

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

MEMOIRIST: FRANCES WEINTRAUB
INTERVIEWER: SANDRA BERMAN
LOCATION: ALBANY, GEORGIA
DATE: MARCH 10, 2011

<Begin Video 1>

INTERVIEW BEGINS

BERMAN: Today is March 10, 2011. I'm with Frances Weintraub, who has agreed to participate in the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Project of the William Breman, Jewish Heritage Museum. My name is Sandy Berman. I'm so pleased to be here interviewing you today in Albany, Georgia. I'd like to begin by asking you to tell me a little bit about your own background, when you were born, your parents' names, if you can go back to your grandparents, and how everybody arrived in Albany.

WEINTRAUB: I was born here. My name is Frances Sterne Weintraub. I was born at Phoebe Putney Hospital here in Albany on January 24, 1928. My parents were Carolyn Gershon Sterne and Lee Melville Sterne, Sr. My father's parents were Pauline Smith Sterne and Siegmund Sterne. I don't know if he had a middle name. His grandparents that were here were Marx Smith and Caroline Long Smith. They were the first Jewish people to settle in Albany. Why they decided to come here, nobody knows. The family story is that Grandpa Smith was the most ornery person that anybody ever met. When they first came to this country, I'm not sure whether they came to New York. They came to some port. The family decided that he was advised to stay in the northeast in a big city, don't go south, and for heaven's sake, stay away from small towns. So, he came south to the small town that was just nine years old, and that's where we have stayed.

BERMAN: What year was that?

WEINTRAUB: 1845.

BERMAN: Amazing. Just amazing. Is there any family lore about what he found in Albany when he got here?

WEINTRAUB: I don't know about the family lore, in particular, about what they found. My

great grandmother was obviously very elegant and very, very, I say, educated. I don't know if she was educated in Germany or whether she was educated at home in a small village.

According to Rabbi [Dana Evan] Kaplan,¹ he doesn't think they came from any kind of money because, he said, they would have waited and not come here in the 1840s. The family history said that they came here because at that time there was a quota in Germany. There could be only so many Jewish marriages in a certain period and it would have been a long time before it was her turn, so they came to this country. The Anniston family did not know if she knew Marx Smith before or whether they came on the ship together or whether they met over here, whether she was engaged to him or to somebody else. This relative that found us in Tel Aviv [Israel], he and his wife went there to the village where she was born. He said there were three small villages together. He did say that my ancestor, the first one there, was a cattle dealer, which is what is in our history. Rabbi Kaplan did not believe it. Anyway, they were accepted into this community immediately. Maybe because it was so small. For the people in those days, Jewish people were curiosities. In the history of Dougherty County, there is something in there about the women from the various churches from the community were doing bandages and stuff for the soldiers, they were listing names. They said, "The noble Jewish lady was Carolyn Smith." I thought, there weren't any other noble ladies in Albany? She was the only one?

BERMAN: This is for the War Between the States?²

WEINTRAUB: Yes. I don't know if you know anything about Andersonville in particular, but it was very notorious. They had nothing there. There wasn't even anything for the prison people who ran it to share. She and other women would gather up whatever they thought they could use, and they would ride their horses and buggies or whatever it was, to Andersonville and distribute whatever it was that they had. All I can tell you is that they were prominent in the community.

¹ Rabbi Dana Evan Kaplan (b. 1960), a Reform rabbi, was born in Manhattan, New York. He led the Temple B'Nai Israel congregation in Albany, Georgia, between 2001 and 2001.

² The American Civil War, widely known in the United States as the 'Civil War' or the 'War Between the States,' was fought from 1861 to 1865 to determine the survival of the Union or independence for the Confederacy. In January 1861, seven Southern slave states declared their secession from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America. The Confederacy, often called the 'South,' grew to include 11 states, and although they claimed 13 states and additional western territories, the Confederacy was never diplomatically recognized by a foreign country. The states that did not declare secession were known as the 'Union' or the 'North.' The war had its origin in the issue of slavery. After four years of bloody combat, which left over 600,000 Union and Confederate soldiers dead and destroyed much of the South's infrastructure, the Confederacy collapsed, slavery was abolished, and the difficult Reconstruction process of restoring national unity and granting civil rights to freed slaves began.

BERMAN: Did she start a school of some kind?

WEINTRAUB: No. It was her daughter Henrietta. She sent Henrietta to New York to some very fine [school], I guess, for Jewish women. She received the equivalent of a college education. When she came back to Albany, she began the Henrietta Sterne School. It went all the way up through high school, and she had college courses. She brought not only that, but she brought a lot of culture to Albany. She had prominent speakers, musicians, performers. How she managed to do all that, I don't know, but she was a brilliant woman herself. When she had to move to Alabama for her health during World War I, they called her to teach at the University of Alabama. She taught, I think math and foreign languages. She spoke several languages. She was just evidently brilliant, and her students adored her. When her mother died, who died when she was 56, Caroline Smith was 56 when she died, then Henrietta took my grandmother Pauline in, who was 12, and she continued raising her. Pauline, when she was grown, did not go off to New York, but Henrietta taught her. She taught in Henrietta's school in the lower grades. When Henrietta had to move, Pauline continued to teach up to high school. It was in Pauline Sterne School. I met somebody, not so terribly long ago, who was so proud. Her grandmother had gone to my grandmother's school. She said it was the most wonderful school and everyone that she taught absolutely loved her. Anyway, all I can tell you . . . I don't know what they think about my generation, but I'm very proud of them.

BERMAN: Absolutely. That's a wonderful history. You also have some Confederate³ veterans in your family, don't you?

WEINTRAUB: Yes. Anselm [Sterne] was one.

BERMAN: How was he related?

WEINTRAUB: He was my father's uncle. He married Henrietta. My father said that he thought Grandpa Smith, who was the same age of Anselm, I guess, was in the [United States Army] Quartermaster Corps, but he isn't listed as a veteran in the thing. But my grandmother was listed in the [United] Daughters of the Confederacy.⁴

BERMAN: Do you know where Anselm served?

WEINTRAUB: I don't. I never even knew he was in there until they sent that over because

³ Those who fought for the South during the American Civil War.

⁴ The United Daughters of the Confederacy is an American heredity association of Southern women established in 1894 in Nashville, Tennessee. The organization's mission includes the commemoration of Confederate soldiers and the funding of the erection of memorials to these men.

my father's family was not old enough to have been the Civil War, but he knew veterans. Time is shorter than we know

BERMAN: What did your family do? Besides the school, what kind of business were they in?

