

ROCHESTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT (Rochester Jewish community 1924-1975)

Interviewees Dr. and Mrs. Murry Blanchard

Interviewer Bonnie Kantor

Date(s) of interview July 11, 1977

Setting (place of interview, people present, impressions)

The interview was conducted in the livingroom of the Blanchard home at 250 Hibiscus Drive. The session was interrupted twice by phone calls and once by a break for dessert. Throughout, only the Blanchard's and myself were present. The interviews would have been even more productive if each had been spoken with separately. Intermittantly Mrs. Blanchard stopped her husband from offering personal reflections on both a family matter and on certain people in the Jewish community. Despite this, in general they both remained rather candid throughout.

**Background of interviewee**

Mrs. Blanchard was born in Bridgeport Ct. in the 1920s and grew up in Hudson, New York, a community which included 100 Jewish families. Her immigrant parents considered themselves orthodox. She considers herself a committed Jew, especially in a moral sense. She has taught at Temple Brith Kodesh for the last 17 years and is active in the Federation, their woman's committee and the UJA. Dr. Blanchard was born in N.Y.C. in 1918 and was raised in Poukipsee. As a young adult he rebelled against his parent's orthodoxy and leaned toward reform Judaism. He became an optometrist in 1942 and took over a practice in Rochester in 1945. He too is extremely

Interview abstract active in the Jewish community in Rochester.

A most interesting area of the interviews centers around their son Eric's becoming a traditional, orthodox Jew. Peripherally, many of the other subjects raised plugged into this focal point. They discuss their reactions to his decision and how it effected their lives, his life, and their relationship with him. In addition, their perceptions of the moral commitment of Jews versus the ritualistic commitment are of interest as are their impressions of the Reform community and the changes which have been taking place within it. They also evidence keen perceptions concerning the need for improved adult education in the Jewish community.

Interview index (corresponding to tape numbers, sides of tape, and casset recorder numbers)

X Social history

X Family

X Demographic/residential

   Economic

   Political/civic

   Zionism/Israel

X Jewish community

X community relations

X Religious life

X Jewish education

X Anti-semitism

Interview log

a) corresponding to tape numbers, sides of tape, and casset recorder no

b) including references to others in the Rochester community

TAPE I SIDE A

Biographical data

Mrs. Blanchard

Born in Bridgeport in the 1920s  
Moved to Hudson as an infant  
Town of 100 Jewish families--all friends were Jewish  
Sister and brother did not have Jewish friends and are not  
nearly as committed to Judiasm as she is

Dr. Blanchard

Born in N.Y.C. July 4, 1918  
Father was a printer who received an orthodox Jewish education  
Raised in American orthodox tradition  
As a boy he rebelled against strict orthodoxy--he was  
upset that he didn't know what he was saying in temple  
As a young adult he favored reform Judiasm but was not  
religiously oriented  
Graduated from optometry school in 1942  
A member of the Signal Corps in Mt. Mamouth  
He had no temple affiliation when first married  
Lived in Buffalo for 10 months before coming to Rochester  
to take over a practice in April of 1945  
Had no temple affiliation here until children were old  
enough to go to religious school

Originally joined Beth El as a compromise--he wanted reform  
and she wanted orthodox  
Rabbi at the time was Stuart Rosenberg whom they did not  
like so they joined Brith Kodesh and have remained members  
of Brith Kodesh  
Both have been active in temple affairs  
Not intense temple goers  
More interested in action--programs of the temple

Reaction of Dr. Blanchard's parents to his rebellion against  
orthodoxy

He feels he was a product of his time  
His parents were first generation immigrants from Russia  
Now he feels guilty, but he had wanted to deny his Judiasm and  
assimilate into American culture  
The weakness of traditional Judiasm is that all the prayers  
are said in Hebrew.  
He feels that his parents understood his rebellion  
Parents spoke yiddish at home so he learned it as a second  
language and still can speak it

Mrs. Blanchard's background

She also speaks yiddish  
She learned to read and write it in hebrew school  
Her parents never spoke yiddish at home  
Parents were orthodox Jews  
Father received extensive hebrew education in a yeshiva in

Germany but decided that he wasn't the type to become a rabbi so ran away to America

Became a cattle farmer here

Met her husband when he was in optometry school in Columbia

When they moved to Rochester they know nothing of the Jewish community here

However, they didn't go to Newark NY as planned because it only had one Jewish family--thus Judaism indirectly played in their decision to come to Rochester

They had no firm concept of themselves as practicing Jews  
Kept kosher home when first married--she thought it would be nice--he didn't care

Lived in small apt. off E. Main st. in a non-Jewish neighborhood

Moved to Rosedale St. 1945

Rosedale was a Jewish neighborhood and they moved there for that reason

Lived on Warrington Dr. in Brighton for 16 years

13 years ago they built their present home

#### Occupations

Before they had children she was the Assistant to the Superintendent at NYS Training School for girls

Female version of Industry

From the school's inception they only had one Jewish girl in the school

She teaches at Brith Kodesh Hebrew and Sunday schools

She also helps her husband one day a week

She considers her home to be more religious than that of her parents

He likes the symbolism of the Sabbath but he has more of a commitment to the concept of Judaism than to the rituals

He has a strong sense of Jewish peoplehood

#### Children

Two boys--Eric born 1945; Jeffrey, 1947

Eric, who now calls himself Zvi, is a Ph.D. in Philosophy and teaches at Wash. U. in St. Louis. He is married--his wife is a Ph.D. candidate in history

Jeffrey is an optometrist with two children who practices with his father

The parents have kept in close contact with both of their sons

Jeffrey has a sense of his Jewish identity, but is much less committed than his brother--They feel that this is partly because his wife had no Jewish upbringing

The wife controls the religious life of the family unless she receives pressure from her husband

Eric's wife was from an orthodox background, but she wasn't nearly as religious as they are now

## Eric's orthodoxy

It was a trying experience for him when he decided to become orthodox

He had been an excellent hebrew school student

He had developed a strong rapport with Herbert Bronstein-- he has said that Bernstein was his inspiration

Became interested in the Talmud as a student in Wash. U.

Became very confused, took a year out to go to Israel

Finished his degree here and went through trying times

When he would see his parents, he would not practice his orthodoxy, but would when he was alone.

The fall after graduation he made the final decision to become traditional

## Their reactions

Each person has the right to decide for himself what is right for them, but that person must still be tolerant of others

They couldn't help him much in his decision

He never questioned their beliefs

TAPE 1 SIDE B

A problem arose since many physical things accompany orthodoxy

He had a problem eating in their home which wasn't resolved for two years

They now observe the way he does when he comes to their home--they observe the sabbath as he does when he visits.

They allow him the privilege of treating their home as if it were his

They consider it a blessing that the four of them like and respect each other

Eric's wife's family had been against the marriage

They didn't want their daughter marrying someone who was so religious--they were rebelling against their own Judaism

Dr. Blanchard feels that orthodoxy is a male chauvinist religion but his wife disagrees

They feel that their son is not like many orthodox who limit their outlook

Eric and Leah have no desire to go to Israel to live

The two sons do not have a close relationship --they both married two very different kinds of women

## Intermarriage in the family

four neices and nephews have intermarried

None of them were from strict backgrounds

You do everything to avoid it, then stop it, but if one can't, one accepts it-- its better than losing a child

## Organizational Affiliations--Dr. Blanchard

Interests have changed over the years

Has been very active in professional organizations

Jr. Chamber of Commerce

Past president of the Brighton Kiwanis club

Became disallusioned in the service organizations because of their latent feelings against Jews

Active in the UJA

Chairman of the Community Relations committee of the Fed.

Past president of Brith Kodesh

Not pleased with the way Brith Kodesh is now  
 When close to someone in the synogogue you realize that they  
 aren't what you thought they were--you lose some respect  
 People tend to be self-serving

Discussion of having a Cantor , a second Rabbi or a student  
 Rabbi

The temple does not live within its means  
 Ediface complex--material aspects are too important now  
 He has tried to institute reforms but has met with resistance  
 The temple is still going through a transitional period  
 The Rabbi hasn't gotten the support of the whole congregation  
 This represents a pull within reform Judiasm between those  
 who want less tradition and those wanting more  
 They personally want more tradition.

For some, reform Judiasm is nothing more than a step away  
 from denying their Jewishness

Now more and more people are looking for meaning in their  
 lives through tradition

Those advocating more religion will win in the end  
 Rabbis who are graduating from Rabbinical school now tend  
 toward a more traditional view

They feel very strongly that it is important to learn so  
 that you can make an educated choice about religion

They want their son Jeff to learn more so his choice  
 will be an educated one

#### TAPE 11 SIDE A

Review of the Federation's activities and committees

Community relations committee--deals with the interpretation of  
 the Jewish community ti the non-Jewish community both  
 locally and nationally

Areas of interest

Separation of church and state--especially in the school

Soviet Jewry

Educational programs

Prison reform

Black community

Interfaith committee on Israel

He feels that they have been successful

They have no insurmountable problems

This is a very active, committed Jewish community

We have more leadership than we have posts to fill

Anti-semitism

Role of the Natioal Community Relations Council

Most anti-semitism in Rochester is latent

"Five o'clock shadow"--Jews and non-Jews spend work days  
 together but go home to separate social lives

There isn't real anti-semitism until push becomes shove  
 Discussion of previous quota system at the U.R. medical  
 school

As youths they felt anti-semitism very strongly

When they went to college there was much discrimination  
 in admissions

Discussion of Mrs. Blanchard's being denied admission to colleges because of religion

There never were quotas in Optometry schools

Discussion of the experiences of a childhood friend who denied her Judaism to get into a good college and then get an excellent banking job

Mrs. Blanchard's organizational affiliations

Helped conduct population study of the Jewish community 15 years ago under Dr. Rossett

Has taught at Brith Kodesh for 17 years

Discussion of changes in the classes and students over time

Never believes most of those who say that they "hate Hebrew school"

She works in the Federation

Woman's division chairman

Trustee division chairman

Active in the Council and Sisterhood

Very active in the U.J.A.

Perceptions and Feelings about the Jewish community in Rochester

Both are proud of it

It has been a source of satisfaction to both of them

Most of the Jews here are committed

They feel there is a great need for more adult education

Discussion of the educational task force

Evaluated the status of Jewish education in Roch in 1975

He belongs to a task force for the implementation of adult education in Monroe Co.

Listing of some of the courses for the fall

There will be cross-registration between temples and organizations

JCC

Belonged for 30 years but they used it very infrequently

Always felt in was an institution that should be there

Now they do not belong

Lengthy discussion of the JCC's financial problems--their origins and the probable results

The Rochester Jewish community will never let a Jewish organization go under.

Feel that perhaps the center is not necessary

Jews should play sports with non-Jews and Jewish programs should come out of the Federation

Hillel School

Dr. Blanchard is opposed to all forms of parochial ed.

Mrs. Blanchard doesn't believe in it either but feel that the case is different for the Jews --we stand a chance of losing our Jewishness in a Christian society

She feels that the school should be there for those who want to send their children

TAPE 11 SIDE B

He feels that the parents who want the school should pay for it

The only real way to get a good Jewish education is in the

Dr. and Mrs. Murry Blanchard July 11, 1977 p. 6.

home

Thus one must educate the parents

The problem is that parents will do anything for their children moneywise, but won't do anything themselves

END OF INTERVIEW

Interview I  
Tape I  
Side A

Q. Where you were born, when, if you want to. . .

FB. Oh, that was what you meant when you said I should. . .(Loud laughter)

Q. And, how you came to Rochester, just basic biographical background.

FB. Well, do you want me to start?

Q. Sure.

FB. I was born in a very small town just south of Albany, about 25 miles. . . oh, well, not actually. I was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And when I was about 8 months old my family moved to Hudson which is just about 28 miles south of Albany on the other side of the river from Albany. And I grew up there. And, since it's Jewish history that you're interested in, that's an unusual kind of town. There were 100 Jewish families there. And, in my age group, there were. . . and I'm in my middle fifties. . .in my age group there were a . . .there was a large group of Jewish boys and girls so that I always had friends to be with in high school. My sister, on the other hand, who's just three years younger than I am, and when you're in high school it . . . it matters. It doesn't . . . over 30, it doesn't matter, but in high school it does. She had a problem. I think there were. . . there was one Jewish boy her age. And she had friends who were not Jewish. She was very popular in. . . in a group that was completely opposite from the kind of group I went in. . . with. I never dated anybody but Jewish boys, and we always went to. . . together. Eight Jewish girls and eight Jewish boys, believe it or not.

Q. Why do you think there was that difference?

FB. Well, people didn't have children her age and they did have children mine. You know, we were all within a year of each other. We were all in the same group. That was how it turned out. The same thing happened with my younger brother who's eleven years younger than I am. And he, too, found it very difficult because either. . . in high school either the kids were three or four years older or two or three or that much younger. So, he, too, had a group of non-Jewish friends. Although, suprisingly enough, I'm not. . . my sister never dated boys who were not Jewish. Either they came from out of town and were Jewish or she didn't date.

Q. Do you think it had any effect on the way you turned out by having a group of Jewish friends. . .

FB. Yes. Yes, I am. . . For instance, my sister isn't in any way connected. . . was in no way connected with Jewish persons or Jewish interests at all. And to this day doesn't keep a kosher home, cooks ham things of that kind that I wouldn't dream of doing. And yet I went to a school where there. . . my sister went to Cornell and found a whole group of Jewish friends there. Her husband went to school at the same time she did in Cornell. . . at Cornell. And they married each other. When I went to school, there were two other Jewish girls in the whole school. . . Excuse me, that's my sister. . . She must have known. (FB goes to answer telephone - transcriber's note).

MB. Do you want me to take over, or do you want to wait till she finishes?

