got to know people from all over the Southeast. Really fun.

Sharon: During the Ballyhoo, it didn’t matter if you were in BBG or sorority or Temple or . . .

Margaret: No, it did. It did because it was really just mostly the Reform kids in all of them.

Sharon: You mean the Standard Club? That’s what they catered to?

Margaret: Yes, because there were two other clubs. There was the [Jewish] Progressive Club and the Mayfair Club.44 Most of the Conservative [Jews] belonged to those two.

Sharon: So most of the people who you already were hanging out with, the German Jews and the Temple people were at the Standard Club back then?

Margaret: Absolutely. It was like segregation. It was ridiculous. I was one of the few people my age, or around my age, that had friends that belonged to the AA [Ahavath Achim].45 It was just amazing.

Sharon: Even when I was in BBG, we had what we called the ‘Northwest Jews.’ We all knew each other and were friendly. It wasn’t like what you’re talking about, but it was still . . .

Margaret: We were friendly. You just didn’t have any way to meet people like that.

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42 From 1931 to the late 1950’s, courtship weekends in southern cities included Montgomery, Alabama’s “Falcon,” Birmingham, Alabama’s “Jubilee,” Columbus, Georgia’s “Holly Days,” and Atlanta, Georgia’s “Ballyhoo.” They were attended by college-age Jewish youth from across the South who participated in rounds of breakfast dates, lunch dates, tea dance dates, early evening dates, late night dates, formal dances, and cocktail parties, with the goal of meeting a ‘nice Jewish boy or girl’ who might well become a spouse.

43 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.

44 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. The club was visited by Eleanor Roosevelt, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, mayors Ivan Allen and William Berry Hartsfield, senators Herman Talmadge and Richard Russell, and Governor Carl Sanders. Fire destroyed the Mayfair Club on December 4, 1964.

45 Ahavath Achim was founded in 1887 in a small room on Gilmer Street. In 1920 they moved to a permanent building at the corner of Piedmont and Gilmer Street. 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.
Sharon: . . . to be with them. Weird.
Margaret: It is weird. Things have really come around, I think.
Sharon: In that respect?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Did a lot of people who went to these Ballyhoos and these parties meet their mates?
Margaret: Yes, absolutely. In fact, you know Alfred Uhry who wrote Driving Miss Daisy?46
Sharon: Yes. I don’t know him.
Margaret: He was in our group. He was my brother’s age, so he was friendly with my brother. His sister and I are still friends. He is writing a play to open at the Alliance Theatre during the Olympics.49 The name of it is [The Last Night of] Ballyhoo.50
Sharon: How exciting. Has he called on all his old friends to recount memories? Did he call on you?
Margaret: No, he has a good memory and what he doesn’t remember, he makes up. He’s very talented.
Sharon: Yes, and very creative. Definitely. Do you know that house where they . . .
Margaret: . . . filmed?

46 Alfred Fox Uhry was born in 1936 in Atlanta. Uhry is a playwright, screenwriter, and member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. He is one of very few writers to receive an Academy Award, Tony Award (2) and the Pulitzer Prize for dramatic writing. Uhry’s early work for the stage was as a lyricist and librettist for a number of musicals. Driving Miss Daisy (1987) is the first in what is known as his Atlanta Trilogy of plays and earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. He adapted it into the screenplay for the 1989 film which was awarded the Academy Award for Writing Adapted Screenplay. The second of the trilogy, The Last Night of Ballyhoo (1996), received the Tony Award for Best Play when produced on Broadway. The third was a 1998 musical called Parade. The libretto earned him a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical. Uhry wrote the screenplay not only for the film version of Driving Miss Daisy but also for the 1993 film Rich in Love. He co-wrote the screenplay for the 1988 film Mystic Pizza.

47 Driving Miss Daisy (1987) is the first in what is known as Alfred Uhry’s Atlanta trilogy of plays which earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Uhry adapted it into the screenplay for the 1989 Academy Award winning film of the same name. The film starred Jessica Tandy (Daisy Werthan), Morgan Freeman (Hoke Colburn), and Dan Aykroyd (Boolie Werthan). The story of ‘Miss Daisy,’ a Southern Jewish widow and Hoke, her black chauffeur, is set in Atlanta between 1948 and 1973 as their 25-year friendship reflects the social changes in the American South.

48 The Alliance Theatre is a theater company in Atlanta, Georgia, based at the Alliance Theatre, part of the Robert W. Woodruff Arts Center, and is the winner of the 2007 Regional Theatre Tony Award.

49 The 1996 Summer Olympics, unofficially known as the Centennial Olympic Games, took place in Atlanta from July 19 to August 4, 1996. A record 197 nations took part in the Games, comprising 10,318 athletes.

50 The Last Night of Ballyhoo was written by award-winning playwright and screenwriter Alfred Uhry that premiered in Atlanta in 1996. Ballyhoo later received the Tony Award for Best Play when produced on Broadway. The play is set in Atlanta on the eve of World War II in an upper class German-Jewish community as Adolph Freitag and his sister and nieces look forward to attending Ballyhoo, a lavish cotillion ball sponsored by their country club. The Last Night of Ballyhoo was inspired by Atlanta-native Alfred Uhry’s childhood memories and is the second of what is known as his “Atlanta Trilogy” of plays. The first is Driving Miss Daisy and the third is Parade.
Sharon: . . . are you familiar with that house?
Margaret: Yes. A friend of mine lived there.
Sharon: Did you go to the opening or anything?
Margaret: No.
Sharon: Is your brother older or younger than you?
Margaret: He’s three years younger.
Sharon: Alfred Uhry is his age?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: I think I knew he was from Atlanta, but I don’t think I ever put it together. What other famous people do you know? Sam Massell . . .
Margaret: [unintelligible.]
Sharon: Old Atlantan?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: There are people who have definitely made an impact on Atlanta. Rich’s Department Store.
<general discussion, interview resumes>
Sharon: Atlanta has changed a lot in 30 years, but I can only imagine.
Margaret: It’s just a different kind of city. It’s a big, big city.
Sharon: You never really lived anywhere else since you all went to Baltimore and came back?
Margaret: No, just Jacksonville and Baltimore. Pretty boring, huh?
Sharon: No, I wasn’t thinking that.
Margaret: No. I think it’s great to move around, but I’m glad that I’m here, particularly with my kids.
Sharon: Especially for now.
Margaret: I’m so lucky to have everyone here.
Sharon: That’s very unusual.
Margaret: They all live right around me. Debi lives a half a block from me.
Sharon: That’s great. Where did you go to camp? You said something about summer camp.
Margaret: I went to Maine for eight weeks, the same camp my mother went and all my aunts.
Sharon: What was the name of it?
Margaret: Tripp Lake Camp. It’s in Poland, Maine. It was the best time of my life.