WEINTRAUB: My father's father had a small grocery store. My mother's father called on him because he had a hardware manufacturing thing. His story was, and this is one reason that Grandpa Sterne's children kind of resented him, he did not want to let his storekeeping interfere with his regular life. Papa, who is George Gershon, told the family that he came in on the train one time to call on my other grandfather. He opened the door. There was a little bell that rang, but my grandfather Sterne wasn't visible. He called him. He told him he was in the back of the store. He was sitting there eating raw oysters. Somebody came in while they were talking. Papa said, "You have a customer out there." He said, "Shh. Maybe they will go away."
<Laughs> But my grandmother not only taught school, she baked bread for the week, enough for the whole family plus her students. She kept the books for the store. She worked at the store on the weekends. She took as good care of my grandfather as she did of her children. He didn't even know what he liked to eat, much less what he should wear. I guess he was one of these intellectual scholars. He loved classical music. I don't know if there was any other kind then. We had some [Enrico] Caruso⁵ records and some great singers. Like I said, these are the books that my brother left. I'm sure that he took some that were very valuable and probably very old, which was fine with all the rest of us. I felt like I had my parents all these years, and whatever they wanted, I would just take what they didn't want. Mother had already been very generous. She gave me that desk <she points to it>, which had belonged to my great grandmother. She had it restored, which I understand is a no-no. She gave me other stuff too.

BERMAN: Your parents, what did they do?

WEINTRAUB: My father went to Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology], where he graduated as a chemist. That was during World War I. He went to work for some kind of a plant over in Alabama. I guess it was Birmingham. Every time he heard something about the war, he wanted to quit and join the army. They finally let him quit. When he went into the army, they sent him back to Georgia Tech to teach chemistry. He went to Tech when he was 16. I'm not sure

⁵ Enrico Caruso (1873-1921) was an Italian operatic tenor. He sang to great acclaim at the major opera houses of Europe and the Americas, appearing in a wide variety of roles from the Italian and French repertoires that ranged from the lyric to the dramatic. Caruso also made approximately 260 commercially released recordings from 1902 to 1920.

how old he was when he graduated. He used to date my mother's oldest sister. She used to sit on his lap as a small child, and he would help her with her Sunday school lesson. She made up her mind she was going to marry him when she was still a child. I get off the subject.

BERMAN: No. You're doing great. Where was your father from?

WEINTRAUB: He was from Albany, Georgia. He was born at home, though. There is a house on Pine [Avenue] that my great grandfather built that our son-in-law [David Maschke] tried to buy to put his architectural business in. It was owned by an attorney at that time, who would not sell it. Since then, whoever bought it, they gutted it, so the historical value of it is just outside.

BERMAN: And your mother?

WEINTRAUB: My mother was from Atlanta.

BERMAN: They met when . . .

WEINTRAUB: When dad went to school there. My mother's father was born in New York. His father was from Birmingham, England. My grandmother was born in Baltimore [Maryland]. I guess her parents were probably from Germany. She was born around the end of the Civil War, either right after or sometime before the end of it. She would never, ever, ever tell me anything about her past. I asked mother because dad's family talked all the time about their past. I knew about the Sunday schools of all the churches. They all had their parties at the end of the year on different days. The kids went to all the parties. My grandmother never told me anything. Mother said she thought her life probably had been so painful in so many places that she just didn't want to or couldn't talk about it. Her husband did very, very well in Atlanta, as I told you. He was my mother's hero when she was coming up because he was so generous to everybody. Mother's story, I have not heard it from anybody else in the family, was that my Uncle Sidney on her side, I have an Uncle Sidney on my side too, had wanted to go into the . . . this is during or before the [Great] Depression⁶ but right at it, he wanted to go into the laundromat business. My grandfather financed it. The timing was perfect. The idea was horrible. The idea might have been perfect. He lost it all, and my grandfather lost it all. So, he and my grandmother came here to live with my parents, who really didn't have anything. They lost everything in the Depression too. You asked me how my father and my uncle wound

⁶ The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s or early 1940s. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.

up being in the food brokerage business here. Because my uncle . . . that's whole other history. At any rate, that was what they did. They didn't buy any merchandise, but they did sell it. They represented the manufacturer and called on the wholesale grocers. That's not the traditional Jewish thing that was done here. I did not know a lot of what was going on in the downtown community or the Oglethorpe community because we lived on . . . they first lived on Pine. When I was born, they lived on Monroe [Avenue], which was not anywhere near . . . I mean it was within walking distance. Then we moved out to Madison Street, which was on the northside. We wound up on another one. We didn't move that many times. Since I was born, we moved twice. I was getting ready to go off to college the second time.

BERMAN: You were related to the Gershon family in Atlanta?

WEINTRAUB: Yes.

BERMAN: Rebecca Gershon, did you know her very well?

WEINTRAUB: I knew her all my life. How well I knew her, I couldn't tell you. I knew her when I was a child. She asked me over for meals a couple of times when I was working there, but she was not really a warm person. She was most attractive, very intelligent. I think she went to Smith [Elementary School].

BERMAN: Yes, she did.

WEINTRAUB: She was . . . let me see if I can. I don't exactly know. There is nothing I need to say anymore. I don't think.

BERMAN: I think I know what you wanted to say.

WEINTRAUB: I don't think there is any way you could know what I wanted to say. It is some personal family history, so I won't.

BERMAN: Okay. Getting back to your own childhood, you said you didn't grow up in the heart of what was then the Jewish streets or the community, but were you active in the temple?

WEINTRAUB: Yes, we went to temple [Temple B'Nai Israel]⁷ every Friday night. We went

⁷ In 1854, four Jews incorporated the United Hebrew Society of Albany, which was founded for the expressed purpose of purchasing land for a cemetery and building a house of worship. In 1858, land was purchased for a cemetery. Congregation B'nai Israel was officially founded in 1876, when an estimated 100 Jews lived in the city. From its founding, B'nai Israel was a Reform congregation. The congregation's religious school was founded in the late 1870s. The congregation built a small synagogue in 1882 and a larger one 14 years later. The first Rabbi was hired in 1885. In 1898, they hired Edmund A. Landau, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College, who lead the congregation for 47 years. In 1940, a tornado destroyed the Temple. It was rebuilt on the same site. Albany's Jewish population went from 290 Jews in 1937 to 475 in 1960, before peaking at 525 in 1968. B'nai Israel

to religious school every Saturday morning or Sunday when they changed it to Sunday. We, of course, attended the High Holy Days⁸ services. We observed the religious holidays that we observed here. When I was a child, we had our *Sukkot*⁹ inside the temple. The Sisterhood¹⁰ erected it every year. We put fresh fruit on it. All the kids brought shoeboxes decorated. We had the fresh fruit and candy in it. Each child at the end of the service, they would call us up there. They would cut a piece of fruit down and give it to us. That was what we had. We didn't have that much fruit at home, but everybody went out and bought fruit to take. After the service, they took the boxes that the kids had brought and took it to the people in the Jewish community who were older and not able to get around as much. The rest of it, they took to the hospital or people who were shut-ins.

BERMAN: Do you remember Rabbi [Edmund] Landau¹¹ very well?

WEINTRAUB: I remember him very well. If I remember him the way he really was, I could not tell you. All of us children were in awe of Dr. Landau.