Q. You can go on with your background a little bit.

MB. Yea. I was born July 4, 1918 in New York City. I was always. . .(rest of sentence blotted out by static - transcriber's note). My father was a printer and he had an Orthodox Jewish education. And I and my younger brother and my

MB. (Continued) younger sister were raised in Jewish tradition with an American form of Orthodoxy, which we went to synagogue on two days, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and we celebrated Passover and the major Jewish holidays, but we . . . my mother ran a kosher home, but my father, my father he did not do things outside the house, but he had them inside the house. And as a boy I rebelled against the strictest form of Orthodoxy. For instance when I would go to temple to pray, I would get upset because I didn't understand what I was saying. I was just reading the Hebrew, which had no meaning or significance to me. So, when I became a young adult, I rejected Orthodoxy. I leaned more toward Reform Judaism. When I graduated from optometry school, which was in 1942, which was during World War II, and I became involved with the Signal Corps at Mt. Mamouth. Frances and I were married in '43, and we didn't have any kind of a temple affiliation at all during that period. When we left Fort Mamouth, we came. . . we went to Buffalo. We were in Buffalo for a period of about 10 months, and then I came to Rochester to take over the practice of a man who was retiring here in Rochester. That was in 1945, April 1st, and we've been here ever since. When we first came to Rochester, and again, we had no temple affiliation. So our children, well one was born in '45, one was born in '47. When the older one was ready to go to religious school, we joined Temple Beth El. It was a compromise because my wife, who had also had this Orthodox background and my desire to be Reform, we settled on the Conservative as a compromise based upon the fact that we would be happy. Well, it so happens that the rabbi at Beth El at the time was Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg who turned both of us off away from Temple Beth El. As a result, we left and went to B'rith Kodesh. We've been at B'rith Kodesh ever since. That's it. So much for our religious background up to this this day. I have been very active in

- MB. (Continued) temple affairs. I'm past president of Temple B'rith Kodesh. And, I'm not a very intense temple goer. I prefer Shabbat services on regular . . . than I do to any holiday services. I'm more interested in the actual programs of the temple than I am in the worship.
- Q. Just to backtrack a little bit. When you rebelled against your parents' Orthodoxy, how did they react to that?
- MB. Well, I think it's a . . . I was a product of my times. I was a . . . I was a first generation American-born. My mother and father were both born in Russia.
- Q. And did they come here together or. . .?
- MB. No. No, they were married here. My father came with his parents, my mother came with her parents. And they met here and they married here. For them. . . I think perhaps they made me feel a little guilty about it, when I think about it. But, I think I was trying to deny the fact that I was really Jewish. I wanted to be an American, I wanted to be assimilated. And maybe it's because I . . . back. . . to the fact that. . . that I was unhappy about just saying words. I think that one of the weaknesses of traditional Jewry, of Orthodoxy and Conservatism, is that it demands that all prayers be said in Hebrew. And there's a large segment of the American population who knows how to read Hebrew but does not understand it. And I used to sit in synagogue. . . my father, you know, they read very rapidly. . . they read very rapidly and I used to say ditto, ditto, ditto. Well, I guess. . . Are there any other questions?
- Q. Well, were your parents upset at this?
- MB. No.
- Q. Very interesting.
- MB. If I had. . .

FB. The only thing is. . .Dad came one year. He wasn't really upset, but you know he didn't like going to B'rith Kodesh with us.

MB. No, when he came to visit we went . . .

FB. He came at holiday time. Because one time we did take him with us to B'rith Kodesh, and when we got back he said, "You know, I really enjoyed the service at B'rith Kodesh. It was wonderful, it was nice to see all those young people there and others." And he said, "I understood it and everything so well, the only thing is that I could not bear to watch the rabbi stand in front of the IrunHakodesh without a keypo on." He said, "And when he took out the Torah and he wasn't wearing a keypo, I just couldn't bear it." He was upset by that. So, next we didn't go with him.

Q. Did your parents speak Yiddish at home?

MB. No, well. . . They. . . My parents knew how to speak Yiddish. My grandparents were alive for a large part of my life. My father's parents. And they spoke Yiddish. I learned Yiddish because when my parents spoke with their parents, with my grandparents, they spoke Yiddish. My mother's mother lived with my mother for a long time. So that again she didn't speak hardly much English, so I had to speak Yiddish to her. So we spoke Yiddish in the house as a second language. It was just. . . We didn't speak it in school, but we knew how to speak Yiddish.

Q. Can you still speak it?

MB. Oh, yes. You learn as a child, it's hard to forget it.

Q. Oh, I can imagine. And you Mrs. . . .

FB. Blanchard. . .Can I speak Yiddish?

Q. I'm sorry. No, but well, that would be important to know, too.

FB. Oh, yes. But, on that same subject, my . . . I didn't have any grandparents living with us. Although, in my small town, my grandparents lived in the same town right across the street from us for about . . . oh, I think until I was about 12 years old or so. And my grandmother spoke Yiddish and my grandfather. They spoke Yiddish to each other. When they spoke to us, they spoke in English. And we didn't respond really in Yiddish, though I can speak Yiddish. And I understand everything and I can speak it. I sometimes think I speak better than Murray does. Even though I didn't practice as much, you know, speaking it. But what I used to do is when I went to Hebrew school, my brother is just. . . was just a year and a half older than I, and I went to Hebrew school same as he did. And I learned to read and write Yiddish in Hebrew school. In those days that's what they taught you. They taught you to read Hebrew and write Hebrew and that was all and then they taught you to read and write in Yiddish. That's all I ever learned in a . . . in a Hebrew school.

MB. We used to have more of a vocabulary.

FB. Yes.

MB. Of a language to talk, Hebrew is of fear, is a language to fear.

FB. So, what happened was, my grandmother used to get a Yiddish newspaper from New York City it was sent in the mail. And she, along when I was about, oh, 10 and 11, she already had cataracts and it was very hard for her to read. So she used to ask me to come over after school and read the Yiddish newspaper to her. And I think I learned a great deal from that. You know, reading from the Yiddish newspaper. But my family never had. . . didn't read Yiddish newspaper. My father never spoke Yiddish at home.

Q. Were your parents immigrants?

FB. Yes, my mother was. My father, too.

Q. Were they married over here. . .

FB. Oh, yes.

Q. . . . or did they come together?

FB. No. They were married here. They were young. They were young when they came, very young.

Q. And, were they Orthodox Jews?

FB. Mmmhmm.

Q. How would you characterize them?

FB. Well, I would say Orthodox, yes, because the only temple we had in our . . . the only synagogue that we had was an Orthodox Synagogue. We were after all only 100 families. So we had an Orthodox Synagogue and everybody was Orthodox. No matter what you personally believed, you went to an Orthodox Synagogue, you were Jewish.

MB. Her father had a very extensive Hebrew education in Europe before he came to America.

FB. Yes. He had been studying at a yeshiva. They had sent him away from home, you know, after 13 they sent you to a . . . What was the name? I don't remember where. . . he went in. . . in. . . in Germany I think he was telling me. He went to a yeshiva to study to be a rabbi, only he suddenly decided he wasn't the type, and he ran away. He never saw. . . he never saw his parents or his family, anybody. He came to America.

Q. He ran away to America?

FB. Mmmhmm. He earned his passage aboard a ship out of Hamburg.

Q. What year was this?

FB. Oh, I have no idea. My mother, you know, Mom would know.

MB. He was somewhere around. . .

FB. He was young, he was. . .

MB. 1910. . .

FB. He was fourteen years old.

MB. Well then, when was he born? We could tell then. He was 57 when he died, right?

FB. He was 57 in 19. . .oh, he would be 77 now. He was born 1900. . .

MB. 1914, yea.

Q. Before the war. What did he become here? What vocation did he follow?

FB. My father was actually a . . . a farmer, believe it or not.

Q. Did he own. . .?

FB. Yes. He owned a farm, dairy farm and one farm that he. . . he used to grow wheat on and . . . and grain. And, he kept cattle for slaughter. He had an. . .

MB. Well, actually he was more a cattleman than he was a farmer. . .

FB. He was a cattle dealer.

MB. He didn't live on a farm and grow farm. . . He had a tenant who took care of the farm.

Q. I see.

FB. I didn't grow up on a farm. As my mother said, "Who takes nice Jewish girls to a farm to live? How can a nice Jewish girl get married if you live on a farm?" So we always lived in town.

Q. And you went off to college?

FB. Yea, yes.

Q. And, that's where you met?

MB. No.

FB. No. It was after that.

MB. She . . . She went to Bernau down in Gainesville, Georgia. And I had gone to Syracuse, and I was in Columbia. And, while I was at Columbia, my roommate, Leo, who had lived in Hudson. . .

FB. He still did.

MB. Yes, well he was. . .

FB. One of my friends, I'd known him all my life.

MB. So, one night he was going to visit Frances and her roommate, who was also from Hudson, who was in New York City working for a training school. . .

FB. Training school for girls. . .

MB. So I went and I met her and that was the end. That was the . . . I met her while I was in school, not while she was in school.

Q. And . . . And from Buffalo you came here?

MB. We lived in Buffalo for about 10 months, that was all.

Q. What figured in your decision to come here? Did it. . .

MB. A man was retiring, his practice available. And I didn't. . . I wanted to stay in upstate New York.

Q. Did you know anything about the Jewish community here. . .?

MB. No. That did not enter into my. . .

FB. I. . . No, it didn't enter into our decision at all. Except in a way, yes it did. Because you were interested in practice in Newark, New York. . .

MB. Well, yes, yea. . .

FB. And there was only one Jewish family in Newark, New York, and I was pregnant at the time, I was in my third month, you remember with Ricky. And I said to Murray, "How could we possibly live in Newark, New York, when there's one Jewish family there? What'll we do if we have, you know, a boy? And what'll we do if he has to go to Hebrew school, if he has to be Bar Mitzvahed? What

FB. (Continued) will happen when we have children? It might not matter to the two of us, but what would happen when we have kids? They wouldn't grow up with . . . knowing other Jewish children." He said, "You're right." And that was when, and you remember you'd already paid for that practice, and you decided, well, maybe we were right in not going to Newark and we came to Rochester instead. We never went to Newark.

Q. By that time did you still consider yourself Orthodox, or . . .?

MB. We were. . . we had no firm concept of ourselves. We weren't involved with a synagogue, and allegedly if you're not involved with a synagogue and you have no concept, you're a Jew. You don't think of yourself as Orthodox or Reform.

FB. You think of yourself as a Jew.

MB. And. . . And you. . . we adhered to certain. . .we observed certain holidays. And those days, we had a kosher home when we were first married, but we. . .I didn't care about it. . .

Q. Do you keep kosher?

FB. Yes.

MB. Yes. When we first. . .

FB. Murray, I had two sets of dishes. . .

MB. But. . .

FB. My mother thought it would be very nice and I said, yes, I thought it would be nice, too.

MB. But, after all. . . I didn't have that kind of a . . . you know, I was rebelling all the time and I rebelled against. . . since to me it's sensitivity, or. . . that's the wrong word. The senselessness of having to have two sets of dishes, you put them in the dishwasher, you worry about one set, or two set. . .

FB. There weren't dishwashers then. I did them by hand.

MB. Well, anyway. . .so 'cause I didn't insist and I discouraged all the nuisance about whether we didn't use kosher. . . kosher meats, we didn't buy non-kosher meats. We still use kosher meats, but we didn't bother with two sets of dishes. To this day we still do that. We buy kosher meats. We don't eat non-Kosher food in the house, but. . .

FB. I don't have any shellfish or anything like that.

MB. We just eat off one set of dishes that's all.

Q. But, you don't keep kosher outside of the home?

FB. I do.

MB. Oh, she does, but I don't.

FB. Murray doesn't, but I do. I don't eat. . .

MB. Ham, pork, a lot of shellfish.

FB. Any kind of pork, no kind of shellfish.

MB. Although she does. . .well she'll eat a beef meal even though it's not kosher meat. She'll eat the kosher beef, the kosher part of the cow, but she doesn't. . . it doesn't have to be a piece of kosher meat. Right? Is that. . .

Q. When you came here, where did you settle?

MB. Oh, for the beginning, we lived in a . . . in a small hotel for a few months. She was pregnant, as she told you. And then we found an apartment on the . . . just off East Main Street out near Culver Road, I guess you'd call it the eastern part of the . . . northeastern part of the city. It was a non-Jewish neighborhood, but it was a place to stay. Housing was very difficult, you know. At the end of World War II. We lived there from, oh, I guess from May until August, and then the soldier whose house . . . apartment we were subletting was released from the Army. So we came. . . we were forced to move and we

MB. (Continued) bought a house on Rosedale Street, you know where Rosedale Street is? OK, we bought a house on Rose. . . two-family house on Rosedale Street. And we lived there for approximately, let's see, about 7 years, 6,7 years. On Rosedale, is that right? Six, 7 years?

FB. Let's see. From the time Eric was five months old till the time he was six. Five and a half years.

MB. And then we bought a house in Brighton on Warrington Drive. And we lived there from the time that Jeffrey was five until the time he was about . . . he must have been about what thirteen? Fourteen years old?

FB. Almost sixteen years.

MB. And then the older one was away at college, and then Jeffrey went away to college. And we decided we wanted to live . . . didn't need a big house, and we built this house.

Q. When you moved to Rosedale Street, was that a Jewish community at the time?

MB. Yes.

FB. Yes, and we deliberately did that because we had been living in an apartment right off Main Street, and it was non-Jewish in a four-family house. And really, I wanted to be in a Jewish neighborhood, not only for myself because I . . . would walk the baby and there were no Jewish girls around really, no other Jewish people at all. And, although we were friendly with the neighbors and everything, I really wanted a place where there were at least a few other Jewish families so that the children, I knew I was going to have children, the children would have other Jewish people to be with. And I wanted to be with other Jewish people, too.

MB. I think it was a major factor in our decision to buy a house in that area, cause that's where we were looking for a house.

FB. And it was a Jewish area.

MB. It was a middle-class Jewish neighborhood, which at that time was all we could possibly afford.

Q. This is when the . . . Were any of your children in school then?

FB. Oh, no.

MB. Well, the older one, Eric was. . .

FB. Eric was only five months old when we moved here.

MB. When we moved here, we waited until he went to . . . he was in first grade. . .

FB. First grade. . .

MB. And Jeffrey, Jeffrey started kindergarten.

FB. Started kindergarten.

MB. Warrington. . .

FB. And then we moved to Warrington.

Q. Because of their schooling?

MB. No. We wanted. . . we were living in a two-family house, and we decided we wanted to live in a one-family house, so we were able to afford a house, so on Warrington Drive, we bought the house.

Q. And your sons went to Brighton?

MB. Right. They all went. . . Both of them graduated from Brighton High School.

Q. I'm trying to think if I know them because I went to Brighton.

MB. What was your maiden name?

Q. Silverman.

MB. Which Silverman? What's your Dad's name?

Q. Mort.

MB. Mort Silverman. . . Yea, I know your Dad. I'm sure I know your Dad. He's active, I believe, in B'nai B'rith.

Q. Mmmhmm. He passed away seven years ago.

MB. Where did you live?

Q. On Sylvan Road, which is right. . .

MB. I went by there, sure.

Q. Near Warrington.

MB. When did you graduate. . .

FB. Did you have a brother named Neil?

Q. No, but I know him.

FB. Neil Silverman. Wasn't there a Neil Silverman who is a. . . that I think Jeff, the name seems familiar. . . that Jeff and Ricky used to know when they were in school, I think.

MB. Well, when did you graduate from high school?

Q. I graduated in '71.

MB. You. . . You're younger then, that's why.

FB. A lot younger.

MB. Jeff was. . . they graduated in '64, Jeffrey graduated in '64 and Eric graduated in '62.

Q. Yea, that's right. I didn't hang around with older men. (Laughter)

FB. Not in those days. (Laughter)

Q. No, not then. So, were you working at the time, Mrs. Blanchard?

FB. Yes.