Sharon: Poland, Maine?

Margaret: P-O-L-A-N-D, as in the country. Maine has a lot of countries as the names of cities. I don’t know why, but they do. It’s just a fabulous place.

Sharon: Did a lot of your friends go there?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: So a lot of Jewish kids went?

Margaret: It was a Jewish camp. It wasn’t a religious camp, but all the kids were Jewish.

Sharon: Kind of like [Camp] Barney [Medintz]?

Margaret: No. They have religious things there. This had nothing.

Sharon: Nothing? But all the kids were Jewish?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: They didn’t serve ham, did they?

Margaret: Yes, they did. That was the way we were all brought up. Not now, but that’s the way we did it.

Sharon: Did you go there for years?

Margaret: Five.

Sharon: Was it an all-girls camp?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: Was there a boys’ camp that matched it?

Margaret: No. It was unusual. Most of them did, but this one kept to women only. There are still Atlanta girls that go there. Most people don’t want their kids to go away for eight weeks.

Sharon: So far. That’s very far.

Margaret: Yes. It was fun, though. I took the train.

Sharon: From Atlanta to Maine?

Margaret: From Atlanta to New York. Then they had a special train that went from New York.

Sharon: I bet that was beautiful.

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51 A summer camp founded in 1911 in Poland, Maine for girls ages 7 to 16.

52 An overnight Jewish summer camp near Cleveland, Georgia in the North Georgia mountains. It was founded in 1963 and named in honor of Barney Medintz, a prominent Jewish leader in Atlanta, who died in 1960.
Margaret: It was gorgeous. It really was.

Sharon: Where did the train leave Atlanta?

Margaret: Brookwood [Station]. I don’t think it left from downtown. I think it left from Brookwood. I don’t remember well. There were two stations downtown. One was Union\textsuperscript{53} and one was something else.

Sharon: The Union Station? Where was that?

Margaret: Near where Rich’s is downtown. It was a beautiful station. They should never have torn it down. Just gorgeous. There was another one, too. I can’t remember the name of it. Then there was Brookwood right near the [Jewish] Community Center.

Sharon: Yes, that’s the one that I’ve seen.

Margaret: That’s the only one left.

Sharon: I know you had a car when you were 16. Did you take buses before that?

Margaret: Yes, we did. Because we lived near Ponce [de Leon Avenue]. I would take the bus to school.

Sharon: Was it a public bus?

Margaret: Actually, it was a street car. It had tracks along the side of the road.

Sharon: On Ponce?

Margaret: Yes. Had tracks everywhere in Atlanta. But they’re all paved over now.

Sharon: Did you have to pay for it?

Margaret: Yes. Absolutely. They all ended up on Virginia Avenue. You know where that hill is going down to Monroe [Drive]? That was the trolley barn, right across from Grady Stadium.\textsuperscript{54}

Sharon: The trolley would take you anywhere you needed to go?

Margaret: No, it was on the tracks.

Sharon: I know that, but I mean . . .

Margaret: Sure. Because my school was on Ponce and so I just rode on Ponce.

Sharon: Would it take you downtown to Rich’s and stuff?

\textsuperscript{53} Union Station, built in 1930 in Atlanta, was the smaller of two principal train stations in downtown, Terminal Station being the other. The station was located over the tracks between Forsyth and Spring Streets. It was the third ‘Union Station’ succeeding the 1853 station which was burned in 1864 during the American Civil War. The station was razed in 1972. Remnants of the platform may be seen behind the Atlanta Journal Constitution building although construction of Underground Atlanta and MARTA largely obliterated the site.

\textsuperscript{54} Henry W. Grady High School in Atlanta, Georgia was founded in 1872 as Boys’ High School, and was renovated in 1950, 1987, and once again in 2004. Adjacent to Grady is the school’s athletic stadium which is across the street from Piedmont Park.
Margaret: Sure. Rich’s, Davison’s ... that’s Macy’s now.

Sharon: I remember Davison’s. That’s definitely in my time. After school when you would go on these projects like the Red Cross and the Scottish Rite?

Margaret: Yes, we took a trolley. I don’t think they had buses then. They were all overhead electric. The electricity was overhead. There was a mechanism on the top of the trolley that would hook into the electricity. They ran on steel tracks.

<general discussion, interview resumes>

Sharon: What do you remember? Any outstanding thoughts that you can really remember? Anything about the war?

Margaret: Before my dad went into war, he was the regional manager for OPA, which was the Office of Price Administration. They were the ones that decided what was going to be rationed. Of course, he wasn’t able to tell anybody what was going to be rationed next because people would hoard it. I never will forget my grandmother and how furious she was because he did not tell her that sugar was going to be rationed. She ran a kitchen, a lot of baking, and she was furious. He did that for a couple of years. Then he went into the Navy. It isn’t that I don’t remember, because I know it didn’t happen. No one ever discussed what was happening in Europe to the Jews. I don’t know. I know people knew, but no one ever discussed it with us. I don’t think I would have found out until I was maybe in college or married. People just did not really talk about it to me. I don’t know why, but I do remember that. I remember a lot of things connected with Rich’s. Every time they did something, we were involved. When they had their Lighting of the Great Tree, we used to go down. There was a roof of the store where all the executives and the families would stand. We’d have hot cocoa and coffee. We could watch the whole thing. It was really neat. That was fun. Really, our life revolved around the store.