<End Video 1>

<Begin Video 2>

WEINTRAUB: When he said anything, it was as if it was what God wanted us to do. I don't know how to explain it any other way. He conducted services every Saturday morning. Each child was told that we had to memorize something from the Hebrew Bible and be ready to recite it, which we took very seriously. Once in a while, one of the boys would be a smart aleck about it and not have his prepared. But almost everybody took whatever he said very seriously. I'm sure there was friction in the adult community, but nobody that I know of ever complained about Dr. Landau to any child. He was very respected in the general community too.

BERMAN: I've heard that, that he crossed all boundaries.

membership grew from 70 in 1940 to 150 in 1962. The 1950s and 1960s were the peak years for the Albany Jewish community.

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

⁹ One of the Harvest Festivals. It is seven days long and comes after the ingathering of the yearly harvest. It celebrates G-d's bounty in nature and G-d's protection, symbolized by the fragile booths in which the Israelites dwelt in the wilderness. During *Sukkot* Jews eat and live in such booths, which gives the festival its name and character.

¹⁰ A group of women in a synagogue congregation who join together to offer social, cultural, educational, and volunteer service opportunities.

¹¹ Rabbi Edmund A. Landau (1875-1945) was the first permanent rabbi of Temple B'nai Israel, leading the congregation for 47 years. He was born in Ontario, Canada, and raised in Michigan. His family was originally from East Prussia.

WEINTRAUB: He did.

BERMAN: Can you describe a personal interaction that you had with him?

WEINTRAUB: Let me think. I never had any reason to be afraid of him. You might not believe it, but I was a very obedient child, and I took him seriously. My regular school, I didn't take so seriously, but I did take him seriously. When we had to learn our stuff at the temple, one week I took it on myself to learn all the books of the *Bible*, starting with Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, etc. Nobody had done that before, as far as I know. When I got through, he applauded. Everybody else stood up and applauded. He also had us come in and . . . I was four or five as far as I remember. We were supposed to say the Ten Commandments.¹² I think we had five of us in our kindergarten class. I had the seventh commandment. I don't remember which one I had before that. When I stood up, nobody knew exactly whether I said, "Thou shalt not omit adultery," or whether I said, "Thou shalt not admit adultery." But I did not say, "commit adultery." They never let me live that down. When he got sick and couldn't work anymore . . . the base pay for a rabbi those days I don't think was very high, but everybody took care of Dr. Landau. My father, during all the years he was sick, which I think was four years, Dad conducted the services at the temple. He did the funerals. Whatever anybody insisted on giving him, he gave to Dr. Landau. He felt Dr. Landau should have it. I don't know if the Landaus knew that, but that's what Dad did.

BERMAN: Were most of your friends from within the Jewish community or were they from your neighborhood and your school?

WEINTRAUB: Terese [sp] and I, she was a year ahead of me in school, but she and I were very good friends as young children. As we got older, she matured faster than I did. I was still a shy little girl, and she was a lot more outgoing. I have two first cousins here also, one of whom was a year ahead of Terese, and the other one was three years behind me. I was much closer to the younger one. Their mother died when Janet, who is the younger one, was 11. Aunt Carrie, who had no children, took her and Pauline in and raised them and educated them. Janet and I were practically in each other's pockets because we were very close to Aunt Carrie. In fact, Janet taught me how to smoke when I was 17. <Laughs>

¹² According to Jewish tradition, the "Ten Commandments" are ten categories that contain 613 mitzvot (Hebrew: commandments). The ten categories are significant because they form the basis of man's relationship with G-d and man's relationship with his fellow people. While G-d directly gave the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people, it was Moses, who also led the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt, that received the tablets and brought them down from Mount Sinai.

BERMAN: What about within your own home. Were Jewish traditions important? Did you have a Sabbath¹³ meal?

WEINTRAUB: We didn't, and I'll tell you why. Because my mother worked, I think, as soon as they got back into business after the Depression. When they started back, she went to work. I don't think she ever worked before. They had the choice of her fixing a Sabbath meal or of getting to temple. So, they chose to go to temple. That was what they did.

BERMAN: What about your Passover¹⁴ experience or traditions? Can we talk about that a little bit about that?

WEINTRAUB: Yes. That was the whole family. When I sit down, we're all there. Those who are gone. Those who are still living but are somewhere else. It was Aunt Carrie, Uncle Charlie, Uncle Lionel, and Uncle Sidney. When Janet and Pauline were with them, they were there too. My parents, myself, and my four brothers and sisters. Of course, as we got married, the other part of the family came in. We had it, as I remember it as a young person, we either had it at Aunt Carrie's house or our house. We had a little gray book, which I wish I still had. I gave it to Glenn [Weintraub] because we bought new books. They got lost with all of his travels. My dad conducted the service. We always had somebody who wasn't Jewish there. Dad would give a sermon on Passover before it ever started to try to explain to them. He did not do the whole book. He could not read Hebrew. He didn't miss any glasses of wine, though, I'll tell you that! He was a very intelligent and a very intellectually curious person. He would have all these tales. When it was the Dayenu¹⁵ part, he always said "daryna." I didn't know

¹³ *Shabbat* (Hebrew) or *Shabbos* (Yiddish) is the Jewish day of rest and is observed on Saturdays. *Shabbat* observance entails refraining from work activities, often with great rigor, and engaging in restful activities to honor the day. *Shabbat* begins at sundown on Friday night and is ushered in by lighting candles and reciting a blessing. It is closed the following evening with the recitation of the *havdalah* blessing.

¹⁴ Hebrew: *Pesach*. The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating *matzah* during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled 'kosher for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

¹⁵ Dayenu (Hebrew) is a song that is part of the Passover *seder*, meaning "it would have been sufficient." This traditional up-beat Passover song is over 1,000 years old. The earliest full text of the song occurs in the first medieval *Haggadah* after the telling of the story of the exodus and just before the explanation of Passover and *matzah*. The song is about being grateful to God for all the gifts he gave the Jewish people.

what Dayenu was the first time I heard it. But we always had the service. We had all of the symbols. We had horseradish and parsley. If we couldn't get horseradish, we had regular radishes. We had a hard-boiled egg. We did not have a hard-boiled egg to eat, which a lot of people did, but we had the four symbols. The youngest child, as soon as he was old enough to talk, asked The Four Questions.¹⁶ The meal, we didn't have jumping up and running and all, but it was my . . . it's still my favorite holiday.

BERMAN: Did you have any food traditions?

WEINTRAUB: We had the *matzah* ball¹⁷ soup.

BERMAN: Can you talk a little bit about the tradition of the *matzah* ball soup? How did it get passed down?

WEINTRAUB: It started with my great grandparents. I suppose whoever did their cooking . . . I'm sure that my great grandmother gave them some instructions, and they did their own thing with it. Then it went to my grandmother's side and my father's and Aunt Carrie, who has carried it on, and my mother carried it on. I don't think my mother's family did it at all – not that way. I don't know how other people's charoset is, but ours was not with kosher wine. We use the Bristol Cream. We had raisins, nuts, apples, sugar, cinnamon, and wine. Mother used to make it every year. She would put the charoset out, and every year, Dad's sisters and brothers and he said that their mother made it into balls. So, they had charoset balls. Mother tried everything, using honey instead of sugar. Everything she could think of, and she never could do it. The first year I had to do it after my grandmother died . . . she helped mother with it, and I started making it then. When they told me that, the next year I got some seeded raisins. I cut them up and they stuck together with the rest of it. So, I had charoset balls. There was not one word said. I never did that again. It probably didn't taste as good because you didn't have much wine. You had it all stuck together.