MB. In Buffalo.

FB. I worked in Buffalo.

MB. Before we had children. After that, she didn't work.

FB. Oh, after Eric was born, I didn't, no.

Q. What was your occupation?

FB. Oh, I was a . . . I was the Assistant to the Supervisor of the New York State Training School for Girls.

Q. What was that exactly?

FB. That's a . . . That's a training school for girls. . .

(Transcriber's note: Dr. and Mrs. Blanchard answered together, tape is completely garbled and indecipherable.)

Q. Is it still in existence?

FB. Oh, yes.

MB. In fact, the director just died. . .

FB. Situated in . . .

MB. The director just died. . .

Q. And where is that? It's in Hudson?

MB. Hudson.

FB. Hudson.

MB. Same as industry.

FB. And it had. . . the reason I was in New York City was because all the administrative offices were right at the school. The reason I was in New York City, it was fate. I was supposed to meet Murray there. But. . .

Q. I believe that.

FB. They had five social workers in New York City and they had no central office. So when the girls were sent out on probation, if they had to get in touch with a social worker, if she happened to be out, you know, checking on some of the others, they were lost. And some of them had an immediate crisis, crises and needed someone to talk to and needed to know that there was somewhere they could go. So the State opened a . . . an office in New York City, 'cause that

FB. (Continued) was the area most of the girls came from, as a matter of fact. It's interesting to note the school was opened in 1895. I was there in '42, the end of '42, we were married in '43. . . '42 and in all those years only one Jewish girl had ever been at that school. . .

MB. Were there really?

FB. Yes, at the New York State Training School for Girls. And when I was reading -- when I first came there I used to read from the . . . some of the records-- that girl became. . . became the wife of a judge and a New York State Judge, and used to ask for girls who were going on parole. . . to have them come and live in her home.

Q. That's fascinating.

FB. And she would. . . that was the one Jewish girl.

Q. And you. . .

FB. That was. . .

Q. Oh, I'm sorry.

FB. That was how come I got to read her record. Because, she would keep taking girls into her home afterwards.

MB. And when. . . she didn't get it because of the traveling, you know, . . . Her next professional job, she got a job working in an office of a furniture store.

FB. Yea, I was the credit. . . I guess you might have called me the credit manager.

MB. Oh, see here. It was a temporary kind of thing, because we decided not to stay in Buffalo, we didn't care for Buffalo.

Q. I see. And you haven't resumed work at all. . . resumed work?

FB. Well, I . . . teach. . . I enjoy it so much that when you say "work". . . I don't really think of it as work, but I teach in the B'rith Kodesh Hebrew School.

Q. Oh, you do?

MB. Teaches Hebrew.

FB. And, I help Murray one day a week. And I teach in the Sunday school.

Q. And you're an optometrist? And have you kept the same office that you had when you first came to. . .

MB. No. Well, yes and no. We've had to change locations because the building had changed. I moved from one location. . . this is my third location in the same general area. I have an office in downtown Rochester, it's been. . . it's been in three different buildings. And I also have an office out in Spencerport, a little town, a small. . . a small in a home.

Q. Now. . . just backtracking a bit. . . Do you consider yourself in the home that you've set up in that time, or now, as religious as your parents, ritual, dogma. . .?

FB. I would say even more.

Q. Really?

FB. Yes, because on a Friday night, we have. . . we do a kiddush, we do. . . light the candles. . . Well, in my home. . . Yes, in my home, my mother always lit the candles on Friday night, and you knew it was Friday night at home. When I came in after school, you know, the house was spotless, and there was chicken and there was chicken soup. . .

MB. Newspapers on the floor. . .

FB. Yes, the floor, you know. . .

MB. You could lie on it, and spread newspapers on it they wouldn't get picked up, so you must be. . . (Loud Laughter).

FB. And the house was sparkling, shining clean, you know, and you could smell. . . it smelled like Friday night, all the cooking and the baking that was. . . my mother did all day. But, outside of that, we always had the holidays, you know, she always kept the holidays. But, outside of that, no. I don't ever

FB. (Continued) remember a kiddush in our house on a Friday night.

MB. No, that's true, we never did have. . .

FB. No. My mother lit the candles and that was it. It's the woman who keeps the Sabbath. Really in Orthodoxy, men are the supposed to be the ones. But the kind of Orthodoxy we had in our small town, it was the woman who kept the Sabbath, not the man.

MB. She. . . She made. . .She did the traditional thing. . .

FB. Yes.

Q. And you, Dr. Blanchard, have you. . .getting back to. . .

MB. Same thing, same thing, no. Very, very hard for me. . . for me to explain the way I feel about it. I like the symbolism of the candles on Friday night and the kiddush. I have never been what you call ShomoShabbath, you know what that is. I have office hours on Saturday. But, I have a . . . more of a commitment to the concept of Judaism than I do to the rituals of Judaism.

Q. Oh, I. . .

FB. A sense of peoplehood. Jewish peoplehood more than Jewish religion, perhaps that's what you. . .

MB. Right. Than the ceremony, the rituals. I enjoy it, but I don't go out of my way, for instance, if we're with a group of people, and we have to go to a party on Saturday. We make a Havdallah Service on Saturday, we have a party.

Q. (Laughter)

MB. Yes, we have a party.

FB. Oh, we did that once. We had a Simcah party after our second grand. . . grandchild was born. And it was a little girl, first little girl in. . .

MB. Twenty-five years.

FB. . . in the family. And, so we decided to have a Simcah party and we did.

FB. (Continued) And we had it on a Saturday, but we asked people to come a little earlier, it was in the winter time. Jilly was born in November, and we had a Havdallah Service, and it was lovely.

MB. We had it as. . . We had it. . . We had it very. . . Hoffman came and he brought accordion and. . .

FB. Oh, we had a wonderful time. We were singing Israeli songs, and having a wonderful time.

MB. In fact, we had such a wonderful time, I don't know whether you know him, name Moshe Hoffman, you know Moshe Hoffman at all?

Q. No.

MB. Anyway, he had such a wonderful time, cause he normally gets paid for it, he wouldn't take any money. He said, "I haven't had such a wonderful time since I've been in Rochester." (Loud Laughter) He was so. . .

FB. Oh, it was just great, just great. It was so enjoyable, it was a very happy time.

Q. Before we get to your grandchildren, how many children do you have?

MB. We have two children, two boys. One is Eric, or he now calls himself Zvi, which is a Hebrew name, who is a Ph.D. in philosophy and taught at Washington University in St. Louis, and also is now engaged in a second Ph.D. in a clinical psychology program at St. Louis University. And he's married, has no children, and his wife is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the Washington University. And my younger son is Jeffrey and he's . . . he was just thirty years old in February, and he's an optometrist and he practices with me. And he's married, and he has two children. He has a son that's age 6 and a daughter that's three and a half. And they live here in Rochester over on Westerlawn.

FB. And she's the little girl we had, you know, the party for.

Q. So, do you keep in close contact with them?

MB. Oh, yes.

FB. Oh, yes.

MB. We tell. . . We speak . . . Well, with Eric, we speak with each other. . .

FB. At least once a week.

MB. And we . . . we usually see each other twice a year. That is, we go there once and they come here once. The usual pattern.

Q. And was it any kind of major decision for your son to go in with. . . was that a given that he would enter. . . ?

MB. Well, it's . . . well, yes, I think it was. What happened was, when he . . . he decided to be an optometrist, he graduated from optometry school in 1970. . .

Q. That's a difficult profession to get into.

MB. And when he . . . he graduated he came to Rochester and he worked with me from 1970 from till 1974, and then he decided that he didn't know whether he wanted to stay in Rochester or not. My daughter-in-law was apparently very unhappy here. She came from Yonkers, New York, but her parents had retired and moved to . . .

FB. Marlborough.

MB. Marlborough. I'm sorry. And the . . . her parents had retired and had moved to Miami, Florida to live. And so, they discussed it and they decided they would like to go to Florida. So, he went down, took the Florida board, passed the boards, and so in the fall of 1974 he left and went to Florida. He opened an office for himself in Florida. In Florida, Lauderdale, which is near Fort Lauderdale.

Q. Yes.

MB. And he practiced there for two years, and the circumstances seemed to be that they were not very happy there either. They. . . so. . . she was not. . . she

MB. (Continued) didn't find living there. . . her parents were farther away than she thought it was going to be, and since his professional success was not as good as he thought it was going to be. So they talked it over and they decided that they would like to come home. So they called us and we discussed it and tried to see the situation on the phone and then I went down to talk it over with them. We all agreed, and we decided. So that this past January he came back. And now he's back again, so . . . if that explains the situation.

Q. Do you think they're here permanently now?

MB. I should. . . I. . . I would guess so because that all the things that might have bothered them before have been ironed out. They were ironed out in the two years hiatus while they were away, plus the fact that we've discussed all these things before they came back to Rochester. Because we didn't want to go through the pattern of temporary. . . very difficult to establish an office pattern to. . . in which you try to develop a practice and think you have two doctors instead of one doctor and then have one doctor leave. It creates a problem you see. So, we discussed that and we discussed our personal family relationship to make sure that that wasn't going to be any kind of a problem. Well, we felt things were satisfactorily discussed and answered. And they're back and assume they were because they both bought a house.

Q. Now are they Jewishly oriented?

MB. Well, the younger son, Jeffrey, he has a sense of Jewish identity. He's very concerned about that. They were. . . they just came back, they were . . . joined B'rith Kodesh now, and Jason will start going to religious school in the fall. He's not. . .

FB. And Jill. . . when it came to nursery school for Jill. . .

MB. Yes, she still goes. . .

FB. They wanted her to go to the B'rith Kodesh nursery school because the Jewish content was there.

MB. They, they have an identity with Judaism. They don't have. . . they have less of a commitment to ritual than we do and much less than my other son.

FB. Well, Eric is Orthodox.

MB. I happen to think that it's because of the fact that his wife had had very little contact with Jewish ritual. . .

FB. No, no.

MB. Negligible. Whatever it is would be from the result of our. . . her association with us and her husband's desire. It would not be because of her own experience.

Q. So you think the wife really has a big part in it?

MB. I think the wife controls the . . .

Q. The neatness?

MB. Yea, In the home, anyway. Unless. . . unless the husband makes demands upon her, but not. . . usually, usually it's the wife. If the wife has any kind of a background or if the husband has a commitment to that kind of thing, they'll do it, she'll do it to please her husband, but if her husband doesn't pressure her, she'll do whatever she. . . her experience has been.

Q. And your other son's wife, is she. . .?

MB. My other son's wife comes from a . . . an Orthodox background, but not the same kind of traditional that they now observe. Before they married, they discussed all this because he had made these decisions by himself before he was married. Yes, and she knew what he expected from a Jewish wife in the way of observances, etcetera, so she went into this marriage with her eyes wide open. She knew

MB. (Continued) what the situation is. She is now as observant and traditional as he is. They both. . . they work together as a team. It's very. . .

Q. Well, when did he start this?

MB. Well, let me be brief. . . shall I go into. . .? All right. Anyway, we . . . it was a very trying kind of experience for him when he was going through this. What happened was, he went away . . . he went through the B'rith Kodesh religious school experience.

FB. He was active in the . . . in the B'rith Kodesh. He was an excellent Hebrew school student.

MB. Yea. He had a . . . a very inquisitive mind, an excellent student. The teachers that he had in religious school always enjoyed him as a student because. . .

FB. They enjoyed him. . .

MB. Yea. . .because he stimulated the classroom. And he always questioned, and then of course, he came in contact with Rabbi Herbert Brownstein, who was here at the time. He and Brownstein developed a kind of rapport because they both had excellent, bright minds, searching about everything, including Judaism. And they developed a very close friendship which exists to this day.

FB. And I think he's . . . he once even made the remark that. . . that Herb Brownstein was really his inspiration.

Q. Really?

FB. He got him started.

MB. Herb was a Reform Rabbi. Herb, I think was Reform, but he also had. . . he had a concept of the traditional part of Judaism. And, so he went away to school and while he was at Washington University in St. Louis where he did his undergraduate schoolwork as well, he became good friends with some people

MB. (Continued) including an Orthodox Rabbi. And they took him in and they were treating him almost as if he was a son, you know, in a far away place, and so, they became very close. And, of course, as part of this association he developed a kind of interest in and study of the Talmud and the . . . the tradition of Judaism. And he didn't. . . he wasn't sure about himself as to what he wanted. He was. . . he was a very, I don't want to use the word religious person, but he was a person who was sensitive to religion. And. . .

FB. He was sensitive, excuse me, to human beings.

MB. When he. . . at the end of his junior year he didn't know what he wanted to do. So, he asked for permission to take a year off and go to Israel. . .

FB. Well, he was already. . . you missed the most important part, honey really. The question in his mind was there and that was why he took a year off. But, he had already entered a yeshiva, which he was. . . yes, he was.

MB. No, he went to yeshiva until he came back so. . .

FB. He went to the yeshiva before he'd gone.

MB. Well, maybe, I don't remember.

FB. And he. . . he was doing work at the yeshiva at the same time he was working. . .

MB. On his Ph.D.

FB. Yea. . . oh. . .

MB. Am I right?

FB. No, it was before, honey.

MB. Well, anyway. . .

FB. At the same time he did some. . . he was in undergraduate school. He was also at the yeshiva because he got married. . .

MB. No. He came back. . .

(Transcriber's note: The Blanchards spoke at the same time for the next few seconds of tape. The lines are indecipherable.)

FB. Talk to Eric about it, he'll know.

MB. My concept was that he came, took a year off, he didn't know what he wanted to do. He went to Israel. . .

FB. No, excuse me. . . I was going to say he had a year to spare because he went away to school when he was sixteen.

MB. Eric finished high school in three years.

FB. And he. . . so he figured he was a year ahead of himself anyway and he'd like a year in Israel, because he really didn't know. . .

MB. Anyway, he rented an apartment. He registered himself to a yeshiva, he spent a year. But he had gone. . . he went with the stipulation that he would come back after a year to get his. . . and get his degree.

FB. He did his last semester of his senior year. . .

MB. No, that's here. Here. So he came back to Washington University, and he finished up and got his Bachelors Degree. And when he came back, I should tell you that he went through the usual trying times trying to identify himself and find out what he wanted. Because during this period he kept,. . . he would come home for a vacation, he would not be religious. He would not strict. He would eat anything that . . .

FB. Once.