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55 Davison’s of Atlanta was a department store chain and an Atlanta shopping institution. Davison’s first opened its doors in Atlanta in 1891 and had its origins in the Davison & Douglas Company. In 1901, the store changed its name to Davison-Paxon-Stokes after the retirement of E. Lee Douglas from the business and the appointment of Frederic John Paxon as treasurer. Davison-Paxon-Stokes sold out to R.H. Macy & Co. in 1925. By 1927, R.H. Macy built the Peachtree Street store that still stands today. That same year the company dropped the ‘Stokes’ to become Davison Paxon Co. Davison’s took the Macy’s name in 1986.

56 The OPA was originally created within the Office of Emergency Management of the United States government to control money (price controls) and rents after the outbreak of World War II.

57 Beginning in 1948, the Rich’s department store put a large pine tree atop its downtown Atlanta store. The Lighting of the Great Tree on Thanksgiving night became a major long-standing holiday tradition. Later, the tree was perched atop the bridge that connected the original store with an addition on the opposite side of Forsyth Street. Rich’s downtown store closed in 1991 and the tree was moved to Underground Atlanta. From there it was moved to the Rich’s at Lenox Square mall, Following the merger with Macy’s, the Rich’s name was eventually dropped and the tree is now known as the Macy’s Great Tree.
Sharon: Were you the first people to get to ride the Pink Pig?58
Margaret: No, surely we weren’t the first people.
Sharon: I meant when it opened.
Margaret: Sure. We tried to be unobtrusive. It was not our style to be first for anything. We enjoyed it. My parents did a lot of interesting things, and things that I actually just found out about since I’ve been working with the Archives. My dad was the head of something called the Atlanta Farm Bureau.59 That organization brought young German-Jewish boys to Atlanta and placed them on farms so that they would learn a livelihood so they could come to this country, be able to work and they’d be out of Germany.
Sharon: How old were the boys he brought over? Do you know?
Margaret: I imagine they were in their teens. I’m pretty sure. I never knew that until I was working.
Sharon: How did you discover that?
Margaret: I think Sandy Berman, the Archivist [at the Cuba Archives of the Breman Museum], told me about it. She said, “Did you know your dad was . . . ?” I found out that my great-grandfather, Emanuel Rich, was on the Board of Governors of the Cotton States Exposition.60 This is the one-hundredth anniversary this week.
Sharon: It’s going on at the High Museum.61

58 Since 1953, the Pink Pig train ride has been delighting generations of Atlantans over the Christmas holiday season. Originally named ‘Priscilla the Pink Pig’ the ride was first located at the Rich’s in Downtown Atlanta. A second pig, Percival, was added in 1964 to increase ridership. Now located just outside of Macy’s at Lenox Square, the Pink Pig is still a popular attraction and is open from the end of October through early January. (2016)
59 This was the Georgia Farm School and Resettlement Bureau, a non-profit agency founded in 1939 with the resettlement and retraining of Jewish refugees as its mission. Because of Georgia’s agricultural economy, it was thought that refugees should be trained for eventual placement on area farms. The bureau soon discovered that many refugees were not interested in farming, and the organization modified its emphasis to a general resettlement and training program assisting newcomers in finding employment in a variety of fields and helping to meet social, medical, dental, and educational needs. As the situation of Jews in Europe deteriorated, the Bureau worked with the National Refugee Service to disseminate information regarding immigration possibilities for Jews in occupied territories. Other Atlanta area organizations also offered support including the Atlanta Section of the Council of Jewish Women, Gate City lodge #144 B’nai B’rith, The Temple Sisterhood, the Atlanta Federation for Jewish Social Service and the Atlanta Free Loan Association. The Farm Bureau’s final meeting was held on December 12, 1941, five days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Executive Council discussed the question of enemy aliens, and decided to suspend all activities of the Bureau.
60 The 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition was held at the current Piedmont Park in Atlanta with nearly 800,000 visitors attending. It was designed to promote the region to the world and showcase products and new technologies as well as to encourage trade with Latin America. President Grover Cleveland presided over the opening of the exposition. But the event is often remembered for the both hailed and criticized "Atlanta compromise" speech given by Booker T. Washington promoting racial cooperation.
61 The High Museum of Art in Atlanta is the leading art museum in the Southeastern United States. Located on
Margaret: There’s another exhibit at the [Atlanta] History Center on West Paces [Ferry Road]. My family has been very involved through the years with Jewish and general community things, which makes me feel good.

Sharon: What have you learned about your mom? You said that she was always volunteering and stuff.

Margaret: She did.

Sharon: What kind of stuff did she do?

Margaret: She and a friend of hers, Arlene Frohsin, started a women’s service group. It was called the Service Guild and it’s still in existence. They did all kinds of things from a clinic at Grady Hospital for indigent mothers and just all kinds of things like that, not necessarily in the Jewish community, but they were all Jewish women that did it.

Sharon: All the people she rallied with?

Margaret: Yes. They did all kinds of things. In fact, the history of the Service Guild is in our Archives. I still belong. I don’t do anything with it because the only thing they do right now is run the gift shop at the [William Breman] Jewish Home which is not something I care to do. I support it, but she did a lot of things in the community. She had to do a lot with my dad because of Rich’s and all.

Sharon: The kind of stuff that she did with him?

Margaret: Entertaining and traveling. They did a lot of traveling. She was a good wife. She really was.

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Peachtree Street in Midtown, the High is a division of the Woodruff Arts Center. It was founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association and renamed after the High family donated their house as an exhibit space in 1926. In 1983, a new 135,000-square-foot building designed by Richard Meier opened to house the Museum. In 2002, three new buildings designed by Renzo Piano more than doubled the Museum’s size.

The Atlanta History Center was founded in 1926 by 14 Atlantans who wanted to preserve the city’s history. They called it the ‘Atlanta Historical Center.’ Today it is the Atlanta History Center and is on a campus that houses the Atlanta History Museum, Centennial Olympic Games Museum, Swan House, Smith Family Farm, six historic gardens, and the Kenan Research Center. It also included the Margaret Mitchell House, which is located off site.