BERMAN: Who did the cooking? Did your mother do the cooking or your grandmother?

¹⁶ The Four Questions [Yiddish: *Fir Kashes*; Hebrew: *Ma Nishtana*] are part of the Passover *seder*. These questions provide the impetus for telling why this night is different from all other nights. They are traditionally asked by the youngest child (who is able to speak) and are: (introductory question) Why is this night different than all other nights? 1. Why is it that on all other nights we eat either bread or *matzah*, and on this night we eat only *matzah*? 2. Why is it that on all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on this night we only eat bitter herbs? 3. Why is it on all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once, but on this night we dip them twice? 4. Why is it on all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we only eat in a reclining position?

¹⁷ A dumpling made from *matzah* meal, an Ashkenazi custom. The balls are dropped into chicken soup or boiling water. They are popular during Passover.

Or did you have household help?

WEINTRAUB: We had household help. My aunt was a wonderful cook. She and her husband had a drugstore for many, many, many years then my Uncle Lionel went in with them. During the Depression, Aunt Carrie single handedly kept that drugstore open. She would come down in the morning. She would go to . . . there was a grocery store within walking distance. She would walk to the grocery store. She would buy supplies. She would come back to the drugstore. She would prepare breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I don't know what the price of the dinners were or breakfast, but her lunches were, I think, 25 cents. They had two vegetables, rolls, a salad, a meat, and a dessert. And they had a drink. People would come there and eat every day. I don't think they had a dinner. I think she just did breakfast and lunch, excuse me. My uncles, they were very peculiar in that they marked their profit when they bought merchandise. They would never reduce their prices. I mean, never. When World War II came along, and nobody had anything, they had a whole upstairs attic part full of merchandise. They had patent medicines. I don't know if you remember, but they used to have these dresser sets with the brushes, combs, mirrors, and nail stuff. They were fancy and expensive. They sold out of those, I think, the first year. We had a military base here. They had fancy soap that they sold for \$1. Soap was very inexpensive. People bought all the soap they had. Anything that was hard to get, they had upstairs in their attic. They used to sell nylon hose when they first came out. They were made out of parachute nylon. I worked there during the summers. My Uncle Lionel was still there when Joe [Joseph Weintraub] and I got married. At Christmastime, the Sterne Company would close because that was when they got everything ready for the next year. Joe would go to work there over Christmas. He is a wonderful salesman. He was very good. Everybody had his own cash register. Uncle Lionel had a habit, I don't care where he was. It was sort of a contest. There was no prize or anything. When somebody was making a good sale, all of a sudden he was there to take the money and give them the thing back. So, Joe never got to ring up his own sales.

BERMAN: What was the name of their store?

WEINTRAUB: Robinson Drug Company. They bought anything that anybody offered them that was a deal. But like I said, they didn't reduce their prices. They added their profit from the regular price. But if anybody from one of the other drugstores wanted to buy something, they gave them a discount. These were the days when people made up their own prescriptions.

Uncle Lionel was supplying all the drugstores with their stuff to make up the prescriptions because he bought it all on a deal and they didn't. He made his profit. They had enough room to make a profit too.

BERMAN: Getting back to the cooking for Passover.

WEINTRAUB: For dessert, we had meringues with strawberries and ice cream and whipped cream. But we did not have *matzah* cake because mother didn't know how to make it. She tried it, and it didn't come out good. Lizzie never made cake. She made pies.

BERMAN: Lizzie was your . . .

WEINTRAUB: She went to work for my parents when my brother was eight months old. He's three years older than I am.

BERMAN: What was her last name?

WEINTRAUB: Keen. K-E-E-N. I didn't know it, but everyone in the . . . we used to call it "colored" . . . in the colored community called her "Miss T." I wish I would have known that because she's so much more a Miss T than a Lizzie. She raised not only us. I found out after she died, we were either the third or fourth family she had raised. She taught herself to read from the *Bible*. Her father, I think, was a slave. He sharecropped. His wife died when Lizzie's younger sister was born. Lizzie, I think, was the third from the youngest. I think they had like 12 children. Her father went to town every Saturday. He always brought them back candy. She had three brothers who were very successful. One of them lived in Albany. He had a little grocery store. He was as respected as anybody. I mean, he paid his bills. He made his profit. She lived across the street from his store, and I used to go down the road. They didn't live far from us, but it wasn't paved. I used to play with her nieces, and she would go to his store and get some vanilla wafers and come back and make us lemonade. We had lemonade and vanilla wafers. Incidentally, when her granddaughter got married, she wore my wedding dress as did my cousin Janet and my sister Pauline, Blanche, and I.

BERMAN: Can you describe your feelings for Lizzie?

WEINTRAUB: All of us thought Lizzie loved us the best. She never raised her voice to us. Our parents were strict. We always knew they loved us. I guess the German Jewish was reserved. They would kiss us at night when we went to bed. If they went out of town, they would kiss us goodbye. When they came back, they kissed us hello. They read to us a lot. They took a great interest in us and taught us a lot. But the open affection we got came from

Lizzie and whatever nurses were there at the time. You were asking me about help. My mother knew how to live in great luxury with no money whatsoever. Lizzie was there, depending on how many babies and diapers and things were there. We had a wash woman. I don't know how many times a week, but they would come to the house and boil everything. Then they would iron it. Everybody had a nurse. There was one nurse there with whatever kids were there at the time. She had a hairdresser who came to the house. She had a sewing lady. We went to her house. The sewing lady, her husband worked for the post office. He had money. We didn't have any. Everybody who worked at the house toted. Do you know what toting is? I mean, clothes, food, whatever. Lizzie's house was full of things. I can remember when I would go over to her house, I saw stuff that I didn't remember we had had. Lizzie's brothers all tried to help her financially. She helped everybody. White, black, green, purple. She didn't care. But she did not want anybody to do anything for her. Mother and Dad had to figure a way to try to pay her in some way for what all she did for them. If she stayed with us, if our nurse couldn't stay, she would not take anything for it.

BERMAN: Did she have her own children?

WEINTRAUB: She had one son. His name was Pug. I don't know what his name was, but he was called Pug. He was a veteran of World War II. While he was overseas, he drank something that came out of a car, and it made him blind. I don't know, he thought maybe it was alcohol. She raised his daughter. His wife was still living, but I think he lived with Lizzie and the wife and kids lived separately. Lizzie had two nieces that lived with her when I was in grammar school. When Pauline came along, she had Blanche, who was Pug's daughter and was his oldest child. She raised her.