MB. Twice. He came home once, and when we went there for graduation, remember? For. . . yea, because he came home once he was on his. . . for Christmas vacation, he wasn't wearing his keypo, he was, you know, like he was before he went away. He went back and he kept it up again, and then when we went for graduation, it was in June and St. Louis is hot in June. But, I said in order to make Eric not be embarrassed, I'll take a hat along. So, I came to

MB. (Continued) St. Louis. . . he came out to the airport, there he was without his keypo, we ate at the hotel that night. It was. . . it was just like he was before. But then in the. . . that fall, after graduation, he went. . . he had gotten a fellowship to for his Masters/Ph.D. program, he was staying at Washington University. That fall, he did. . . made a final decision that he was going to be traditional. And then he. . . at that time he became involved with a yeshiva in St. Louis where was studying at the same time he was getting his Ph.D. . . he was studying at the yes. . . he was studying Talmud. So he taught himself Yiddish, 'cause when you study the Talmud. . .

FB. You need Yiddish. . .

MB. You read Hebrew, but you have to discuss it in Yiddish, so he had to learn Yiddish in order to discuss Talmud. And he worked at the Yeshiva and when he was married, a couple years later, the head of the Yeshiva went to New Orleans where he was married and married him. And on his Shabbat of the wedding, he gave . . zviha. . . which means. . .

FB. You know what that means?

MB. Which means he's an ordained rabbi. . .

FB. Orthodox rabbi. . .

MB. He is certified that he knows enough to be . . .

Q. Really?

MB. Yea.

FB. He got. . .

MB. So and, of course, he's been that way ever since. He then got his Ph.D., finished his Ph.D. and he's teaching at Washington University. He's in the Chair of Judaica, that's his speciality, Judaica. Even though his Ph.D. is

MB. (Continued) in social philosophy, but he . . . he works with the Rabbi Schwartzchild, who . . . who's head of . . . head of the department, I suppose, Judaica.

FB. Well, he writes for Jewish magazines.

Q. What was your feelings at this time? Was it difficult for you?

MB. Why? Not for me. . .we. . . we discussed this. . . we have very open relationship, all four of us, my two sons. . . our two sons and Frances and I. . . In fact, when we used to live on Warrington Drive, we used to have a kitchen table, it was like by the back window. In the summer time, we used to have discussions. Actual discussions, it wasn't you know. . . and we would all have very loud voices, even though it's for emphasis, our voice is raised. And we used to have these discussions and our voice would raise. Till one day our neighbor said to me, "You know," he said, " I enjoy your discussions very much." (Loud laughter).

FB. I said we'd have to close the windows after that. He said they used to sit and listen to us.

MB. We had. . . we had. . . we all had an open tolerance. We've agreed in life that each person has the right to decide for himself what is best for him or herself. At the same time. . .

FB. Within limits.

MB. Yes, of course, but . . . we all . . . at the same time we'd expect them to be tolerant of the other people who have different views than they do, and that's what we've done. It never. . . it never bothered me. I'm proud of the fact that he found. . . that he found this kind of. . . if he did something bad I would be. . . I'd be upset, but to have somebody to. . . someone to observe. . . someone to become an observant Jew, a traditional concept, what's bad about that?

MB. (Continued) It's not bad, it's different. I don't care about it myself.

I don't feel the need for it myself, but if it pleases him, surely it's a wonderful thing, so why should I interfere? Why should anybody interfere?

FB. His greatgrandfather would have been very proud.

Q. Sure.

FB. Really of a greatgrandson he would have said, "Oh, a nice Rabbi." And so on, he probably would have been proud of him.

Q. When he was going through the trauma of deciding, did you help him at all with that?

MB. Well, when he came home we talked about it a little. But he really, as I told you, St. Louis is a long way from here. He'd come home twice a year, and when he came home we talked a great deal. We expressed our feelings, told him how we felt and we let him talk about his feelings and he questioned. It's very difficult to . . . for one person to try to justify or to explain or to help another person unless you're professionally trained in that area to make decisions. And it is. I can't tell you what to feel. Religion is something that's inside of you, your concept of religion, what you think about life, part of you. How can I tell you what you should or should not do? I can't tell you that.

Q. Did . . . In this time, did you ever go through a period when he was questioning your beliefs?

MB. No.

FB. No. Never did that.

Q. He never questioned your relationship?

MB. No. I never did. He never questioned mine.

FB. He never did. As a matter of fact, one time. . . you know, actually, Orthodoxy has a lot of physical things that go along with it in the home. For instance,

FB. (Continued) he would come home and would eat tuna fish and fruit. And I am a typical Jewish mother. If he didn't eat, and he was so thin at the time, the skin was stretched so tightly over his bones, that I used to really almost cry he looking at him, he was so thin. And it made me feel awful. He'd come home and eat fruit and tuna fish. And one time, I said to him, "Rick, . . ." and even though I'd promised to have other dishes, and other pots and pans for him, he would not eat anything hot, just things that were cold. And so I really couldn't cook a meal for him. And he just refused to accept it then. Now, of course, he does. He accepts. . . I have separate sets of dishes for them when they come, and pots and pans. The only thing he won't do is cook on top of the stove. But in the oven they do, I have a self-cleaning oven and they turn it on, you know, and the heat is very hot. So that those little things really. And one time when we were discussing, you know, I'll get pots and pans, I'll get dishes for you and so on. . .

END OF TAPE I, SIDE A

Interview with Murray and Frances Blanchard  
July 11, 1977  
By Bonnie Kantor

Interview I  
Tape I  
Side B

FB. Wouldn't mind except, I said that I don't feel as strongly about it as you do, and if something should happen, I would feel awful. For instance, if I mixed up a milk stick and a plate stick a night, I certainly wouldn't go . . .

FB. (Continued) I wouldn't throw it out. And it wouldn't matter to me. And I wouldn't be as careful as you would want me to be. I said, would you be able to accept that? He said no, I wouldn't. Either you're kosher or you're not. And I said, well in that case Rick, I guess I'm just not. He said, well, mother, if you don't really want it and if you wouldn't be careful and if you wouldn't be willing to do it all the time, even if I were not here, I would rather you didn't do anything. He wasn't annoyed, he wasn't angry. We were trying to see. . . find a way so that it would be easy when he came home. Well that went on, I think, for maybe about a year or two. We used paper plates and he. . . they ate, or he particularly, he wasn't married yet, ate cold things and that. . . and frozen T.V. kosher dinners and so on. However, after he was married, it just didn't. . . I don't know, he. . . he became a little more lenient, in that he allowed me to buy a new set of dishes for them only. He allowed me to buy pots and pans and instead of his being separated from us where I kept my normal routine as far as cooking was concerned and he was apart from us on paper plates and all that kind of thing, it got to the point where we all ate together. We all cooked, we used only those pots and pans. . .

MB. Yea, but he. . .

FB. . . . only those dishes, and all of ate together. We all ate the same thing.

MB. Yea, but he took all the cooking.

FB. I mean they watch everything I do.

MB. Oh, yea.

Q. He does the cooking?

FB. Well. . .

MB. He. . . his wife . . .

FB. They do.

MB. He and his wife.

FB. Leah. I help, but I ques. . . but if there's any doubt in my mind at all I say Leah, is this. . . Oh, yes, that's fine, mother.

MB. So, then there's no question, you see, as long as. . .

FB. And they're . . .

Q. You must have learned a lot.

MB. Oh, well, yes. He, he, he's quite a . . .

FB. And we observe the Sabbath the same way he does when he comes.

MB. No lights. The lights cannot be turned on and off, the telephone cannot be answered when he's here. . .

FB. We live the way they do. . .

MB. That's right. When they come. . . we go there or they come here, they. . .

FB. The same way we do when we go to their house. But, we live that same way when he and Leah come home.

MB. We turn off the light in the refrigerator and so it doesn't go on, the lights are not turned on and off, lights are left on all night in certain parts of the house so they don't have to be turned on and Saturday and things like that. We allow him the privilege of treating this as if it were his own home, that's all. It's easier for us to do it his way than it is for us . . .

FB. He cannot do it ours. We can do it his way.

MB. It's a small concession, if you want to call it a concession, I don't know.

FB. I don't think it's a concession at all. . .

MB. Well, I don't know. . .

FB. . . . for him to be comfortable and happy in his home.

MB. It doesn't bother us to do it.

FB. And that's really the thing. I don't want him to feel that when he comes to his former home, it isn't home anymore, his home is in St. Louis. . . But when

FB. (Continued) he comes to visit that he's comfortable, and as I said, we can do it his way, it's no effort really. Whereas he cannot do it our way.

MB. We want to think that. . . consider a blessing is that, I think, that the four of us like each other and respect each other. I think that's a very nice relationship.

Q. His. . . His wife was Orthodox?

MB. Oh, yes.

FB. Yes. She has an interesting background. Her mother and father were former. . . come from Poland and they both suffered in the concentration camps. They went to London. . .

Q. Did they both live then?

FB. Yes. And they went to London and they met each other there, and they were both very young, they were children, you know, when they were. . . really young teenagers, 12, 13, 14, something like that, when they ended up. But they were in labor battalions, and then they were in concentration camps. And, I guess they were young and strong and they were able to live through it. They met each other in London and were married there. As a matter of fact, Leah was born there in London. And a year later her sister Ann was born in London and, or a year and a half later in London, and then they came to America. His. . . her father fought with the British Brigade. . .

MB. In Africa.

FB. The Jewish. . . do you remember the Israeli Brigade that was connected to the . . . the . . . the Jewish Brigade. . .

MB. Well, find the number. . .

FB. Later. And, then they came to America and settled in New Orleans because he had a lot of family there, a lot of his family had been in New Orleans for

FB. (Continued) two and three generations. He had cousins and second cousins and they wrote for him to come. . . that he had never even known, you know. They were the part of the family, I guess, that stayed in Poland. And so she comes from an interesting family. And they, interestingly enough, are Orthodox but remind me of the second generation Jew in America who wants. . . wanted very much to be very American and was willing to throw away a great deal of his heritage in order to become an American, couldn't see how he could be both. And that's the period her mother and dad are going through now. I think, really. Yes.

Q. How did they react to their Judaism, do you think?

FB. Well, I'll tell you. . .

MB. Well, I. . . wouldn't able to know. We don't see them very often.

FB. We don't see that much of them. I only know it. . . in it. . . about it as far as their relationship with Eric is concerned. Now they objected strenuously to Ricky marrying their daughter. Not because he wasn't a nice young man, and he was a nice young man, as her mother said, not because he didn't have good family, but because. . . but he did. But because he was Orthodox, she did not want an Orthodox son-in-law. . .

MB. That is, you know, it's a male chauvinist society, you know, in all. . .

FB. She wanted a. . . she just felt she didn't want a. . . an Orthodox son-in-law. She wanted a real American. . . he wasn't American as far as she was concerned. She wanted a real American young man, who. . . who, I guess, just was American first and his Judaism didn't mean much to him.

MB. But she wanted a Jew.

FB. Oh, yes. . . She wanted him to have been born a Jew.

Q. Right, no identity.

FB. That she would have wanted. She wouldn't want a non-Jewish son-in-law at all.

FB. (Continued) But, a young man who was born Jewish but didn't necess. . . wasn't necessarily a practicing Jew of any kind. That would have been fine with her. She couldn't stand an Orthodox Jewish boy.

Q. You made the statement that Orthodoxy is a very chauvinistic. . .

MB. It's a male chauvinist. . . it is. . . In Orthodoxy the male is the dominant figure.

FB. And yet, Murray, you know you say that. . .

MB. But it's the truth.

FB. But in reality it isn't, it truly isn't so. Take for instance Eric and Leah, I use them as an example because they're the only ones I know. Eric shares with Leah all of the things that have to be done in the house because he understands she's still in school, she's doing her Ph.D. work. And she's been teaching on the. . . you know, in. . . for her fellowship money. And she has a great deal, a great number of things to do, a great deal to do. So that at home, he does his own. . . he takes laundry to the laundromat, really or he helps her. . . I called one day, she said Ricky's busy in the kitchen. He was doing. . . he was cooking in the kitchen, he helps her with putting things on the table and off of the table. Just like any other young man. I don't really call that as male chauvinist anymore, even in spite of the fact that he's Orthodox. But when it comes to the Synagogue, definitely. I mean, they sit separately,. . . well, they're Orthodox, they sit separately. The women, as a matter of fact, my daughter-in-law got a group of women together, she's a women's libber. They got a group of women together who decided that if they. . . could not. . . who asked the rabbi if they could be . . . be a part of the service. Well, this is just a little bit of. . . of synagogue politics. The rabbi, in order to keep peace, said yes, he didn't see why there weren't

- FB. (Continued) certain things. . . wait a minute, Murray, that was so. . . then he said, no. The Board wouldn't go along with that and they decided to have their own services. So the women would meet downstairs and have their own services. Yes, that's so, dear.
- MB. No. They wanted to have separate, but equal, they wanted the Orthodoxy. They couldn't participate. . .
- FB. Well, that's what they ended up with, but that's not what they wanted originally.
- MB. Oh, they wanted. . .
- FB. They wanted to be. . .
- MB. They were. . . they were turned down for that so they decided to meet in a home so they could have the kind of . . . they wouldn't allow them to use the Synagogue for separate but equal services. So, that's what the rabbi. . .
- FB. You see, that wasn't what I understood, it ended up that way.
- MB. They. . . they needed to meet in somebody's home.
- Q. Do they do it?
- FB. Oh, yes.
- MB. Oh, yes.
- FB. So the women have. . . I was telling Leah, I really do feel. . .
- MB. And my son. . . my son is not opposed to that.
- FB. No. I really didn't feel it would seem to me that that would be quite proper. Why should they have to be separated in a worship service? I think that they should. . .
- MB. Orthodoxy is. . .
- FB. . . . be no . . . that they go to the Synagogue together and they come home together and that when they have children, what will they do?
- MB. The boys will go with the. . .

FB. The boys will go with the Dad and the girls will go with the mother?

MB. You know that. . .

FB. I saw a scene in that little synagogue when we were there last that was a joy to my heart. The head of the math department at Washington University also belongs to the synagogue. And he was the reader that morning and he did the Hahcafah, you know, when the walk around with the Torah, and he had a little boy who was about five or six and a little girl about three. And he had this huge great big talite on and his keypa. And he's walking around and his little son and daughter were walking with him. And there was one, the little boy on one side was holding the nob that comes down, you know the two rollers, and on the other side the little girl was holding the roller on. . . they were helping Daddy carry the Torah. Which is in their minds, that's what they were doing. They were helping Daddy carry the Torah, the two little ones. And they were skipping and jumping and there was such joy and it was so lovely to see the whole family, you know, the Dad and the two children. I said to Leah later when we were discussing this separate service and so on, oh did you know I really don't mind only isn't there some way that you might be able to become a part of the service, something that you might be able to do in the service. Because I hate to see you separated. And not be at a service together, even though Ricky may sit on one side of the room and there's a . . . a division and Leah on the other side. Still you're in the synagogue together and when the children are there, the children will be in the synagogue with you. I really don't approve of having the women's service in another part. Maybe some one of these years they'll work out something where they could still all be together.