The Service Guild was dedicated to social service and civic work and was founded in 1936 by sixteen young Jewish women.

Grady Memorial Hospital, frequently referred to as ‘Grady Hospital’ or simply ‘Grady,’ was founded in 1890. It is the public hospital for the city of Atlanta, serving a large proportion of low-income patients. Grady is the largest hospital in Georgia and has come to be considered one of premier public hospitals in the Southeast. (2016)

A nursing home in Atlanta providing short and long-term dementia, Alzheimer’s, and nursing care. Formerly the Jewish Home, it first opened in 1951 at 260 14th Street, NW, on land that had been donated by real estate developer Ben J. Massell. The Home’s growth called for a larger, updated facility, leading to the construction of a new building at 3150 Howell Mill Road, NW. The second Jewish Home opened on February 16, 1971. In 1991, it was renamed the William Breman Jewish Home to honor and recognize its third president, Bill Breman, as the prime motivator of the modern day facility.
Sharon: You think she’d be looking down thinking proud things?
Margaret: Yes. I think she is looking down. I’m just sad she didn’t get to see my grandchildren and children. She died when she was very young. She was 50.
Sharon: I’m sorry. That is young.
Margaret: She’s been gone a long time. I’m sure she was an inspiration. All of the women, all of her friends, did things. It was not like she was unusual. They all . . .
Sharon: . . . that’s what they did.
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Did any of them work?
Margaret: No, not at all. I don’t know any one that worked.
Sharon: You said you were working in . . .
Margaret: . . . Baltimore . . .
Sharon: You were the only one who was working. When you came back to Atlanta . . .
Margaret: When I came back . . .
Sharon: . . . was that the same?
Margaret: Yes. Then, after I had Debi I didn’t work again until 1970. I went back to work part-time at the Atlanta Jewish Federation.66
Sharon: That’s a long time, though. That’s still 25 years.
Margaret: I worked there 17 years. I started as sort of a part-time flunky for Marilyn Shubin.67 I ended up being the Director of the Women’s Division. It was very interesting.
Sharon: What did you do as Director of the Women’s Division?
Margaret: I just headed up whatever women’s things that were going on with education, missions, fundraising. Everything.
Sharon: Did you like that?
Margaret: Yes. I loved it.
Sharon: For somebody who is Reform, was that kind of . . .

66 The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta raises funds which are dispersed throughout the Jewish community. Services also include caring for Jews in need locally and around the world, community outreach, leadership development, educational opportunities. It is part of the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA).
67 Marilyn Shubin is originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania lived in Cleveland for 10 years prior to settling in Atlanta. She was active in the National Council of Jewish Women in both Cleveland and later Atlanta. In 1970, Marilyn started to work professionally as the Director of the Women’s Division of the Atlanta Welfare Federation and appointed director of the welfare campaign in 1978. That same year Marilyn was appointed by Jimmy Carter to the President’s Commission on the Holocaust.
Margaret: Actually, there were two things that made me really want to be “more Jewish,” because I really don’t feel like I got a good Jewish background at all. I learned a lot at the Federation, but I also have a sister-in-law who taught me so much about how to run a Jewish home. It was because of her that I started to be Jewish. I was Jewish but . . .

Sharon: . . . you wanted to practice.

Margaret: Right. So we’ve always had everything, all the holidays and everything.

Sharon: Do you think because you didn’t get that when you were growing up, all the holidays and stuff, it became more important?

Margaret: Absolutely.

Sharon: What about your children?

Margaret: Absolutely. They’re even more observant than I am.

Sharon: You said four of your grandkids are at Epstein?

Margaret: Yes.

Sharon: And moving in that direction?

Margaret: Sure. Debi belongs to the Temple. Margo belongs to the AA. Beth belongs to Or VeShalom.68

Sharon: Kind of runs the gamut.

Margaret: Yes, absolutely. I’m proud of them, because that’s exactly what I had hoped. Bill is not at all. He is irreligious. He was very supportive when they were growing up and did everything that he should, but it really doesn’t mean that much to him.

Sharon: I think more times than not I’ve seen it’s more up to the woman to bring it into the house.

Margaret: Women are the most important, right?

Sharon: That’s right. Definitely. What are you doing with your life now? You said you worked for 17 years . . .

Margaret: I retired in 1987 from the Federation.

Sharon: That was a paid position, correct?

Margaret: Yes. That was a paid position. In 1988, a friend of mine, Lois Blonder, and I

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68 Congregation Or VeShalom was established by refugees of the Ottoman Empire, namely from Turkey and the Isle of Rhodes. The congregation began in 1920 and was based at Central and Woodward Avenues until 1948 when it moved to a larger building on North Highland Road. The current building for OrVeshalom is on North Druid Hills Road.
started a business that was called CultureLink.\(^{69}\) We planned and escorted women once a month to something cultural. We’ve been doing it for over eight years.

**Sharon:** What kind of women?

**Margaret:** Anyone that wants to join. It’s a group. There’s a yearly fee. Then each trip is a different amount. It depends on whether we go out of town or in town.

**Sharon:** What kind of stuff have you done, culturally?

**Margaret:** We do a lot with artists. We go to their studios. We’ve been all over the state.

**Sharon:** Once a month?

**Margaret:** Once a month. We go to museums or we go to people’s homes. We’ve had architects’ days where they take us to their favorite house that they’ve designed, or an interior designer’s house. We’ve done a day of rugs. We’ve done all kinds of jewelry. We are doing two in October, as a matter of fact, because with the holidays we aren’t going to have one this month. We’re doing a day of miniatures where people make little doll houses. We’re doing a Thanksgiving\(^{70}\) cooking class. We have had a great time.