<End Video 2>

<Begin Video 3>

WEINTRAUB: She had as good as morals. She didn't always have the same exact feeling of right and wrong like we did. She believed in taking care of whatever needs to be taken care of. I don't mean that necessarily . . . she would do things that I wouldn't have thought of. She had potted plants that she loved on her porch. She had a fenced in yard. There was a white housing project next to her. The children from that project would go into her front yard and throw all of her potted plants on the ground. She complained to the parents. The parents wouldn't do anything at all. She finally announced to me one day that the next time a child came into her

yard and bothered her stuff, she would was going to shoot him. I said, “You can’t shoot them, Lizzie. Those are children. I don’t care who they are.” She said, “Oh, yes I can too.” I said, “They will put you in prison.” She said, “I’ll go to prison.” She went and talked to the man who was in charge of the housing projects. Or my father talked to him. I don’t know. He went over and talked to those families and told them that the next child that went into her yard, the whole family was going to be moved out of the housing project.

<interruption in video>

BERMAN: I believe we were talking about Lizzie and her family. Where exactly did we leave off?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The difference in moral . . .

BERMAN: Yes. The people who came into the yard.

WEINTRAUB: My niece, who is my younger brother’s daughter, she was the baby in the family. They used to bring the kids at least once a year. This was probably Susan’s first visit. She was four. She did come as a baby. She walked back in the kitchen. She picked up her little foot, and she kicked Lizzie. Lizzie looked at her. She said, “Susan, foots is not made for kicking. Foots is made for walking.” Susan turned around and screamed into the living room and told her mother and daddy that Lizzie was mean to her. Neither one of them said a word to Lizzie. They didn’t criticize her. They knew Lizzie <unintelligible> whatever she said. I don’t know if they knew what was said.

BERMAN: Growing up in this period, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, before really the Civil Rights Movement¹⁸ got started, did you think at all about the discrimination that was going on for a person like Lizzie with the separate drinking fountains? The separate bathroom facilities?

WEINTRAUB: I did not really think of that, but I was raised to treat everybody with total respect, to treat everybody fairly. My father really thought of African-Americans as children. He thought that they had not been educated, which was the South’s fault, and they could not take care of themselves, and it was up to him to help them and to take care of them. He always was

¹⁸ The American Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them. The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Noted legislative achievements during this phase of the Civil Rights Movement were passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

respectful. Lizzie told me, she said my parents were two of the finest people anybody would ever meet anywhere. We all loved her, and she loved all of us. It was not an equal thing. When the folks died and she came out here, I had a hard time getting her to sit at the table with us. When Joe and I first started camping with the kids, which was when the folks were still living. Dad died in 1970. Mother died 1971. This was in the 1960s. Lizzie was going to New York to see Blanche, her granddaughter. When she found out we were going up there to a convention. We were going to take the camper and camp along the way. She informed us she was going with us. Well, in those days, private camp grounds were segregated. Joe got on the phone and he contacted state and federal camp grounds all the way up to New York so that Lizzie could stay in the campground with us because they were not segregated. We never said anything to Lizzie. She wound up deciding not to go with us. However, I was thinking I would be the only person in the whole camping industry who had somebody who wouldn't let me do a thing. She was a character, though. She used to go up to see Blanche, and she would take the bus. After she was coming here, she was older than my father, who died when he was in his 70s, fairly early 70s. She was going to take the bus. She had arthritis, and she had troubles. Joe and I wanted to fly her to New York. We could have flown from Albany to Atlanta and then to New York. It would have taken her about four and half hours. We told her we would like for her to fly. She said no. We said, "Lizzie, we're going to pay for it. You don't need to take the bus. It's not good for your back. It's not good for you at all. They're crowded." She said, "No, I'm going to take the bus." We said, "Lizzie, if you take the bus, it's going to take 14 hours. If you fly, it's going to take 4 ½ hours." She said, "See, I'll get my money's worth."

BERMAN: Do you have any recollection of what it was like here during, what they've called the Albany Movement¹⁹ and what it was like for the Jewish community as well as your relationship with . . .

WEINTRAUB: Our Jewish community, and I'm not proud to say this, was very uneasy. We had people from all areas, everywhere who came into Albany. Albany had always been . . . I'm

¹⁹ The Albany Movement challenged all forms of racial segregation and discrimination. The coalition began in Albany, Georgia, November 1961 and ended summer 1962. It was formed by local black leaders and ministers, along with members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Leadership Conference (SLC) joined the movement in December 1961.

not saying that everybody abided by the law, but there was very, very little, if any, violence. I mean, there were plenty of people who were derogatory toward other people. When they came here, there were quite a few Jewish who came. They decided to integrate the temple. This Jewish girl came to temple one Friday night. She was barefooted. She was dirty. Her hair was a total mess. She was not dressed for that at all. She had a little colored child with her, who looked like he or she came out of a bandbox. Just darling. Nobody said anything. She came in and she attended the service. There was no problem. We have a couple of African-American members now. I don't know if anybody told you. I mean, our relationship with the African-American community was with the people who worked with us, who knew us and who we knew. I have never had anything with anybody that I knew that was not a really pleasant, warm relationship. Jacob Javits²⁰ called my father and wanted to know if it would be helpful for him to come down here. Dad told him under no circumstances should he come, and he didn't. We had a wonderful police chief at the time, Laurie Pritchett,²¹ who kept the white and colored people separated. I don't know where some of these people came from. Joe and I went to a movie downtown one night. We saw these pasty-faced white people that looked like, I can't even tell you. They looked like they came out of the sewers with cockroaches, is all I can tell you. They, obviously, were looking for trouble. They also had African-Americans who were looking for trouble. I'm not saying that nobody in Albany was looking for trouble. They could have been. We weren't. I'm very ashamed of the fact that when Martin Luther King²² in

²⁰ Jacob Javits (1904-1986) was a United States Senator from New York, who served from 1957 to 1981. He is known for championing the rights of the average American and an ardent proponent of civil rights. Javits played a key role in the Senate's passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

²¹ Laurie Pritchett (1926-2000) was born in Griffin, Georgia. He was the Chief of Police in Albany, Georgia, during the 1961-1962 Albany Movement. He was notable for using non-brutal methods based on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s own tactics, which greatly differed from the way most police departments handled such demonstrations at the time.

²² Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) is best known for his role as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement and the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs. A Baptist minister, King became a civil rights activist early in his career. He led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957, serving as its first president. With the SCLC, King led an unsuccessful struggle against segregation in Albany, Georgia, in 1962, and organized nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, that attracted national attention following television news coverage of the brutal police response. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. On October 14, 1964, King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence. In 1965, he and the SCLC helped to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches and the following year, he took the movement north to Chicago to work on segregated housing. King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by riots in many United States' cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971, and as a United States federal holiday in 1986.

one of his talks, he said, “We cannot go into places and sit down and order a glass of iced tea.” I thought to myself, “Who wants a glass of iced tea?” I didn’t drink iced tea, what I can say. I didn’t get the point.

BERMAN: Did you ever discuss any of this with Lizzie?