MB. Well, they'll go back on . . .

Q. I. . .

MB. I wasn't referring to you personally, but. . . (Laughter)

Q. I grew up in Temple Beth El.

MB. Yea.

Q. And I came from a family that was committed morally to Judaism, ethically, but not. . .

MB. Ritually.

Q. Ritually. And I went through Beth El and I always was tormented in that I felt terrible that here I was getting this education. I always felt very guilty and ashamed that my parents didn't. And I always vowed that when I grew up, I would. I don't. No, I didn't, but I didn't grow up with a very strong Jewish background. Yet, I feel. . .

MB. You feel the Judaism, but you don't feel the ritual of Judaism.

Q. No, not the ritual.

FB. Well, you see, this is the same thing that happened to us. I'll tell you, one of Eric's philosophies is that is in the statement he once made. . . we were discussing Judaism, and especially being Orthodox, and he said, "Mother, tell me something. If you're Orthodox and don't want to do all of the rituals and everything else that goes with Orthodoxy you become Conservative. When you're Conservative and you don't care to do all those things, you become a Reformed Jew." He said, "Mother, what happens. . . and after you don't want to do anything, and you would like to be even less Jewish, you become a Unitarian, and then what happens?" He said, "So, let's be Orthodox."

MB. He feels that the survival of Judaism is with the Orthodox group, they will maintain the heritage of Judaism.

FB. He feels that, he said it's always been a small group and that had been firm in their beliefs. But he isn't like a lot of American Orthodoxy who limit themselves

FB. (Continued) and limit their outlook and their perspective. Ricky's not like that. He's extremely tolerant and he's joyful in it. He enjoys it, it's a source of joy.

Q. Does he ever. . . Are they planning on moving to Israel?

MB. No.

Q. Is that a part of their. . .

MB. No, they want. . .

FB. He has no . . .

MB. He's a clinical psychologist. He's. . .

FB. He has no desire to go to Israel to live at all.

MB. He wanted to become a clinical psychologist and do counseling, that's what he wants to do.

Q. And he's working on that . . .

MB. No. Full time. . . he teaches, he teaches two, two Judaica courses at Washington University. . .

FB. And one philosophy.

MB. Yea, one philosophy course he teaches three courses. And the rest of the time he goes to school and he's studying.

FB. And, he's also handling some patients now.

MB. Yea.

Q. And your daughter-in-law is getting her doctorate?

MB. In Russian History.

FB. She has a Masters in soc. . .

MB. I should say, yes. They're both students. She's a Ph.D. candidate in the Russian . . . the Russian history of the labor movement in Russia. And she's writing her thesis now. But, because the labor market in Ph.Ds. is very low

MB. (Continued) now in history. . .

FB. Particularly. . .

MB. And this year, while she was writing her Ph.D. . . while she was writing her thesis, she went back and got. . . took the graduate courses to let them pay for her Masters in social work, so that she can get a job as a social worker to help sustain herself when she's . . .

FB. That's what she's looking for a job now in social work. How could that be male chauvinism . . .

Q. I was going to say she's fairly. . .

FB. She's very liberated.

Q. Now how does this plug into your other son? Have they kept good relations?

MB. No. In fact, they had. . . they never had a very close relationship generally. When they're together, they. . . they're everything gels immediately, like sparks. They light up when they. . . they . . . they get together. But because they have. . . they're apart physically, because they married two different kinds of women. My other, my younger daughter-in-law is different than my older daughter. . . my younger daughter-in-law is not academically or educationally oriented. She's a bright girl, but I mean she's. . . her interests are in everyday living, you know, having a good time, going someplace, doing things. . .

FB. She enjoys her home.

MB. Yea, yea. But she's not involved in or interested in an intellectual kind of life or the academic life, I should say, and she's. . . they're different. So they . . . their interests are different. So that the two. . . the two of them are. . . are completely separated. And so there's no. . . there's no drive or there's no incentive . . . no incentive. . .

Q. I agree with you, but it's just that I don't want to.

MB. Well. . .

Q. You're saying that women keep the family together that. . .

MB. Right.

Q. That that's how contacts are made?

MB. Right, right.

Q. That's true.

MB. Sure. She's. . . she's very close to her. . . she. . . she has two sisters and they're all. . . very. . . the three sisters are very close together. The family meets regularly and everything else.

Q. Oh, they're in Rochester?

MB. No.

Q. No?

MB. The one's in Yonkers, that's where I got the Yonkers from, and one is in Washington, D.C.

Q. Has there. . . Has there been any intermarriage in your family?

MB. No. Well. . .

FB. In our immediate?

Q. Well, I know not in your immediate, but in your . . . just in your. . .

MB. Yes.

FB. I have a. . .

MB. Two nephew, and a niece.

FB. I have a nephew. . .

MB. And a niece.

FB. . . who married. My sister's youngster, but there was no Jewish background there at all. I don't know. And I really shouldn't say. And . . .

MB. Your niece married. . .

FB. . . . my. . . my niece, my brother's daughter married a non-Jewish boy.

However, I really shouldn't say that my nephew married a non-Jewish girl. She. . .

MB. Converted before she got married.

FB. Before she was married. . .

MB. Honey, it's three.

FB. And Marion, and on Murray's side, his niece. . .

MB. My niece married a non Jewish . . .

FB. . . . married a non-Jewish boy. So, I should really say there were three, but one is a converted to Judaism. . .

MB. There's four. Scott married a girl who converted, too, before they went and got married, no before the baby was born. My nephew. . .

FB. Yes.

MB. Frances' sister's son got married to a non-Jewish girl and she became pregnant when before the baby was born, she converted so that the baby would be Jewish. And then Frances' brother's daughter married, but there's no Judaism. . .

FB. There's no conversion.

MB. No. And the other one, the. . . Frances' younger brother's son married a non-Jewish girl who converted before she married. Let's see, and my brother's daughter married a non-Jewish boy, although he was. . . he was not. . . not. . . non-Jewish. . . he had no religion at all. They maintain an association with my brother's family in Poughkeepsie. They. . . he was. . . he never converted to my knowledge.

Q. Was this accepted? Are there strong feelings against it?

MB. We? Well, we're not happy about. . .

FB. You do everything. . . how can I say that. . . yes, you accept it because you

FB. (Continued) love your child and although you do everything you possibly can either to avert something like that before it gets too far along and if that isn't possible then you hope there will be a conversion. And if that isn't possible, then you accept whatever the young people decide to do. I would rather do that than lose a child.

MB. Yea, of course, it's a . . . again, this is not something. . .

FB. Murray, You're. . . I think you've forgotten that there's a tape. OK?

MB. Yes.

Q. OK. To change the subject altogether. For example, getting back into your occupations, do you close on Jewish holidays?

MB. Yea, I. . . I'm not in the office on Jewish holidays.

Q. You own your own business, then?

MB. Yes. The office . . . there's a non-Jewish employee, the non-Jewish employee works. But myself and the Jewish employees do not work.

Q. Oh. Uh-huh.

FB. You're closed holidays.

Q. Uh-huh. What organizations do you belong to, I mean political, civic, religious. How many tapes is this gonna take?

MB. Yea. I, I. . . I'm a very active individual. An active individual. What has happened is I . . . my interests have changed over the years. I always was very active in my professional organizations. I've belonged to the chairs of the local professional organization, to the chairs of the state association, I was the President of the State Association, of all of New York State.

Q. Really? Are you still active?

MB. Yes. Of course, this past year I was and I am now a member of the State Board. So, I've always been active professionally. I also head the Western Region for Post-Graduate. . . Honey, may I have a . . .

FB. Something to drink?

Q. No thanks, really.

FB. Cream soda or . . .

MB. Would pour me a cup of. . .

FB. Tea?

Q. No, thanks, really.

FB. What would you like, dear?

MB. Would you bring me. . . you going to have some coffee? Would you pour me a cup, too, please? And then, I said I'm involved in the education. . . professional education or post-graduate education for the Western Region of New York State.

Q. Now is there optometry. . .

FB. Maybe you'll have some fruit? Bonnie, how do you know that Adam. . . how do you know for sure that Eve was Jewish?

MB. Adam and Eve were Jewish?

Q. Were they?

FB. No she was. Eve was definitely Jewish. How do you know? Who else would say "Have a piece of fruit?" (Laughter)

Q. Oh, I almost ruined your joke.

MB. What were you asking me about education?

Q. Are there optometry schools in Western New York State?

MB. No.

Q. You're talking about post-graduate training.

MB. Yea, what we do is, we have seminars. . .

Q. Oh, I see.

MB. We bring people in and we have seminars. And when I was. . . first came to Rochester I was, as I told you I'm a product of someone who is trying to become involved, assimilated in the American community. So, I felt that my place to work was in the non-Jewish community. So, I became very active within the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club. And I went the chairs of the Brighton Kiwanis Club. I was their past president of the Brighton Kiwanis Club. So, that's a service organization. From. . .

Q. Now, why did you leave these, did you. . . did your needs change?

MB. What happens is my. . . I became. . . I'm still active in professional. . . the service clubs, I became a little bit disappointed in the acceptance of the. . . of the Jew by the non-Jew. I found that there was a latent anti-Semitism in the service clubs, it still is a "WASP" as far as organizations. Even in Brighton, it turned me off completely. I was president of the organization, the remarks were made such as, "Well, this fellow can't follow him because we don't want two of that same kind in a row following each other." That kind of remarks that turn you off. So, I began. . . became, call it a little bit disillusioned about it, the Kiwanis Club. And I stayed on for a number of years, but I began to take less and less of a role. At the same time, my family, my. . . my son and my father, he's . . . was. . . was a leader in the Jewish community in Poughkeepsie. He was. . . he was in one of the most outstanding Jewish civic leaders in the city. He also held a multitude of offices. In fact, when they built the new Jewish center in Poughkeepsie, his was the only name that was given to a room, to a room they call it the. . .

MB. (Continued) they named the gym after him as a tribute to the work that he'd done early and raising funds and working for the center over the period of years. And he was a civic leader to the point where in his honor they made him a trustee, even though he had only gone to the sixth grade in public school, they made him a trustee of the community college. So it was an honor that they bestowed upon him. So we picked up our. . . well, I picked up my kind of commitment to service through my father. It was just a natural kind of thing. And then I became. . . I came here, I got involved in the UJA, working for the UJA. Immodestly I say I'm a well-organized person. If I get involved in something I have an ability to meet . . . be with people and make people, get people to do things. As a result, if you do the job in one area, somebody's. . . they give you another job. They gave me another job, so ultimately, you become so involved with . . . it's like quicksand, you can't get out, you become enmeshed. As a result, I became more and more involved in the Jewish community. And when Rabbi Brownstein, who was here, who was chairman of the Department of Community Relations at the Federation left, he asked if I would take over . . .

FB. Excuse me, do you have another interview to do tonight?

Q. Oh, no.

FB. It just occurred to me we're rambling on and on.

Q. Oh, no. Not at all. The way we usually do it is, depending on . . . depending on the amount of information, these tapes usually run for about an hour and a half. And they'd like to get two sessions, if you both are willing. Or just go. . . the second one usually doesn't go that long, if you'd be willing to go on and do a little more the same night.

MB. Well, anyway. . .

Q. And then we transcribe them. . .

MB. And then they edit. (Laughter)

Q. No, we leave it all in.

MB. So, I became the Chairman of the Department of Community Relations and as you assume that kind of load, you become more and more involved. And from that point on I went to a . . . to a community relations advisory council national plenum in California, and while I was there I was named a member of the Executive Committee of the national organization and one thing leads to another. That's how we became involved. And then, of course, the temple. . . I've been involved in the temple for . . . a friend of mine who was in the temple on Warren Street got me to serve on the Board of Trustees. And again, I told you, I get involved and I start to do a job, and they. . . and I am well-organized, so they give me more work, what would I do if I wanted to be president of the temple? You know, so that's how it happened.

Q. When were you president?

MB. Let's see, this June would have been . . . I, I. . . Herb Schwartz, who's the President now served one year up to this June. I was the president for the three years preceding that.

Q. Oh. Did you . . . are you pleased with the way the temple is going?

MB. Well, not particularly.

Q. Really?

MB. I feel that. . . I feel that there are changes to be made in the synagogue which would make the synagogue a better place according to my standards. Now I'm not. . . my standards might not be the same as the majority of the people of the congregation want. But, I feel that there are changes in the synagogue which are not what I consider to be in the best interest of the . . .

FB. Well, the Reform movement has changed considerably anyway. I think you know

FB. (Continued) over the years. As a matter of fact, when we first joined the temple, maybe twenty-five years ago, it was different than it is. . . the services were different, it. . . they were all in English, there was a very. . . I think the Schma was the only prayer ever said in. . . and only the one line "Schma Israel" was the only thing. Now they do the whole Schma with the Vahatpa and everything in Hebrew. They do the Yagot in Hebrew, they do a lot of things in Hebrew in the service that they never did before.

Q. Why do you think it changed?

MB. Well, this is a growing trend toward traditionalism in the Jewish movement.

FB. Because it wasn't . . . people didn't even feel Jewish, we still have members at B'rith Kodesh who feel there's too much Hebrew. And they can't understand why you need Hebrew in a Reform synagogue. Now once we. . . about fifteen years ago, maybe it's even more than that, they did a population survey in Rochester. . .

Q. In fact, Rabbi Karp wants to do that.

FB. . . . and I. . .

Q. Again this year.

FB. Oh, and I worked on it. I did interviewing.

MB. With that. . . what's his name, the U. of R.?

FB. The thing. . . Rosette.

MB. Rosette. Bernard Rosette. . .

FB. I don't remember his first name. Dr. Rosette did the. . . the compilation of all the information. Well, the reason people were Orthodox or Conservative or Reform were some of the silliest reasons, having nothing to do with Judaism. For. . . although I could understand them. One of the primary reasons. . . oh

FB. (Continued) one of the reasons I joined the Reform temple is I didn't to do any of the. . . I wanted to ride on the Sabbath or I wanted to listen to the radio. Or, why did you join this temple over another temple? It was closer to me, you know, in. . . in distance, or I liked the rabbi better. Things of that. . . having nothing to do with their own philosophy of Judaism. Really. And Judaism to them was nothing but a matter of rituals. Either you observed the. . . the rituals connected with the Sabbath, like not driving a car, or things like that, rather than the Sabbath is the feeling of the day apart from the rest of the week. Whether or not you lit candles decided whether or not you were a Conservative or . . . or a Reform or an Orthodox. Anyway, the things I discovered were really . . .

MB. Now we can go back to synagogues. Synagogue politically is a. . . when you're close to someone in a synagogue you lose some of your respect for the synagogue. Because you find the people within the synagogue are not the kind of people that you normally think of as leadership in the synagogue. You find that the rabbi is not the all good, you know, full of altruistic. . . individual that you assume that he is. That's he. .