**Sharon:** This is a business for you and Lois Blonder?

**Margaret:** Yes. B-L-O-N-D-E-R.

**Sharon:** This is a part-time business?

**Margaret:** Yes. Not a full time, a part-time business.

**Sharon:** What a fun way to make some money.

**Margaret:** It is.

**Sharon:** Get people like minded.

**Margaret:** Absolutely. It’s fun. We’ve had a great time. We are going to sort of hang it up until after the Olympics. We’ve got trips planned through December. We’re going to wait now until after the Olympics and see.

<general discussion, interview resumes>

**Sharon:** The women who join, it’s all women?

**Margaret:** Yes. We have done some out-of-town trips, like to Washington [D.C.], Chicago [Illinois], Philadelphia [Pennsylvania], and we have invited men to go on those. Right now,

\(^{69}\) An organization founded in Atlanta by Margaret Weiller and Lois Blonder which planned trips for groups of women to museums, gardens and cultural attractions throughout Georgia and beyond.

\(^{70}\) Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated in Canada and the United States. It was originally celebrated as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year. Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday of October in Canada and on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States.
we’re not doing any out-of-town trips.

Sharon: They’re only the invited guests.

Margaret: Yes. Otherwise my time is definitely taken up with volunteering.

Sharon: What else are you doing?

Margaret: I’ve been chair of the William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum for. I was for three years, four years. Now we have a new chairman. I’m chairing the Archives Committee. I work there a couple of days a week at the Archives and do whatever needs doing. I do a lot of things. I am head of a committee at the Epstein School. I do stuff for National Council of Jewish Women. I mark books for Brandeis [University National Women’s Committee]\(^{71}\) because my daughter Beth is a co-president this year. What else? A lot. I’m on a committee at the Temple, on the board. Then I like to see my grandchildren and children some time.

Sharon: In between.

Margaret: Right.

Sharon: What about your husband? Is he still working?

Margaret: Yes. He is still working.

Sharon: He’s an engineer?

Margaret: Actually, no. He’s a salesman. He’s never really done engineering, although what he sells, he uses a lot of his engineering background.

Sharon: What does he sell?

Margaret: He sells plastics and paper. He’s with Fulton Paper Company.\(^{72}\) He designs a lot of things for his customers, different kinds of napkins or boxes. All kinds of things like that. He doesn’t want to retire. I’m very glad about that.

Sharon: Works out perfect.

Margaret: Yes. It really does. We like to travel.

Sharon: Have you been to Israel? Have you been on a mission trip?

Margaret: I’ve been on 11 missions. That was part of my job. That’s the only thing I really miss about it.

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\(^{71}\) The Brandeis University National Women’s Committee is the largest "friends of a library" group in the world with 48,000 members nationwide. A volunteer fundraising organization, it has contributed more than $58 million in support of the libraries of Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Chapters are located in more than 105 communities nationwide.

\(^{72}\) Fulton Paper Company was founded in 1919, and was in the packaging and container business. In 2009, Southeastern Paper Group, Inc. acquired it.
Sharon: Did you take all different kinds of groups?
Margaret: Yes. It was great. I loved every minute of it. Once I went on three missions in one year. It was hard, but I loved it.
Sharon: I’ve been thinking about doing one.
Margaret: You should. It’s the best. In fact, Debi just got back. Debi and David just got back. They didn’t go to Israel, but they went on a mission.
Sharon: Where did they go?
Margaret: They went to St. Petersburg [Russia], Poland, and Copenhagen [Denmark]. It was great. They loved it.
Sharon: That sounds marvelous.
Margaret: Yes. It was really outstanding. I love Israel. It’s a neat place.
Sharon: What do you see yourself doing in the next 10 years?
Margaret: Probably the same thing.
Sharon: Volunteering and keeping busy?
Margaret: Yes, I do. You know, it’s very rewarding. I’ve gotten a lot out of it, a lot more out of it than I put into it. I’m supposed to be working for the Olympics, but they don’t quite have their act together so nobody’s said a word to me. I volunteered two years ago. I’ve had two interviews. They keep saying, “Don’t worry about it.” But I haven’t heard a word so we’ll see.
Sharon: Yes. I volunteered through Scottish Rite and haven’t heard anything.
<general discussion, interview resumes>
Margaret: There are a lot of things I would like to do, but I have no idea what I’ll end up doing. My husband’s going away for the month. He doesn’t want to be here. He’s not going to be able to work. He’s right. He rented a house.
Sharon: In Maine?
Margaret: No. He would like that. In Highlands [North Carolina]. It’s not a house, it’s a little cabin.
Sharon: North Carolina. How nice. That’s a good thing to do.
Margaret: Absolutely.
Sharon: Do your grandkids ask you a lot about old Atlanta?

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73 Many Atlantans anticipated the city would be bogged down with traffic and crowds during the 1996 Olympic Games and planned to leave the city.
Margaret: Only when they have to write a paper. That’s the problem.
Sharon: Then they are, “I know someone I can ask.”
Margaret: That’s right. Yes. I try to tell them. When you have nine [grandchildren], it’s hard to get them one-on-one. I try to do that, but it’s hard. Once they’re in school, you never see them. I saw one yesterday, one of the little ones.
Sharon: Fortunately, the holidays are . . .
Margaret: . . . yes, I’ll see plenty of them this weekend.
Sharon: . . . coming.
Margaret: Plenty of them.
Sharon: So you’ll get a chance to catch up. If they were to ask you, your grandkids, “What is one of your favorite memories of old Atlanta?” What do you think you would tell them?
Margaret: I probably would tell them . . . I don’t know. I have such great, happy memories of family and Rich’s, and all of that. School, I loved school.
Sharon: Tell them that. Stay in school.
Margaret: They love school. I know the two boys won’t go there, but the other boys, David’s kids, there’s another, my step-grandchildren, but I hope they all end up in [Jewish] day school.
Sharon: It’s pretty expensive, among other things.
Margaret: Yes, but worth it.
Sharon: I think we’re going to stop here for now.