WEINTRAUB: No. I’m sure she had her views, but she got mad with her church. I do not know why. She used to cook for them all the time and raise money for them all the time. She raised chickens for pets. She gave all the eggs away because she wouldn’t eat eggs from the chickens. She wouldn’t eat the chickens. She gave anybody who was white or black who was near to her. She just was a good person. She didn’t care what color you were. If you were a decent person, that was fine. She wanted to make her own way. She did not want anybody to do anything for her. She would not let her brothers help her. She had her own little house.

BERMAN: Do you think any members of the synagogue were actively in any kind of White Citizens’ Council?²³

WEINTRAUB: I don’t think so. They could have been, but I didn’t know anything about it. There were some people in our congregation, and still are, who never liked African-American people just because of their color.

BERMAN: Was there much [Ku Klux] Klan²⁴ activity here in Albany?

WEINTRAUB: My father had a story that the Klan wanted to run somebody for mayor, and they put up a member of the Jewish community, where upon the Jewish community put up a Christian to run against him. But the Klan didn’t win. My father had stories. Whether they were true or not, I could not tell you. He swore that was true. I’m not saying he made it up.

BERMAN: Did you ever see a Klan march or rally?

WEINTRAUB: No, but my mother who lived in Atlanta. You know about the lynching?

BERMAN: Yes.

WEINTRAUB: She lived on 14th Street on the way to the governor’s mansion. My

²³ White Citizens’ Council (WCC) was an American white supremacist organization formed on July 11, 1954. After 1956, it was known as the Citizens’ Councils of America. It had about 60,000 members, mostly in the South, and was opposed to racial integration during the 1950’s and 1960’s when it retaliated with economic boycotts and strong intimidation against black activists, including depriving them of jobs. By the 1970’s its influence had faded.

²⁴ The Ku Klux Klan (or Knights of the Ku Klux Klan today) is a white supremacist, white nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-black secret society, whose methods included terrorism and murder. It was founded in the South in the 1860’s and then died out and come back several times, most notably in the 1920’s when membership soared again, and then again in the 1960’s during the civil rights era. When the Klan was re-founded in 1915 in Georgia, the event was marked by a cross burning on Stone Mountain. In the past it’s members dressed up in white robes and a pointed hat designed to hide their identity and to terrify. It is still in existence.

Grandfather Gershon and the governor [John Marshall Slaton]²⁵ were good friends. Mother said that people from the community marched right past their house to go to lynch him. I don't know whether they lynched him at that time. Not the governor, but they wanted to lynch Leo Frank.²⁶ Her father had all of them hide under the steps in the house. I guess there was a door. He stood in the front door with a shotgun to defend his family. She said it was a very difficult situation. She went to North Avenue Presbyterian School. She wanted to go to college, so she went to Goucher [College] for one year. When Dad proposed to her, she decided she wanted to get married instead. Papa made her finish that one year of school.

BERMAN: That's great.

WEINTRAUB: The only antisemitic remark I ever heard, I'm sure there must have been a lot of them in town, but when I was in the sixth grade, a bunch of my friends came over to the house. There was one new girl who had come into town. She told me that her mother didn't want her to play with me because I was a Jew. So, I told her to go home. That was fine. Everybody in that group, I don't know what they did or what they said, but she came back the next day in school and apologized to me. But I still didn't want to be friends. That's the only thing I remember then. They sent me to New Orleans [Louisiana] to school because I had very few Jewish contacts here. They wanted me to go to a big city, coming from a small town. I think Albany was about 15,000 at that time. They wanted me to go to a place that there was a large Jewish community. They wanted me to go where I couldn't just take the bus and come home. They gave me two choices: Newcomb [College] and Goucher. They did not give me Atlanta. They thought I could just get on the bus and come home. I chose New Orleans

²⁵ John Marshall Slaton, or Jack Slaton, (1866-1955) served two non-consecutive terms as the 60th Governor of Georgia. His political career was ended in 1915 after he commuted the death penalty sentence of Atlanta factory boss Leo Frank, who had been convicted for the murder of a teenage girl employee. Because of Slaton's law firm partnership with Frank's defense counsel, claims were made that Slaton's involvement raised a conflict of interest. Soon after Slaton's action, Frank was lynched. After Slaton's term as governor ended, he and his wife left the state for a decade. Slaton later served as president of the Georgia State Bar Association.

²⁶ Leo Frank (1884-1915) was a Jewish factory superintendent in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1913, he was accused of raping and murdering one of his employees, a 13-year-old girl named Mary Phagan, whose body was found on the premises of the National Pencil Company. Frank was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to death for her murder. The trial was the catalyst for a great outburst of antisemitism led by the populist Tom Watson and the center of powerful class and political interests. Frank was sent to Milledgeville State Penitentiary to await his execution. Governor John M. Slaton, believing there had been a miscarriage of justice, commuted Frank's sentence to life in prison. This enraged a group of men who styled themselves the "Knights of Mary Phagan." They drove to the prison, kidnapped Frank from his cell and drove him to Marietta, Georgia where they lynched him. Many years later, the murderer was revealed to be Jim Conley, who had lied in the trial, pinning it on Frank instead. Frank was pardoned on March 11, 1986, although they stopped short of exonerating him.

because my mother went to Gaucher. That was, I guess, my rebellion.

BERMAN: Did you finish there?

WEINTRAUB: I quit after three years. My father never said a word, but he was directing me to be a teacher. I felt it in my bones. When I was in school here, as soon as you went away, you had <unintelligible> classes. I did not. I took four years of Latin. I couldn't take biology. I took chemistry, physics, four years of math. We only had 11 years of school at that time. Those were the things that I had to take. When I went to Newcomb, it was a liberal arts school. I wanted to be a journalist. I was an English major. If it was a class that I enjoyed or a course I enjoyed, I did well. If I didn't like it, I did poorly. Unless I heard anything by osmosis, I didn't know it. I had a good time. I was not a social butterfly. I was not really one of these popular people. I just liked the friendship that I had. They taught me how to play bridge. I learned to smoke because of them. I just really enjoyed, and I enjoyed the sorority part. But Dad told me that ladies were not journalists. That left a sociologist or a person who worked in psychology. It would have served him right if I had gone into psychology because he had no confidence in psychology at all. There was one English course I would have liked to have taken, but it was expensive. I didn't see the point in them spending money for stuff that I didn't want to learn. So, I told him I wasn't going back. Then they told me I could transfer. They didn't tell me I could be a journalist. If I really wanted to be one, I would have been a journalist. It wasn't so much what I wanted to be as what I wasn't going to be. My great aunt, my grandmother, my aunt – Pauline and Janet's mother, my cousin – Janet's sister Pauline, they all were teachers. My brother George taught when he was at Tulane [University] as a pediatrician. He taught classes there. Neal [Weintraub] teaches at university. Neil doesn't have a private practice. He practices in the clinic. Teachers were all through our family. I don't know about on the other side of it. I was determined I wasn't going to be a teacher. If they told me not to be a teacher, I probably would have been determined to be one. I'm glad I didn't have to raise me. If they told me don't do something, I didn't do it. If I had to do something, there was nothing that they could taken away privilege that would have made me do what I wasn't going to do.