FB. Oh, sometimes I think we expect much too much of a rabbi. We expect them to be gods when they're not, they're human.

MB. We expect them to. . . well, we expect them to be a little bit above the average Amer. . . human being. We expect a little more from them. And sometimes we don't get that kind of thing and we're disappointed. Maybe that's the reason. So that . . . then you begin to find. . .

FB. We expect them to do things we would never do.

MB. . . you find people are. . . who want things, not because they consider them to be in the best interest. . . because they feel that that's what they

MB. (Continued) want. We're, for instance at B'rith Kodesh, there's hasseling going on all the time as to whether or not they should have a cantor or shouldn't have a cantor, or they should have a second rabbi or have a student rabbi. . .

FB. Well, that's administration.

MB. That's all organization. . .

FB. That has nothing to do. . .

MB. That's what I feel is the part of the temple that I'm unhappy with. They don't live within the means that they . . . money has become the name of the game. They have what is commonly called an edifice complex, everything has to be bricks and mortar and things like that. The beauty and the . . . of the religion is secondary to the physical and the tangible and material items that are involved in this kind of . . .

FB. This is part of the American culture.

MB. Well, I don't care, that's not the problem.

FB. It's a part of American society and it has infiltrated even religious institutions. Let's not kid ourselves, Murray. Religious institutions are big business sometimes. . .

MB. Sure.

FB. And they have to . . . there's a . . .

MB. Doesn't make it right.

FB. Dichotomy. . .

MB. Doesn't make it right.

FB. . . . between administration and philosophy or concept or emotion that's involved with religion.

Q. Interesting. When you were president, did you institute any changes?

MB. Yes, I tried to, but I met with a lot of resistance. There was a new rabbi who had come into the temple at the time, and there was a change in the temple. And the resistance to change by the membership, there was resistance to change by the rabbi. It was a traumatic experience because it was a. . . the temple was going through a transitional stage. And it had not. . . not yet really solidified itself because the rabbi did not yet fully control the congregation. He has his people who like him and want him and who use him as a source of inspiration. . .

FB. Murray . . .

MB. But there was a large. . . What's the matter? There was a segment of the congregation. . . why do you think what I'm saying is wrong? I'm telling the truth.

FB. I'm not saying it's wrong, but those are. . .

MB. Frances, if you want . . . if they want to have information. . .

FB. They're personal feelings.

MB. Of course, they're personal feelings, she's asking me personal things. Are you here. . . are you here . . . are you here to have me say what you want me to say. . . what you think I should say?

FB. No. I don't think. . .

MB. Why then. . .

FB. . . . you should say what you . . . what she would like to hear. . .

MB. I'm not condemning. . .

FB. But I don't agree with either, but I don't agree that. . .

MB. I'm not condemning the rabbi, I'm not condemning the rabbi. I just said that there are people in the temple who are not happy with the rabbi, now that's not a secret.

FB. . . . you should say personal things. But that wouldn't be important to the

FB. (Continued) whole Jewish community, honey.

MB. She's asking me what. . .

FB. She shouldn't rely on just B'rith Kodesh. . .

Q. Well, I'll. . . but. . . people usually give, it's funny. . .

MB. She's asking me about the temple. If she's. . . if you'd come from the Federation I wouldn't mention the temple. She wants to discuss the temple, I'll discuss the temple.

FB. Well. . . I think she means the concept. . . the. . .

MB. My wife doesn't like to hurt anybody or offend anybody. She's sensitive to human beings and she's sensitive to the fact that I have likes and dislikes and I express them. . .

FB. So do I.

MB. Yes, but you keep them within yourself. OK?

FB. I'm sorry, dear, I really don't mean to offend you or stop you from speaking. But, I think probably there are areas. . .

MB. If you want to learn what I'm thinking. . . if you're here to learn what I'm thinking, then I have to answer otherwise, I just don't say anything. I mean I'll give her the answers. . . I'll say all the nice little things that'll be platitudes that'll make the record sound beautiful, but it won't have any meaning, it'll be insignificant, it won't have any significance at all.

FB. I'm sorry.

Q. In my last interview I heard very bad things about a former rabbi at Beth El.

FB. I know, but it's funny. . .

Q. But, you know. . .

MB. I didn't say anything bad about Miller, I just. . . and I say I still feel that way, though. There's a segment of the population who do not care for

MB. (Continued) Miller. Is it true that they had a meeting of a certain who were opposed to Miller and what he was doing?

FB. All these things. . .

MB. This is public knowledge.

FB. . . .but they're all a part of. . .

MB. Of what?

FB. . . . of a greater problem, and that was the . . . the . . . the pull of two separate forces in the Reform movement.

Q. Which are. . . ?

FB. One was those who had been introduced to some kind of tradition and enjoyed it, felt more Jewish, wanted more tradition in services and so on, and the old time Reform movement or the Reform group members at B'rith Kodesh. . . the old German Reform group that wanted less tradition, less Hebrew, I always used to say less Jewish, I don't know whether I should make this remark or not but, I really feel sometimes that Reform Jews sometimes became Reform Jews because they wanted less Judaism of all kinds. That is, if they had the courage they would have said, "I'm not Jewish." Some of them, I don't say all. Some of them really had a concept of what the philosophy of Reform Judaism was, and really lived Jewish lives, in quotes. But some. . . to some of the members I think to them it. . . it was just a step away . . . it was the least step they could take from actually being non-Jewish, and that suited them fine. But, and that was the pull in Reform. But their greater number of members were more traditional, they were younger. . . And I think the times now are such that people are looking for meaning. All of society has suddenly become. . . people begin to feel that they really don't have much meaning, that they don't have a great deal of worth, that they're an organism that reacts, that a human being is . . . is an organism that simply reacts physically or in . . . in an

FB. (Continued) emotional way to its surroundings, its physical surroundings. That almost as though people are soulless that they're just an organism that reacts the way a plant would or a . . . a plant grows relative. . . has sun and water. People grow well if they have. . . if they're surrounded by decent living conditions. It's more than that, it's a great deal more than that. But I think society has come to feel that that's what living is, you're an organism that reacts to various things that bombard you in society. . . that. . . almost forgetting that people have souls. . .

Q. So you think that's. . .

FB. And that they're human beings. . .

Q. Back to religion?

FB. Yea. And I think that's one of the reasons because deep down they know they're different than a plant or an animal even. They do research. . . they do research on animals. And then they say human beings react the way the animals do. In lots of ways, maybe, but there. . . there's more to it than the. . . just reaction. The way animals do or plants do, we're more than just an organism.

Q. So, you. . .

FB. I call it the soul, That's the other part. And although maybe that isn't the correct word. Or your humanity is a part, it's different from animalism or plant life.

Q. Do you think the people advocating more traditionalism are going to win out?

FB. Yes, they want. . . you know, I think a philosophy of religion, if it really isn't clothed, is naked, and if it isn't clothed with some kind of habit like ritual, that when it's under siege, or under bombardment, it's very easy to let go of that philosophy unless it has become a habit through a certain kind of tradition. Maybe even ritual. . . rituals really. That invoke or

FB. (Continued) strengthen that philosophy.

MB. I can tell you often that the point is . . . will obviously come to fruition because the rabbis that are graduating from the . . .the Reform rabbinical schools now are much more traditional. In other words, you can't find the kind of a rabbi like Philip Bernstein or that you had before. Most . . . most of the rabbis, practically all of them coming out, are being taught to lean more toward the tradition so when you . . . when a new rabbi comes to a synagogue, it's natural that the type of . . . of activity in the synagogue is going to move toward the traditional because the rabbi is that way.

FB. Yes, that's another reason.

Q. Is Rabbi Miller?

MB. Yes, more traditional.

FB. Yes in certain respects, where he . . .

MB. He's more traditional than his predecessor.

FB. Yea, but . . .

Q. Rabbi . . . Rabbi Bernstein wasn't traditional?

MB. No, he was Reformed . . . a Reform rabbi. Well he was . . .compared to the people who succeeded him, when he came here they used to have services on Sunday. He was the one that made them change to Friday night. Saturday.

FB. I think actually as far as Judaism . . . I mean when I spoke about Judaism, I was talking about the . . . or tradition . . . I was talking about religion in . . .in general, I think that more people are looking for something . . .

Q. I agree.

FB. . . . to give meaning to their lives, something that makes them more than just an organism living on earth, that makes them human, that can satisfy the soul, really something that satisfies the soul along with the . . . a lot of the other beauties in life. And religion is . . . it's another one of the . . .

Q. Are you finding that there are younger people in line at B'rith Kodesh?

FB. Well, yes.

MB. Why sure.

FB. And they enjoy tradition, too.

MB. Yea, children. . . children of members plus new people who are. . . who are interested in the more. . . well, I don't want to use the word modern, a more liberal concept of Judaism. That's what they want.

FB. They can't be Orthodox and yet they are yearning for a. . . a close relationship with. . . with their religious heritage. And they would like to know more about it, so that they would have a choice. Those in the. . . who are Reform feel that they have a choice that it isn't . . . not pair. . . from the mouth of the Almighty, but. . . and that if they knew more. . . that I really feel there should be more adult education, if you really want to know. Young people who grew up without any information in homes like mine and others, I think are the . . . the parents of the young children. Now I would like to see Jeff and Judy, really my young . . . my younger son and his wife more educated as far as Judaism is concerned. And then they can make their choice.

MB. What they want.

FB. There must be some way of reaching them. Well, when they yearn for it enough, they'll find a way to get it.

MB. Well, I'll go back to the same old story. Organized religion is there, is necessary in a non-Jewish society, because it's a Christian society that we live in. But not everybody has the need for an organized Jewish society. Religiously I'm talking about. There are greater people who do not believe in community prayer, but going to synagogue turns them off. They. . . they don't want to sit there and wish. . . read the words someone else wrote, and. . . and read them

MB. (Continued) over and over every week. . . over and over and over again.

FB. Yes, but how. . .

MB. Well, that they have. . .

FB. I'm sorry to interrupt, but everytime I hear that. . .there are sometimes poets. . . Have you ever read poetry. . .

MB. Yea.

FB. . . . or read a novel and suddenly you come across a paragraph and you say I felt exactly like that only you never expressed it. Either you were incapable of expressing it, you know, you can't find the words for the emotion you're feeling, and it seems to me if someone found a mode of expression and you really feel that way, what's so terrible then about reading someone else's praise?

MB. But you. . . but you didn't select those. . .

FB. If that is the way you feel too. . .

MB. Select them by committee and you wait and see, they select them for you.

FB. So you do other reading besides you don't have to settle for. . .

MB. Well that's. . . that's what I'm saying. Well, when you go to a synagogue service, it's a community kind of prayer. . . you accept everything that's put there before you. Although there is a portion of a silent prayer, which they want everybody to have as part of the. . . (Laughter)

FB. It's so small though.

MB. Prayer. . .

FB. Before I get. . . as a matter of fact, they give you a little portion that you can read. . .

MB. Read.

FB. . . . if you can't think of anything you want to say yourself to the Almighty. The. . . and it's. . . it's a paragraph. I want you to know before sometimes

FB. (Continued) I've tried reading it. I don't get halfway through it because what. . . whatever it says you begin to think about it. By the time I get halfway through, they're finished and it's gone.

MB. You can see we're two different individuals. Living in the same household, you can see that.

Q. Well, that makes life interesting.

MB. Yea. I think it's. . . I think it's. . . I enjoy it. I enjoy it. I enjoy it because I know she's bright and she's. . . we disagree on some things and we agree on other things but we respect each other's differences. That's. . . I told you the whole family operates this way. I think it's a wonderful way to live.

Q. That's good 'cause that's what we're about actually.

MB. What?

Q. Because I asked for information about you before I came.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE B

Interview with Murray and Frances Blanchard  
July 11, 1977  
By Bonnie Kantor

Interview I  
Tape II  
Side A

Q. So, just to get back to basics, the Jewish organization that you began with that you. . . that you belong to is B'rith Kodesh, and that you were President of that.

MB. Yea, I was. . . I started off with the Federation, going to the Community Relations Department, and I became involved doing the. . . the Temple B'rith Kodesh at the same. . . the same time. I was Chairman of the Department of Community Relations and President of the Federation at the same time.

Q. Are you still active in the Federation?

MB. I'm still Chairman of the Department of Community Relations.

Q. And what is that. . . what. . .

MB. Community relations, well. . .the Federation is divided into different areas. There's the area of fund raising called the UJA, there's the area of social planning which deals with the planning of activities as far as the development of the Jewish community itself in Rochester. There's the Department of Internal Affairs which deals with structuring of the . . . excuse me, of the leadership development of the Federation. Now they develop the programs to educate people in the Federation to the ways of the Federation. Then there's the Department of Community Relations. The Department of Community Relations is set up. . .oh excuse me one more, there's a Women's Division which performs over the activities of the women's organizations in the community, usually in practice is the chairman of the . . . or person or whatever you want to call them of the Women's Division. And then there's the Department of Community Relations which is supposed to be . . . that part of the activities of the Federation which deals with the interpretation of the Jewish community to the non-Jewish community. Both local and nationally. Now we have a committee on Soviet Jewry, we work to try to get Soviet Jews out of Russia. We have a committee on Church/State where we try to get the. . . the local schools not to have Christmas programs at Christmas time to embarrass the Jewish children. We have the. . . the Department of Social Legislation/Community Service. We have. . . we have

MB. (Continued) educational programs. We recently had a forum, . . . forum series on prison reform, and we had people like Wadsworth speaking, Stanley Fink who's the Majority Leader of the Assembly came up to . . . to speak and we had our . . . our member of the bar and an ex-prisoner come and speak, spoke to the community both Jewish and non-Jewish to educate them of the needs in prison reform. We get involved in other activities with the black community in the city. We work with GEM and other non-Jewish organizations to try to . . . to develop a better Christian/Jewish relationship in. . . in the Rochester community. We have an Interfaith Committee on Israel which follows this form. We have an Israel Committee which deals with trying to interpret the needs and requirements of the State of Israel to the non-Jewish community and the Jewish community. That's. . . and that's where. . . that's a part of. . . that's what I did and I have all these committees to do.

Q. Do you feel you're successful?

MB. Oh, well, I'll be immodest, yes, because we've taken the department from a very quiet department into one which I consider to be the most active one in the entire Federation.

Q. And do you have any difficulty with. . . you mentioned different agencies, some religious, some ethnic, some racial, that you're dealing with. . . do you have any difficulties with any of . . . particular?

MB. None that's a. . . we have. . . we have. . . if we have a problem we sit down and discuss these problems. The only area we. . . where we've had . . .

FB. Separation of church and state. . .

MB. Well, yea. . .

FB. And there are little problems that come up. . .

MB. Yea, fourth of July. . . we. . .