<End of first interview, second interview begins on same side of tape>

Sharon: Hi. This is Sharon Greenblatt interviewing Margaret Weiller. I was very correct to say it this time. Today is Wednesday, September 13.
Margaret: December.
Sharon: December 13 [1995]. Our first interview was on September 20. This is Tape 1, Side 2, halfway through.
Sharon: I had called you on the phone and told you that we had just a few things that we wanted to try and get some more information on. One of those things I wanted to talk to you about was your parents’ friends and your parents’ grandparents’ friends, if you can remember any of them. Their names? Possibly anything about them that sticks out in your mind?
Margaret: You want to start with my parents?
Sharon: Whoever you want to start with will be great.
Margaret: I probably know more about that, so I’ll start there. I guess my parents’ best friends were Helen and Joe Asher, A-S-H-E-R. They were the parents of Tom and Norman Asher who both still live in Atlanta. They were really more like family than family in a lot of cases. We were very, very close. They had a lot of friends, having both grown up in Atlanta. Joe Asher worked for Rich’s also, but they knew one another before that. My parents also were very good friends with Clarence and Janet Elsas. E-L-S-A-S. and Herbert and Edith Elsas, the same spelling. Let me think who else. Virginia [Rich Barnett] and Dick Rich, who was a cousin of my dad’s. By the way, his name was not really ‘Rich.’ It was changed to ‘Rich.’

Sharon: What was his name?

Margaret: Rosenheim, R-O-S-E-N-H-E-I-M, but my great uncle, my grandmother’s brother, Walter Rich, asked my dad and Dick to change their name to Rich. My dad wouldn’t do it, but Dick did. We were very friendly. My family was friendly with them and mother was also friendly. Arlene and Leon Frohsin. F-R-O-H-S-I-N. Arlene and my mom did a lot of volunteer work in the community. Leon was the owner of Frohsin’s, a very exclusive women’s clothing store.

Sharon: Where was that located?

Margaret: It was located on Peachtree about where Peachtree Center is now.

Sharon: Downtown.

Margaret: Downtown, yes. It goes on and on.

Sharon: What did they use to do, your parents and their friends?

Margaret: They were very busy giving a lot of fun parties. They traveled some. Both my mother and my dad were active in the community. During the war, I remember my mother was in the Motor Corps for the [American] Red Cross. I don’t know what she did. She wore a uniform. My dad did things, also, in the general community and in the Jewish community. I don’t know if I talked that he was in the Navy during World War II. Did I ever tell that?

Anyway, we lived in Jacksonville during World War II. He was a lieutenant commander in the navy. My grandparents’ friends were the Harrises that owned Atlanta Paper Company, and the

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72 An upscale women’s clothing store on Peachtree Street in Atlanta which sold designer gowns by Dior, Givenchy, and Valentino.
73 American Red Cross Motor Corps was founded in 1917 by the American Red Cross (ARC). The service was composed of women. It was developed to render supplementary aid to the US Army and Navy in transporting troops and supplies during World War I, and to assist other ARC workers in conducting their various relief activities. The work included canteen work, military hospitals, camps and cantonments, home service workers, outside aid, office detail, other ARC activities, such as services during the 1918 flu pandemic.
Lowensteins that owned Norris Candy Company. N-O-R-R-I-S.

Sharon: Is that still around?

Margaret: No, I don’t think it is. All the Montags, the Haases, and all of the old German-Jewish families. My parents grew up with those kids, too, so they were friends also. I think that’s enough of that.

Sharon: I know that you said holidays weren’t a tremendously big deal in your house back then. But with any of these other families?

Margaret: Not really. They didn’t either. They were very assimilated into the community.

Sharon: We talked last time about the department store of Rich’s and how it got started. Is there anything that you can remember that happened in the formation of Rich’s, maybe before you were born, that you heard stories about?

Margaret: I just heard that my grandfather and his brothers came to Atlanta, I guess, before that they were peddlers. They opened this store called M. Rich and Brothers. That was after Morris Rich, the oldest brother of the three brothers . . . it just grew. I think I always heard a lot about how they added so much to the city. When the city couldn’t pay the teachers, they gave scrip to the teachers and let them buy things at Rich’s for nothing . . . and groceries. They always were doing good things for the city. I guess that rubbed off into the family as a whole.

Sharon: That’s a good thing to rub off.

Margaret: Right.

Sharon: So first they had this smaller store. As it became more popular and . . .

Margaret: . . . right. It grew and grew and grew . . .

Sharon: . . . to what it is now.

Margaret: Right. Which is not locally-owned, of course, anymore.

Sharon: Federated.

Margaret: Federated Department Stores owns it.

Sharon: That was just sold, wasn’t it, recently?

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76 Scrip was used during the Great Depression era as a substitute for government issued currency. Because of the banks closing temporarily and the lack of physical currency, someone had to come up with another form of currency to keep the economy going and a way for trade to continue. Therefore the old idea of local currency was reborn. Paper, cardboard, wood, metal tokens, leather, clam shells and even parchment made from fish skin was used. At one point, the government considered issuing a nationwide scrip on a temporary basis.

77 Federated Department Stores was founded in Columbus, Ohio in 1929 as a department store holding company. The company changed its name to Macy’s, Inc. in 2007 and is headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is the owner of department store chains Macy’s and Bloomingdale’s. Several Rich’s stores in Atlanta that were acquired by Federated are now Macy’s stores.
Margaret: No, not just. Probably about 10 or 12 years ago
Sharon: Up until that point, it was just family held?
Margaret: Yes. There were stockholders besides family. It was a publicly held company.
Sharon: I like that story you told me last time about the . . . because to this day I have never been on that Pink Pig, and now it’s gone.
Margaret: Now it is gone, yes.
Sharon: Are you going to get any pieces of that, or anything?
Margaret: No, I don’t think there are even any pieces available. There was a very famous clock over Rich’s downtown in the main store, on the outside of the store. Instead of numbers, it said ‘Rich’s Incorporated.’ They’re incorporating that clock into the new Federal Building that they are now constructing at the site. That’ll be nice.
Sharon: Where was the clock? On the front?
Margaret: It was at the corner of Broad and Alabama, I think.
Sharon: Has that clock not been up in the past recently?
Margaret: I think they took it down to construct the building, but it’s going . . . I’m not positive. I haven’t been there.
Sharon: I haven’t either.
Margaret: Then it will go back in.
Sharon: Do your grandchildren know the story about how Rich’s got started and how you’re related to it?
Margaret: I don’t think so. We don’t talk about it that much. I don’t hide it, but it’s just not something we have brought up.
Sharon: You should maybe sit down and do some kind of memories with them on tape so they’ll have it.
Margaret: That would be good.
Sharon: We talked about your childhood friends. I think you gave me the names of a couple of them. Could you just give me the ones that really stick out in your mind? Maybe the ones that you grew up with?
Margaret: Two of my really good friends also happen to be cousins of mine. One was Virginia Rich [Barnett], who everybody knows as being a famous dancer in Atlanta with the