BERMAN: Were you a member of a Jewish sorority?

WEINTRAUB: AEPi [Alpha Epsilon Pi].²⁷

²⁷ Alpha Epsilon Phi ('AEPi' or 'AEPi') is the global Jewish college fraternity with active chapters in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, and Israel with a membership of over 9,000 undergraduates. Alpha Epsilon Phi is a Jewish fraternity, though non-discriminatory and open to all who are willing to espouse its purpose

BERMAN: Was that important to your parents?

WEINTRAUB: I don't think so. It was important to my Aunt Claire [sp] in Atlanta. She had all these people write letters for me. I didn't know anything about it. When I got there, I did go through <unintelligible>. There was one other Jewish sorority. I was invited to join it. I was invited to join AEPi and I joined AEPi. It was the kind of thing, if you're not in it, you're missing all this stuff. But if you're in it, you realize you're not missing all that much. I'd say probably it was pretty good for me because I got to be around people that I might not necessarily had been friends with, and I became friends with them. My big sister's mother and father were wonderful to me. They lived in New Orleans. I went over there to dinner very often. They just took me under their wings. They were very nice.

<End Video 3>

<Begin Video 4>

BERMAN: Was it important for your parents . . . Did they want you to date only Jewish young men?

WEINTRAUB: No, they didn't tell me to date only Jewish men. Maybe they learned by then. But I did not date anybody who wasn't Jewish in New Orleans. My first year there were boys who were not in Tulane or in the college. Very, very few. A girl from here had gone out with a guy from the air base. He was from New Orleans. I was 17. He was 28. She told him to call me, which he did. He was very nice to me. He took me out. He was always very respectful. All of our social life was in the French Quarter. My father told me I could not drink, so I always had a lemonade. After I don't know how many months of lemonades, I asked him, "Please can I have just one drink?" I think by then I was 18. Everyone kept ordering another round of drinks. I was surrounded by these huge glasses of lemonade. I had the one drink, and I said no more for me. So, I wasn't surrounded by those. Joe is Jewish. He wasn't really serious. He was a boy I enjoyed being with, and he enjoyed being with me, but we were so different.

BERMAN: How did you meet Joe?

WEINTRAUB: I met Joe when I moved to Atlanta. I took a course in shorthand. I already was a pretty good typist. That was when I went to work for ADL [Anti-Defamation League] before I finished that class. I don't think anybody Jewish was qualified at all. They hired me. I was living with my Aunt Claire. When I got a job, I met this girl Rhoda. We were

and values.

roommates. She was Jewish. She and I roomed together. She met Joe. I do not know how. He asked her out. She had a good time. I met him when he came to the door to pick her up. She didn't hear from him anymore. About a month later he called me, and we've been going together ever since.

BERMAN: You mentioned before your father had him investigated.

WEINTRAUB: He did. Dad said he did not know it. He said this guy must have been an absolutely frustrated private detective. We were going out a lot. He started telling me that all these people were telling him that somebody was checking up on him. He heard from United States Navy. He heard from his boss and people that you wouldn't even think you would hear from that people had been checking up on him. He thought maybe he was going to be offered a very important government position. I don't know what happened, but we were going to the fair in Atlanta one night. I had talked to him on the phone before that. He was telling me about somebody told him that they had heard from somebody about him. I hung up the phone, and all of a sudden, a light turned on. I picked up the phone and called home. Mother answered the phone. I said, "Y'all been checking up on Joe?" She said, "Here, Lee." She him the phone. That was the most embarrassed I have ever been in my life and the most angry I had ever been with my parents. In the first place, I was 24 years old and I've never shown any sign that I had bad judgement, as far as people were concerned. In fact, I was probably a lot more judgmental than they were because everybody I met, I looked at through my parents' eyes. My parents were probably not nearly as judgmental as I thought they were. I couldn't understand why they would think something like that. I guess it was because what happened to my brother. Dad said he had gotten a thing like this <she gestures with her hands to show height>. When he got on the phone, he did say he was sorry and he tried to be discreet and he did not go to anybody in the Jewish community but that he was sure that Joe would understand, if not then, when he would have a daughter of his own. We went out. I was so embarrassed. I was so scared. I didn't say a word until we got back home from the fair. I was sitting on the merry-go-round like this <she gestures to show fright>. I wouldn't get on the rollercoaster. When he pulled into the driveway and turned off the motor, I told him. He was quiet for a minute. He was so nice. He said he understood perfectly. He did not blame my father at all. Dad told me that there was not one word about Joe that was not exceptionally good. About his father, it was not good. Joe knew that his father was a scoundrel. He didn't know all the stuff, I guess. Certainly, Dad

never told me anything. But Dad was concerned because he was afraid that Joe's father might make a problem for us in Atlanta, which was one reason he was so anxious for us to move back here.

BERMAN: What did you and Joe do for a living?

WEINTRAUB: I worked at ADL.

BERMAN: No, here in Albany.

WEIBTRAUB: We went into the Sterne Company, the family business. Joe was working for West Lumber Company. He was making a lot of money because they moved him over to the real estate. They owned the property. They sold the property to somebody who wanted to build on it. Then they loaned the money to the contractor, and they sold the supplies. They controlled the whole thing. Joe had a cousin that was just going into the contracting business. He got started with him. Joe told me that he was sure that we would have been millionaires if he had stayed there. I figured we did all right here. We weren't millionaires. We always made a good living. We managed to educate all three of our kids wherever they wanted to go.

BERMAN: How would you describe your life in Albany?

WEINTRAUB: It's the only place I've ever really lived. I lived in Atlanta for a year. I lived in New Orleans for three years. In New Orleans at the time I was in school, it was almost like living at home. They had parental authority over you. When I moved to Atlanta, it was sort of a culture shock. Everybody who wanted to take you out in New Orleans, they had to come into the dormitory. They had to go in to meet the lady in the parlor. She had to call you down. They had to talk to her until you came down. They had to bring you back. You had so many 10:30s or 10:15s a month. You had 10:15s on the weekend. You had four 12 o'clocks in the whole year. Something like that. They watched you pretty closely. You could not smoke inside the dormitory or anywhere, only on the grounds. They really had their rules. If you got 10 call downs, I forgot what happened. I never got a call down. I told you I was very obedient.

BERMAN: Have you been happy living in Albany?

WEINTRAUB: I have. I am happy. You can't tell?

BERMAN: Yes.