FB. But that's true of all of soci. . . all of the. . . all of society.

MB. We have, the twenty-sixth, I think it is, we're throwing a luncheon for all the school superintendents in all of Monroe County to interpret the needs of the Jewish community to them and let them sit down with each other and discuss their problems in relationship to our problems so that we can come up with some kind of a formal understanding so that in a few. . . so that when. . . when the. . . the Christmas times come, or Easter comes, we defer to our separation of church and state policies. You're not supposed to have a Christmas program and a parent program. . cause that's not. . . that's not what separation of church and state, equal time wouldn't be equal for each school. Separate but equal. You're not supposed to have a Chanukkah program, you're not supposed to have a Christmas program, so they. . . they have to be advised of it. Cause they have pressure from their non-Jewish groups to have these kind of things in the school. So we have. . . we try to explain the situation so they will find some kind of a way to resolve the problem.

Q. They still do have Christmas parties.

MB. No they don't.

Q. They don't?

MB. No, they're cutting them down. There's no more Christmas trees in the schools.

FB. Actually. . .

MB. Some of the schools, yea.

FB. Yea. Actually, I think the key to that is the teacher. If the teacher doesn't understand. . .

MB. Principal, it's the principal, principal.

FB. Well, he has to know and so inform the . . . or direct or guide the teachers. Because they're the ones who do the lesson planning, and they're the ones who plan for these things in the classroom.

FB. (Continued) Someday the Women's Association is going to have a meeting with teachers, with superintendents, and . . . on things to do in the classroom when they have a social studies unit on Israel or . . . or the church/state relations on what to do in a classroom at holiday time and that kind of thing.

MB. That. . . that's, , ,

FB. Someday we'll do that.

MB. . . . what I mean. I also serve. . . right now I'm serving on the Brighton. . . on the Brighton Zoning Board of Appeals for my community service activities. I'm very diversified.

Q. I don't know where you find the time.

MB. Well, I organize myself. . . First of all I. . . I take a long lunch hour. I take a twelve to two lunch hour so I do most of my community services during that lunch hour. And then we have a few evenings.

FB. He does it again.

Q. Now what does the community relations activities that you're doing. . . are there other organizations from other denominations that you . . .

MB. The Community Relations Department's composed of twenty-five members selected at random. Plus, two representatives from every major Jewish organization in the city and every synagogue sends a representative, and the Council of Jewish Women sends a representative, ORT sends a representative, the Zionists organizations send a representative. So the organizations and department's composed of twenty-five assorted people plus representatives. So, it's a relatively large group of people and everybody's represented.

Q. And is this . . . you mentioned you brought the organization up, or your time. . .

MB. Within my. . . I've been Chairman of the Department, I guess, for around four or five years, I'm not sure now what the exact time was. However long Brownstein

MB. (Continued) is gone. Three years, Miller's four years, so four years I've been Chairman of the Department, four years. And, we've developed new programs that have signaled an interest in activities in this. . . and we've got people who've become involved and are working. For instance, we have a national meeting in January in Miami, and we got 22 people from Rochester who went down. . .

FB. We have a very, strong, active committed Jewish community. We truly do.

MB. So, just like Julia Berlove, who I'm sure . . .

FB. We have more leadership than we have posts to fill. It's true!

MB. She's leaving. . . she's leaving for . . . for Indianapolis, is that where she's going, Indiana someplace. . .

FB. Bloomington.

MB. Bloomington, Indiana. She. . . just yesterday we were at Pris and Henry Brown's, she was throw a cocktail party for . . . for Julia. Julia wants to makes sure that I will make arrangements so she'll be able to come to the plenum in Tucson next year.

Q. So your . . . agency must deal with anti-Semitism.

MB. Yes. ADL is one of the agencies that we deal with. NJCRAC which is the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, under which we operate, you know, that's our parent organization, is composed of . . . of representative communities plus representatives from each one of the national Jewish organizations, like National Jewish Congress, National Bureau of Labor Unions, Jewish Congress, National Jewish Committee, ADL, things like that.

Q. Do you feel, since you obviously have much dealings with the non-Jewish community, that there is a lot of anti-Semitism in Rochester?

MB. I think most of the anti-Semitism we have now is latent. I think that there are still some beds of anti-Semitism. I still think there's what we call

MB. (Continued) "five o'clock shadow." That during the day the Jew and the non-Jew sit down together and do business together, talk together and get along well together. And, but in the evening, they socially, most of them don't . . . go back to their own little hives for their activities. I don't feel any anti. . . anti feelings that exist, unless push becomes shove. I think I can foresee what will. . . if the energy crisis becomes very bad and they have to ration gasoline that there will be negative comments against the Jews.

Q. What about professionally as far as optometrists.

MB. Optometrists pick their own profession and I think that approximately half of the optometrists in the United States are Jewish.

Q. Really?

MB. Yea, it was a profession, I suppose, that grew on, just like dentists. . . a very large proportion of dentists who are. . . are dentists and now a large proportion of the physicians are becoming. . . who are Jewish. In fact, the medical school of the U. of R. the last few years has. . . has had a tremendous majority . . . larger majority of students. . .

FB. Compared to the days when they used to have one or two Jews. . .

Q. They had a quota system.

FB. Right. It wasn't even 10% I don't think.

MB. So. . . So, I don't think professionally. . . I don't think it's made . . . I think it's been a breakdown.

FB. Yes, your generation and our children's generation, they've had no experience. I'm sure you've had had none with anti-Semitism.

Q. No.

FB. And either has . . . have my children. Truly. But, you know, our generation

FB. (Continued) once in a while. . .

Q. You. . . you've felt it.

MB. Well, when I was a kid I did. Oh, I was. . . my God, I was going to school.

FB. When it was time for us to go away to college, today when your child goes to college all you think about is getting the money in some form or other, if the parents can't afford it, and if they can, then they don't think about that quite so much. And which school will accept the child on the basis of his grades and so forth. But in those days, there was no help financially from anyone, your father had to be able to . . . our time, your father had to be able to send you to school and you had to work and. . . and save your money and go to school if your father couldn't afford to help you. There were no agencies that you could go to for loans. Banks didn't make loans to students then. And there were no agencies that you could approach for help financially. But on top of that every school had a quota. For instance, my father wanted me to go to a girls school. My grades were high, they were excellent and there was no reason why I couldn't go to any school I wanted to as far as he was concerned. He could afford to spend the money on a school. And he wanted a girls school. So what nice girls schools were there around? There was Wellesley, Skidmore. . . well do you know that my application was refused and the school principal was told. We take two Jewish girls and we already have them. And he was. . . and he said but, why? I mean, here's a student I think you should be proud to have. And they said well her background. And I sat right across the desk from him when he was talking to the Registrar or the Admissions Officer, and he said, what do you mean, background? And then that was the first time that I had ever had any experience that . . . that there was something I was kept from doing because I was Jewish. I had never had that happen to me before. But I was refused admission. And so he

- FB. (Continued) was told, well, since you feel that strongly about that particular student, we'll have another. . . we are going to be having another meeting of our Board of Admissions and we'll take up the application again. And I said you can just tell them they needn't bother, I wouldn't go there. And there were lots of boys in our age group who wanted to go to engineering school, don't go to engineering school, you'll never get a job when you get out.
- MB. War came. . .
- FB. Jewish boys and then the war came along, and of course that changed it all. And we all know what Jewish boys went through to get into med school in Murray's age group. It isn't that way anymore.
- Q. Optometry never set any quotas?
- MB. No, not to my knowledge. Course, I. . . it's very hard now, of course, optometry is very difficult to get into, the number of students . . . spaces available is limited. In fact, we have a higher applicant to place available ratio than any medical or dental school. We have. . . in New York State we have one. . . one optometry school, the State University College of Optometry, and they have 1500 applicants and they pick 48 students. Minimum that you have to have a 3.4 in order to be considered.
- Q. Are they thinking of expanding?
- MB. Well, I don't know. It's hard. It takes money to build schools so. And they're thinking of expanding the class. They want to hold down to you get to a class of 92. They're now. . . they're now into I think. . . now this class, next year they will go to 62, but 92 is supposed to be their. . .
- FB. There was another thing I wanted to tell you. You know it fl. . . it came to my mind when I . . . I talked about Wellesley, and Skidmore. . . As a matter of fact, out of the eight Jewish girls who were my friends. . . friends, everybody

FB. (Continued) went to college with the exception of one. And there was one who denied her Judaism, she said. . . her name was very Dutch. . .

Q. Really?

FB. Yes, really. That's how bad it was. Who. . . who registered . . . who wanted to go to a certain school and knew that as a Jewish girl she was never going to get in. . .

MB. She went to business school anyway.

FB. Well afterwards. And she said she was Dutch Reformed. Her name was. . . in those days they asked you what your religion was on your application. . . she put Dutch Reformed, well she had a kind of a Dutch name anyway, I mean it could have been a Dutch name. And she was accepted. And when we were out of school, she had a. . . an excellent job. No Jewish girl would ever have dreamt of having a job at Chase Manhattan Bank as an assistant to a vice-president. And she got that job, oh, we thought that was wonderful. But deep down, there was a certain amount of disrespect, she got it under false pretenses.

Q. She never told them she was Jewish?

FB. Oh, she finally walked out on that beautiful job. She was making more money than any of us ever dreamt of. Right at the beginning, but in the end she left that job because she couldn't stand it anymore because she felt so guilty.

Q. Interesting.

FB. And really, you wouldn't find a girl today. . .

Q. No, not at all.

FB. . . . who would feel so pressured that she wouldn't want to do that.

Q. What activities are you involved in Jewishly, civically. . .

FB. Oh. . . well, I've been involved in quite a few.

Q. Well, you teach at Temple B'rith Kodesh.

FB. Yes, I teach at Temple B'rith Kodesh in the Hebrew School and the Sunday school, I should say Saturday school because we teach on Saturday morning. Saturday and Sunday morning.

Q. What do you teach?

FB. On. . . on Saturday I have a Havurah group that I teach. . .that we teach. . . oh, all sorts of things. What was the curriculum last year? The shabbat, holidays. . . we made movies of holidays, things that go on on a holiday. Holidays. Deuteronomy, I did Deuteronomy this past year. Then I teach Hebrew, reading only to those youngster. . . youngsters who have never had Hebrew. And I've been there fifteen. . . seventeen years. And there's a great difference now in the classes. In the beginning, there were almost as many boys as there were girls, believe it or not because the boys had not been Bar Mitzvahed. Almost. There were always a greater number of girls, I would say it may have been 60/40 when I first began and now it's about. . . well this last class is 100% girls. Last year there was 100% girls, and there are fewer in the class. Last year there were 12 in the class and there were years when I had 20, 22. And that's how it's. . . there are fewer. . . they are fewer in number now and there. . . there are only girls now because most have . . . are Bar Mitzvahed or Bat Mitzvahed in the Reform Temple now. That is an interesting thing to note.

Q. Are. . . Are they there for different reasons, are they harder to teach now, you know, are they there because their parents are making them go . . .do they feel a commitment to want to learn?

FB. I have always felt that when a young person says "Oh, I hate Hebrew school." Or, "I hate Sunday school." Nine times out of ten they say so because their

FB. (Continued) . . . peers demand it of them. . . . demand it of them. Somehow it. . . it's not the infants who really enjoy going to Saturday school. But I think that given the permissive kind of parents we have and the change in. . . in the way parents handle children today in this generation, I don't think the kids would really go if they hated it that much and the parents would go along with it really. But they don't and they do come. I think it's the thing to say most of the time. Yes, there are those who really dislike it. But, I think that there are fewer of them than we really feel there are. And, I teach in the Hebrew School. The classes are larger in the Hebrew School, more youngsters are going to Hebrew School now in the Reform movement. I don't know about the others. More are going and. . . although with the drop in population the classes are smaller this year. The number is smaller, but that has nothing to do, I don't think, with the Hebrew School per se, I think it has to do with the fact that there are fewer children. . .

Q. Right.

FB. . . . to go. And I work in the Federation, I was Women's Division Chairman. . . . Women's Division of the UJA and now I'm Trustee Division Chairman. I'm the Women's Association President. I was always active in Council for a long time. I was active in my Sisterhood in our Sisterhood, B'rith Kodesh, for a long time. But then after a few years when I began to become more active in UJA and in Federation, I found it difficult with teaching and the volunteer work and the house and everything to do these other things, too. So, I. . . I'm not as active in Council or the Sisterhood as I used to be.

Q. Now you speak about a Women's Division of the Federation. . .

FB. Women's. . . the Women's Association is a department of the Federation, as Murray pointed out to you.

Q. And, are you. . . have special functions as women?

FB. Yes. One of our primary functions, and one of the reasons really that we formed was, that there was no focal point or central point or clearing house for all the things that women. . . Jewish women's organizations in Rochester did. So one of our primary functions is to be . . . to be a conduit, channel. . . various things through the Women's Association that a single organ. . . Jewish women's organization will not be able to do by itself. So that every Jewish women's organization in Rochester is a member. They send. . . they have representatives on the Board; we have representatives at large for those Jewish women who do not belong to Jewish organ. . . women's organizations. And, so we. . . it's really true. . . truly a representative of all of Jewish women in the city of Rochester. We have the Board, and the Executive Board. We have a President's Council. And one of the purposes for that is to clear the calendar so that no Jewish women's organizations are doing big events on the same day. If there is a conflict, all the Presidents are in the Council together, we talk about it and they are. . . they're very gracious about changing dates and so we don't have any conflicts. Whereas before, we might have. One Jewish president might have called up another, "How dare you have an art show the same day we're having. . . I don't know. . . a fashion show or whatever it is." And so that is. . . it makes for better relationships between. . . among all of the Jewish women's organizations. We work in. . . we're actually a representative of, I think, of our Jewish community, women's community, to the non-Jewish women's community. We have an Interfaith Coalition that's very strong. And the Executive Board consists of two Catholic women from the Rochester Catholic Diocese, two representatives from the Council of Church Women, protestant women, and two Jewish women from our Women's Association.

Q. Have you ever been on that?

FB. I beg your pardon?

Q. Have you ever been on that particular. . .

FB. Yes, as President of the Women's Association, I do. And Anne Berger sits and we have quite a few Jewish women on the various committees that serve that Interfaith Coalition. You must be interested in something very interesting that has come up in the Women's Association, as a matter of fact, that we're working on. Another one of our purposes is to foster understanding amongst the women in the whole community, Jewish and non-Jewish. And, of course, Israel is a focal point for Jewish women. The Middle East is a . . . well, I hesitate to use the expression "world-wide problem." How could we be a problem to anybody? But, it's foremost in the minds of a lot of countries these days. It's relation. . . their relationship to Israel. And we have a study program that we've initiated on the Mid-East situation, which we hope will culminate in a year, after a year of studies, which we hope will culminate in a trip to the Middle East.