78 Virginia Rich Barnett (b. 1934) was born in Atlanta to Virginia Lazarus and Richard Rosenheim (later Richard
Atlanta Ballet,\footnote{Atlanta Ballet is a ballet company founded in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia by Dorothy Alexander. It is the longest continuously performing ballet company in the United States.} and then other companies. The other was my cousin Gail Oberdorfer. I have a lot of friends. I did go around with the friends of my parents’ friends, a lot of them, particularly in my younger years. I know I talked about where I went to high school. Since there weren’t any Jewish kids there, I ended up with a lot of non-Jewish kids. I still see some of them.

\textbf{Sharon:} What about as far as Gail and Virginia, do you still see them?

\textbf{Margaret:} I don’t see Virginia very much, and Gail lives in . . .

\textbf{Sharon:} These are women your age?

\textbf{Margaret:} Yes. Gail lives out of the city, so I don’t see her a lot, either. But we’re still close.

\textbf{Sharon:} One of the things that we’re interested in is the Jewish organizations. You talked a little bit about being involved with Federation and Marilyn Shubin. Can you tell me a little bit more about that and how you got started in it?

\textbf{Margaret:} I guess I have to go back a little ways to where I really got started in working with community organizations. All during high school I was very active in a lot of things. After I got married, which was very young, I started doing work with my Sisterhood\footnote{A group of women in a synagogue congregation who join together to offer social, cultural, educational, and volunteer service opportunities.} at the Temple. Then I got involved with the National Council of Jewish Women.\footnote{An organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into advocacy and philanthropy inspired by Jewish values. They strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and families.} That’s where I met Marilyn and worked with her for a lot of years there. I guess I got . . .

\textbf{Sharon:} What were you doing at that point?

\textbf{Margaret:} Raising children.

\textbf{Sharon:} No, I mean with the National Council of Jewish Women.

\textbf{Margaret:} Just volunteer projects.

\textbf{Sharon:} Like what?

\textbf{Margaret:} I was one of the first ones to start Bargainata.\footnote{A fundraiser started in 1970 the Atlanta chapter of the National Council for Jewish Women. Donated new and gently worn clothing, accessories, and housewares are sold with proceeds helping to fund various programs that benefit Atlanta’s women, children and families.} I just worked on all kinds of Rich), a member of the Rich’s department store family. She studied with Dorothy Alexander at the Atlanta School of Ballet as well as at the School of American Ballet in New York. She joined the New York City Ballet in 1955 and later returned to Atlanta and was associate director and principal dancer with the Atlanta Ballet. Together with Carl Ratcliff she formed the Carl Ratcliff Dance Theatre, Georgia’s first professional modern dance company. She married dancer Robert Barnett and had two children: Robert James Barnett, Jr. (1959) and David Michael Barnett (1962).
different projects. I started a group of young girls. I don’t even remember when. It was when my kids were about 12 or 13, called ‘Councilettes.’ They did public community projects.

Sharon: How young were the girls? These were high school girls?
Margaret: No, about 12 or 13.
Sharon: What kind of stuff did you do with the Councilettes?
Margaret: We did different things in the community. I don’t even remember, but good stuff. I just joined in on all the projects that Council had, and I learned a lot. A lot of people in Atlanta had started out there.
Sharon: Who else was starting with you?
Margaret: Carol Goldberg and Barbara Asher, who just passed away last week. Of course, Marilyn was really a wonderful influence on us. She was president during the time I belonged.
Sharon: Marilyn Shubin?
Margaret: Yes. Then she went to work for the Federation, I think in August of 1970.

<End Tape 1, Side 2>

<Begin, Tape 2, Side 1>

Sharon: Today is December 13, [1995], Wednesday, its six o’clock. This is tape 2, side 1. We were just talking about how you got involved with Federation. After Marilyn had started, she called you over to come and help.
Margaret: Yes. I started in November 1970. I left 17 years later. I started off just helping out very part-time because I still had . . . how many [children] did I have at home . . . two, still. I really didn’t want to work while they were at home. I worked until about 2:30 or 3:00 in the afternoons, but then I started working longer.
Sharon: What were you doing when you were working?
Margaret: I was assisting Marilyn for a long time. Then she took another job and I assisted the new Women’s Division director. That’s what Marilyn had been. At one point, the director asked me would I be Women’s Division director? So that’s what I ended up doing.
Sharon: I don’t really know if I know what exactly that kind of position does.
Margaret: Anything a woman does for the Federation goes through the Women’s Division. In other words, the complete campaign.

83 The youth organization of the National Council of Jewish Women. Councilettes was first launched in Atlanta in 1968.
Sharon: That’s raising money?
Margaret: Yes. Any outreach efforts or anything else . . . women’s education, that kind of thing.

Sharon: What kind of outreach programs did you all do?
Margaret: Into all parts of the community: in town, out north, west, whatever.

Sharon: Did you do things the Shoe-Shoe Train?\(^\text{84}\)
Margaret: No, not like that exactly. We would have speakers in the areas where the people lived that we were trying to get involved in part of that Federation. It would be a good way to get them to understand what Federation was, then eventually be involved in it, and support the Federation, which supports the community.

Sharon: As director, your job was to not only raise money, but to raise awareness of the programs that you offered?
Margaret: Perfectly, yes.