WEINTRAUB: We've had our troubles and problems. I'm sure everybody does. My Uncle Sidney Sterne, he and Dad were partners. My brother Lee was a partner. Joe and I went in when he had the promise of receiving an interest. We had been working there a few years. My

Uncle Sidney, nobody in the family ever married anybody that he approved of. He asked Joe what part of Brooklyn he came from. In fact, he thought girls weren't as good as guys anyway. One time, I told him that the people in our family in the older generation who were the top of the line were my great grandmother, my mother . . . my mother wasn't more than my father. I said that the women were all exceptional. When my brother's wife was leaving - his second wife. She had mental problems and emotional problems. They were leaving because his son's psychiatrist said that she could not live in Albany with me and my mother. She wanted to be thee Mrs. Lee Sterne. She wanted to be thee daughter. But both of those places were taken. Uncle Sidney offered to let Uncle Lee to take over his portfolio, which he never would have let him do, but he was going to anyway. Uncle Sidney told me, "I don't know why he won't do that." He says, "What's a wife? She's not blood. She's no kin to him." I said, "Uncle Sidney, you don't think your mother and father were related to each other?" He had a very strange philosophy.

BERMAN: Are you proud of your Southern heritage?

WEINTRAUB: I am. Well, I'm proud of the people that I know of who were here. I'm very comfortable with the people that I know and like. I do want to tell you that when we go the gym, our classes, Joe and I are the only two members in there. All the rest of them are Christian. A lot of them are African-American, and a lot of them are white. I feel like all of them are my friends. We're all friendly with each other. Most of the African-Americans are educated, and their children have good positions. But there are people in the African-American community, and I'm not saying this because they're not white, I'm saying it because they just happen to be in that community. I will also begin it by saying that white people, and I'm not saying thee "white people," I'm saying the ones who are in control of the school boards, running the city, a lot of them in the last generation or so were not what I would call honorable people. Whereas, in the beginning, it was sort of like the beginning of this country, I guess, where the people who really wanted something to succeed and thought to be community good for all. These people, they traded positions for power. And they traded favors for power. They gave money. They gave jobs. I'm talking about the white people. Anybody who objected to the things they were doing was sort of like in the temple at one time when it was one of them. David, my son-in-law, was always on the other side, as our family has always been even though they couldn't say that we were one of them because we were here first. I don't know what to

tell you. We always felt like that you do what you think is right. My father's mother preached to them that you have to accept change. So, he preached it to us. David is an architect. He could have been the architect in the city of Albany, Georgia. Even other architects say he's by far . . . he is so gifted. He doesn't need to be here. He wanted a family, and he liked us as a family. I don't think he particularly wanted the big city life that he had had. He renovated the auditorium downtown. They asked him to underbid, which he refused to do. He was going to tell them exactly what it was going to cost. They said he should put it in the budget. Next year, we'll put more of it in the budget. You just tell them you need more. David wasn't going to do that. He said, "If I'm going to tell you how much it's going to cost, I'm going to tell you how much it's going to cost." That flood²⁸ was horrible for Albany because all these schools that were torn down and they were rebuilding them. Some of these carpet baggers from Atlanta came rebuilding the schools. They appointed or hired some of the local architects. The job that David got, they wanted him to falsify what it was going to cost or what he bid on it. He would not do that. It was Beers Moody [Construction Company] who was sent out of business. They had been completely dishonored because they were terrible crooks. They fired David. He wanted to appeal before the school board, who would not allow him to appear. They fired him without cause, so he couldn't sue them. He filed suit against both of them anyway. That was the only way he could get any records from the Freedom of Information Act. He got all this stuff that Beers Moody wasn't doing. I mean, David is a master estimator. The builders and architects from here went right along. I don't know how much money they stole. The school board would not listen. David tried to go to the district attorney, who was a law partner of the mayor of Albany, who was the school board attorney, who still is the school board attorney. I'm telling you, David has not to this day since then has not gotten any city jobs. He built the school board building. He did the two libraries. He was getting all of that. He did excellent work. He watched his work. And he's very honest and honorable. But they cut him out like you would not believe. So, he ran for the school board. They were going with all of this property. They were buying from someone that they favored. They had to put

²⁸ The Great Flood of 1994 destroyed large sections of Albany and other areas of Southwest Georgia. The flood was the result of Tropical Storm Alberto and killed 31 people while making thousands temporarily homeless. Flood waters split Albany in half with waters reaching 43 feet. Officials report the portion of Georgia covered by the flood waters was the equivalent in size to Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined. A memorial now stands in tribute to the thousands of volunteers who helped rebuild Albany after the devastation.

in all the utilities. Whereas, there was property that cost a whole lot less. They had everything in that was in the area that it should have been in. The people who lived out where they wanted to move it, was so opposed to it. David won the school board. He's been on it ever since. Last year, he was the chairman of the school board. But the African-Americans who have come in since, they want what the white power group was doing. They just again . . . David is himself. If he thinks it's a right idea or a good idea or if it is unimportant, he's not going to oppose it. That's just the way that he is. Carolyn says that when you look for the ten righteous men in the world, you are going to find one of them right over at her house.

BERMAN: That's so nice. That's wonderful. I guess I'd like to conclude with asking you if you could describe one of your fondest memories of growing up here in a small Southern town.

WEINTRAUB: It was a big family. My father's family all stayed here. His brothers and his sisters. Their children were here. We were here. When I went to school, we used to . . . when I was first old enough to do anything, I could walk downtown up until the time that I was 8 ½ years old. Nobody would bother you. In fact, if you were doing something you shouldn't be doing, your mother would be called. I didn't object to that. I liked having the freedom. The children all played together. I was very secure. When the Depression came, and they lost their business, I never knew it. Life went right on. Reb's husband sent money every month to help support his parents. He had left a life insurance policy if he died. My grandmother, she didn't die until she was almost 90. She felt like she was doing her part until then. I did not get along with my grandmother.

<End Video 4>

<Begin Video 5>

WEINTRAUB: I never understood that she really loved her grandchildren, but she was a fusser. I don't care what you did . . . I thought I got all the criticism, it wasn't good enough. She would go off to visit her family, and when she came back, I would be so excited. "Oh, we're going to get along fine." As soon as she walked in the door . . . I'd been reading the paper, she would say, "Why did you leave that paper there?" It would be right back where we were. I wouldn't let her teach me anything either. She was so beautiful. She crocheted beautifully. She could do a lot of things. She just wouldn't tell me about her past. My sisters had a harder time because Dad and mother were older. Mother never seemed to be old. Dad

was not the father when they were coming along because there is 18-year difference between my oldest brother and my youngest sister. There were not many children around with them. The house didn't have the noise of all of us kids. There were five of us. All five of us had a different mother, a different father, a different grandmother, a different background. Different events. I mean the same events happened differently at different times. I don't know how to explain it.

BERMAN: That's what memory is.

WEINTRAUB: It is. They always picked on me. I was the only daughter, the middle one between two brothers. Pauline didn't come along until seven years later after George, so I always claimed to be the middle child. George said he's the middle child. Pauline says she's the middle child of the second generation. I was persecuted. <Laughs>

BERMAN: On that note, I'd like to thank you for sharing your memories with us. We really appreciate it.

WEINTRAUB: You're so welcome and please come back any time. Tell me if I've said something before and I'll tell you something else.

BERMAN: You're great. This was wonderful. Thank you.

<End Video 5>

INTERVIEW ENDS