Sharon: How did you like doing that?
Margaret: I loved it. It was very demanding, though. It really was. Then in 1985, I was lucky enough to have my first grandchild. I stuck it out two more years, but I just really loved being around my children and grandchildren.

Sharon: That wasn’t a paid position, was it?
Margaret: Yes. After I went to work there, it was a paid position.

Sharon: It wasn’t a paid position when Marilyn was there. It wasn’t until later?
Margaret: While I just volunteered. But then when I started working more and more, I was paid. That’s the only paid position. Everything else I’ve ever done was volunteer.

Sharon: You did that for 17 years?
Margaret: I always say, “I was paid for a few hours a week and I volunteered the rest.”

Sharon: I think that’s how it is at most of those non-profit organizations.

Margaret: Absolutely. But it was a labor of love, too.

Sharon: Did your daughters get involved in National Council of Jewish Women?
Margaret: Actually, no. None of them have. Debi’s been involved in the Federation. She’s done a lot of things for Cystic Fibrosis [Foundation]\(^\text{85}\) and Camp Twin Lakes.\(^\text{86}\) Margo has done

\(^{84}\) B’nai B’rith Women launched a new project called the Shoe-Shoe Train in the 1970’s to collect shoes for needy children. Shoes would be refurbished at shoe polishing parties and distributed through local organizations.

\(^{85}\) Cystic Fibrosis Foundation works to cure cystic fibrosis and provide people with the disease the opportunity to
all kinds of things, nothing in particular, a lot with the Epstein School. Beth is co-president of Brandeis [University National] Women[‘s Committee]. She does a lot at school, too, Epstein School. They really have not been active in National Council of Jewish Women. I don’t know why not, but whatever they do, it doesn’t matter.

Sharon: As long as they’re doing something.
Margaret: Absolutely.
Sharon: I know that you are no longer in that position. Are you still involved in organization?
Margaret: Yes, definitely. I sit on a lot of committees. I’m always involved in campaign. I don’t know if I mentioned that with the National Council of Jewish Women, I was the chair of a study that determined that we needed. How did we phrase it? A place for older people to come who were not able to live by themselves, but weren’t ready for a nursing home. We established the Louis Kahn Group Home while I was chair. I worked on that for a long time. Even while I was working, I did that. It’s doing great.
Sharon: It sure is. Are you still involved in that?
Margaret: No. I decided after 10 years I should get off the board and let some new people on. But I keep up with it. I keep a close tab on it.
Sharon: Kind of like your baby?
Margaret: Yes.
Sharon: Out of all those years of volunteering, getting paid, and doing all that stuff, what’s your most memorable experience with the National Council of Jewish Women?
Margaret: It would have to be the Kahn Home. I feel real good about that.
Sharon: How many people do they have there?
Margaret: I think about eight or nine. They’re building a new facility, I think for 23 or 24

lead productive lives by funding research and drug development, promoting individualized treatment, and ensuring access to high-quality, specialized care. The organization is based in Bethesda, Maryland with local chapters around the U.S.

86 A network of camps in Georgia providing programs for children with serious illnesses, disabilities and other challenges.
87 The Louis Kahn Group Home was founded in 1979 by the National Council of Jewish Women to provide assisted living for senior citizens in a home-like environment with Jewish values. The community moved from its original location in the Morningside area of Atlanta to Johns Creek in 2001. The current building was funded by the Philip, S. Kasper and Helen P. Cohen family and renamed The Cohen Home in their memory. In 2009 The Cohen Home merged with The William Breman Jewish Home and is the only assisted living community supported by the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. (2016)
people.
Sharon: Where is that going to be located?
Margaret: It’s going to be at Zaban,\textsuperscript{88} near the Weinstein Center,\textsuperscript{89} so they can both use it. It’s going to be a great concept. I’m excited about that.
Sharon: They’re going to kind of combine them?
Margaret: No. They won’t be combined, but they will be doing programming together. Weinstein, I don’t think, has people living there all the time. I think they have just weekend respite. It’s mostly programs during the day, which will be great for the Kahn people that want that, too. I’m excited. I think it’s going to be a real good situation.
Sharon: Was there anything that we did not talk about that you wanted to mention?
Margaret: I can’t think of anything. You had given me this list of things that we might talk about tonight, so I sort of thought about it. Not really. I will say that I have to credit my husband with a lot. Even though he doesn’t do a lot in the community, he puts up with me being gone all the time.
Sharon: We’ll give him credit for that, for allowing you to do the things you love.
Margaret: That’s right. I do love this city. I’m glad I’m able to do those things.
Sharon: In September you had talked about being interviewed for the Olympics to do some volunteer work. Did you ever hear anything?
Margaret: Yes. Actually, I’m working there tomorrow.
Sharon: What are you going to be doing?
Margaret: Probably stuffing envelopes. Nothing exciting, but I’m trying to make some contacts. Maybe I’ll be doing something a little exciting for a little bit.
Sharon: If you had your dream Olympic job, what would it be?
Margaret: I’d like to be able to be with the athletes or their families, something like that. We’ll see.
Sharon: Do you speak any foreign languages?
Margaret: No, unfortunately not.

\textsuperscript{88} Zaban Park in Dunwoody is home to the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. The area is named for philanthropist and community leader Erwin Zaban who gave and raised money for what was formerly undeveloped pastureland.

\textsuperscript{89} The Weinstein Center for Adult Day Services was located at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta. The MJCCA began the Weinstein Center in 1982 and brought it to Zaban Park in Dunwoody in 1987. The Weinstein Center initially started as a recreational facility and closed in 2014 as it was not equipped to care for members with Alzheimer’s Disease and other forms of dementia.
Sharon: I guess you’re not leaving the city.
Margaret: No, I am not. Not under any circumstances.
Sharon: I don’t think I have anything else I wanted to ask you.
Margaret: I have enjoyed this.
Sharon: I have, too. I’ve learned a lot. Do you have any parting thoughts you’d like to leave with the next generation? For people who listen to this tape 100 years from now?
Margaret: No, not really.

<End of Tape 2, Side 1>

INTERVIEW ENDS