Q. Good!

FB. And when I say Middle East, those Arab countries that will accept us and Israel. So, we have a whole program of study on that involving non-Jewish and Jewish women, and we'll. . . we'll study the Middle East and, hopefully, have a group, a women's group, who will visit these countries and come back and talk to their groups about their experiences and their attitudes and their feelings and so on. And then hopefully, and I'm certain, I shouldn't say hopefully, I'm certain that it will result in a better attitude or a more. . . a greater awareness of Israel and its problems and Jews and their problems in society. Not only in America but everywhere.

Q. So you sound, you both sound extremely proud of the Jewish community.

MB. Oh, yes.

Q. Has it lived up to your expectations?

MB. Yes.

FB. They try in every area.

MB. We try to participate to the point where . . .

FB. And I think most of the people, I can honestly say, that it's a source of satisfaction and joy to me, too. I. . . I've been happy doing that kind. . . this kind of . . .

MB. You get a. . . you get a, ...

FB. Yea. I'm really happy to be a part of it. And I say that I. . . I really feel we have Jews of integrity, committed Jews mostly. . .

Q. Are there any things that you wish were going on that aren't?

FB. I wish there would be more education. . .

MB. Well. . . Well, I. . . yea. . .

FB. Oh, yes, I hope for younger parents and younger adults and the older ones who really should make it a part of their life to feel a joy in it. And accept the responsibility towards the Jewish. . . this is, I think, the reason. . . I feel education is more important so that also that. . . hopefully, it will result in. . . it will, . . it will result in a greater dedication, a greater commitment to the Jewish community. We need committed and dedicated Jews or we can just fritter away.

MB. Well, you know, as far as education. . . education study has been done. Do you know about that thing?

FB. Murray has worked on that, tell her about that. . .

MB. That. . .well, of course, one of the latest jobs that I took on was that there's a adult education group set up to implement the goals and the recommendations of this Education Task Force, which was set up.

Q. Now, what is . . . exactly was this task force?

MB. Well, it was designed to raise the status of the Jewish education . . .

FB. In our community.

MB. . . . in our community.

Q. Now, who sponsored this?

MB. The Federation.

FB. Our Federation.

MB. Elizabeth Schwartz. . . Schwartz was the Chairperson of the. . .

FB. You can call her "chairman" she doesn't object at all, she prefers it.

MB. And they brought in professionals to help and assist with the questionnaires things like that. And after the study was finished. . .

FB. That's when . . . the Board of Jewish Education. . .

MB. . . . there was a report, and the report make recommendations. Now, in the area of adult education, there were certain things they felt were lacking and missing. And they asked me to become Chairman of the Task Force for the Implementation of Adult Education in Monroe County. And we have already begun to work. We have started to. . . sat down with representatives of the synagogues, Beth El, B'rith Kodesh, Sinai, and the Council of Jewish Women, and the other organizations that provide it. . . the JCC, which provide adult education. And to try to make a more cohesive plan so that there won't be duplication. . . to expose more people to the Jewish education so that they get a Hebrew course, instead of having five people with the Hebrew teacher at B'rith Kodesh, and people with the Hebrew teacher at Beth El, they'll have one teacher with ten people somewhere. . . Now, Bill Green, whom I'm sure you know, is now. . . has now been named Chairman of the Executive Council. In other words, they are professionals who are. . . who are in education, Jewish education, or in education, have been set up as a committee to, now to

MB. (Continued) organize and then get the detail work done. First we got the commitment from the all. . . philosophically, now it's down to the nitty-gritty of the situation. So we had a meeting about three weeks ago in which all the educators and representatives of all the organizations sat down and they. . . they told them what they had planned to do in the fall for the educational program. And so then they're taking it and they decided to have a basic Hebrew course to be given for the whole community, not one in each synagogue. They will provide, each synagogue will provide a course in what they call prayer book Hebrew, teach you how to read Hebrew to read the prayers. You have Hebrew, Hebrew to speak it and understand it will be a community project. And there will be a. . . they're gonna to have an opening. . . an opening and a program where they'll bring in a . . . a certain . . . an outside speaker to open the program. And many. . . will be invited, there will be course registration. A man from Beth El registers at Beth El, he's allowed to attend B'rith Kodesh lectures and participate in adult education at B'rith Kodesh. There will be lectures at the JCC. Things that they charged for before will not be charged for anymore, cause at the JCC, you know, you'll have difficulty with the budget. So, they'll have programs there at the JCC for the entire community. Even if you're not a member of any synagogue, as long as you register. . . And now that's underway, we've started in already.

Q. You mentioned the JCC. Do you belong?

MB. No. We did. For a number. . . for a number.

FB. Did you know, Bonnie, that we've belonged to the Jewish Center every year I think for 30 years. Our children never took advantage of it except when they were very young and went to Seneca Camp. And that wasn't for very long either, maybe two or three years or so, cause they went to others, too. And, and yet, we, Murray has always felt that it was an institution that should be there for

FB. (Continued) those Jews who wanted it and needed it and that it was a part of his responsibility to help that kind of Jewish institution. Last year was the first year we did not belong.

MB. The year before, we became members of the. . . we were members of the Health Club. The dues were \$464 a year for a family. We found out that when we went a total of ten times in a year. That means it was \$46 every time we went to the JCC. Well. . . I really didn't feel that we need it any more. I just reached the point. . . I contributed to the building. . . the building fund, but I just felt that it was just way out of line. So, last year, I did not join any more. How far do you think we've gone because I have to help the Chigers because of their. . .now they're in a bind financially. . . the Federation. . . Federation is helping support them. . .so I probably will join again as a general member. And I don't think I'll join the Health Club again, I'm not poor, but I think. . . I think it's a waste of money.

Q. Now, because of their financial problems, are they less. . . becoming less committed Jewishly to the . . .

MB. No. . . no.

FB. Their program is very Jewishly. . . is very Jewish oriented.

MB. They're getting away with murder because, you know, they are. . . they are supported by the . . . the

FB. Community Chest. . .

MB. And now the thing involves a lot of people, a lot of non-Jews belong to this organization who have not contributed one cent to the building. . .

FB. I know, but they're going to be . . . approached now, Murray, for a building fund. . .

Q. Really? They don't want people. . .

FB. Yes. But truly in the . . .

FB. . . . whole history. . . .

MB. You can't give too much money, you have to . . . , there's a fund drive out to raise \$2 million, the interest alone is being carried by the Federation. Now that interest amounts to \$100,000 a year. Now that's a lot of Federation funds raised by people for the benefit of causes like Welfare Fund, Israel, things like that. And. . . .

FB. And our own Jewish agencies, you know, here in the city. . . .but. . . .

Q. Antagonism?

FB. There's a. . . .

MB. Yes, the welfare has it because of. . . . because of political jealousy. What happened is Hillel School needed and wanted a. . . . needed and wanted a new school. As a result, they wanted to have a fund drive. Well, of course, there's only so much money available for . . . . from charity from New York City, so they. . . . they talked about the possibility of having a combined drive, the JCC and the Hillel School. Well, that didn't work out because they found out that lots of people would not support Hillel fund drive.

FB. And those who either . . . .

MB. And those who support Hillel, . . . .

FB. . . . would not support the Center, and not Hillel. Others are willing to support Hillel, but not the Center. And so it was impossible to hold a. . . .

MB. So,. . . . so the JCC, you know, had to. . . . they use guilt now. Don't let a Jewish organization go down the drain. So, we'll rally and we'll support the. . . . to save the JCC. I really feel they're running over their head financially, and you're getting back to the edifice complex, it's a beautiful building. But it's a beautiful gymnasium, it's a beautiful athletic field. I don't know whether the Jews really need that kind of thing. To me, athletics should be a secular activity. The Jew should play handball with the Christians in some

MB. (Continued) kind of a community center, a Brighton Community Center, or a Henrietta Community Center, or a Greece Community Center. It shouldn't be a Jewish Community Center to play handball and basketball or volleyball or things like that. . .

FB. The Jewish programs should come out of the Federation or out of the temples and synagogues. . .

MB. We didn't need a \$7 million building to. . .

Q. Why. . . Why did it get passed then?

MB. Well, because there were a certain segment of the Jewish. . .

FB. Nobody. . . what do you mean, it never got passed.

Q. The idea to get. . . spend \$7 million dollars.

MB. Well. . .

FB. Oh, that was the. . . you know the Center was an autonomous kind of institution.

MB. At one point.

FB. As I understand at one point in Rochester and. . .

MB. They were funded by. . .

FB. . . . they were funded by the Marcus Fund, they really didn't need the Federation. . .

MB. Oh, well it was a. . .

FB. They need the Federation now because they needed them. They were desperate they had no place else to turn. . .

Q. And what happened to their funding?

MB. Well, it's a tragi-comedy. What happened was, first of all, they lived. . . there was a place downtown, well it was on Franklin Street, the area had just changed and no more room down there. So they bought a piece of land from Max Farash on the corner of Winton Road and Westfall Road. Then they applied for

- MB. (Continued) zoning and the neighbors rose up in indignation and they refused to grant them a variance to build the building there. Remind me . . . remind me to tell you about that afterwards. Then so time passed by while they were getting this variance, then they finally were able to buy this piece of land from where they are now, you see. So the time lapse that took place there . . . several things happened. First of all, the cost of building went up about 35 to 40 percent. And secondly, Eastman Kodak stock went from \$134 a share down to \$90 and \$80 a share. So . . .
- FB. That was their fund. . . it was Kodak stock. . .
- MB. So they. . . so they wound up with increased costs and decreased money. I should tell you as an aside that there's a church, a Brighton Community Church has a plot. . . bought the land on the corner. . . same piece of land. . .
- FB. And it's a corn field, they planted corn. . . somebody planted corn.
- MB. And they plan to build a church there, do you know that the neighbors came and spoke in support of the church?
- Q. That's where the corn. . . I just passed there.
- FB. There's a huge corn field there now, Bonnie.
- Q. Right, I know it.
- MB. I just want to show you the difference, when the Jewish Community Center was there, the neighbors came out and were vicious. Now, they came out speaking in favor of the same kind of institution, the same kind of traffic, everything.
- FB. You know, you talk about anti-Semitism, Bonnie, I'm sure you. . . maybe you did read the piece in the paper, maybe you didn't. But, you know the home for the aged would like to build an apartment house right in. . .
- MB. Alongside it. . .
- FB. Yea. . . the Center. And it. . . you know, it's half in Brighton, part of it

FB. (Continued) is in Henrietta, and there's the Town Boards are trying to figure out how. . . who'll be responsible for what. . . plumbing, fire department, and so on. And police department, so forth. And there were several calls, we don't need any more Jews in Brighton, who wants more Jews in Brighton, we have enough Jews in Brighton.

MB. That's correct. As I said, it's latent. When push becomes shove, people will come out. . . it's like, I fought to get into my neighborhood, in all these neighborhoods, I want to live wherever they want to as long as it's not on my street. You know. . . you know what I'm talking about?

Q. Right.

MB. OK.

Q. Your children did go to Camp Seneca Lake then?

MB. Yes they did, one year. . . did they go one or two years?

FB. Two years I think, they went to Camp Corey one year, they went to Seneca Lake one year. . .

MB. We. . . we were really not campers. They went from. . . we spent our summers at home.

FB. We really liked it. . . there were lots of things we did, you know, in the summers. I can remember . . . they wanted to go for two months, you know, for the whole summer. And I said, "Never, what will I do, a whole summer without you, I'll be so lonely, it'll be terrible." So, they did. . . they went for. . . that was when they went to the Institute for Living Judaism in Great Barrington.

Q. Do you think the JCC will make it?

MB. Oh, yes.

FB. Oh, yes. I mean the Jewish community has to be behind them. I think the way the banks who are holding their, I can't say mortgages, but. . . because they

FB. (Continued) don't have mortgages. That are holding their notes sort of expected . . .

MB. It was hard to raise the money. . .

FB. . . . that when they loaned the Center the money that somehow the Jewish community was behind it. . .

MB. And that's . . .

FB. And we can't let something like that. . . it would make it hard for the, you know, we can't not. . . we cannot disregard that kind of responsibility. What happens if other Jewish institutions or agencies need the help of the banks at some future time and they don't have a cooperative attitude because of what might happen. We can't afford that. Really, so we have to stand behind our. . . behind the Center and do . . . we'll just have to get through these times that's all that there's to it. It's done, the \$7 million building is there, what are you going to do? Pull it down?

Q. You have the Hillel School, talking about their fund raising, do you support. . . the school, or the idea of the school?

MB. I think we have a slight difference of opinion between us. Again, with my separation of church and state, I am opposed to parochial education. I think that it . . . an education should teach a child the facts of living, of history, and of science, et cetera and that the religion should be taught by the synagogues and church as a whole. There are people with a different opinion, unfortunately, because the parents don't want to have the responsibility of teaching religion to their children and the kids don't like the idea of having to go to synagogue after their. . . after their public school education, you understand. They have to go all day to public school and then go to religious school afterwards because it's hard for them, it's a long day. They would prefer to have the two all together in one place. And parents don't

MB. (Continued) the responsibility of making their kids learn what Judaism is all about, so that the large segment of the people who want their kids to go to parochial school, Catholic, Jewish, and for the same reasons. I'm opposed to that and if I support it, it'll be a very token kind of support. I'm a member of the . . . they have a fund raising every year, I give them a small donation, but I'm not to the point where I am in favor of parochial education. Now, my wife will want to be different.

Q. Do you feel differently?

FB. I truly don't believe in parochial education either. But, however, comma, as far as Jews who . . . Jews are living in a Gentile society in America, let's not kid ourselves. Children go to public schools and do not learn anything about their Judaism at all. And they're surrounded by Gentile youngsters. I don't feel that . . . that the Gentiles have as much . . . stand in as much danger of losing their Christianity in their Christian society as Jewish children do of losing their Judaism in a Gentile society, in a Christian society. So I don't really worry about the Christian students so much or Catholic schools so much. However, I do worry about Jewish students. And, I feel that there is so much that is entirely different from what they see all day long in their Gentile society that's really non-Jewish to the core, that I feel there should be an opportunity for them to learn their Judaism and for those people I would like to see the synagogue schools stronger. But how can it be, there are just a certain number of hours in the day. And the young people even today hate to give up those two or so hours after school to come to Hebrew. . . afternoon Hebrew school, let alone on a . . . a Sunday morning when they have to come to a Hebrew school. And for those parents who feel that they would like a . . . a Jewish school. . . a long. . . because Hillel has to follow the New York State syllabus, so they get the same thing they

FB. (Continued) would be getting in a public school, the same kind of curriculum and at the same time they're observing Judaism, and when they grow up, they'll really know what choices they have, and they will choose from knowledge and from feeling rather than from not knowing and imagining. . . so I feel for those people who would like to have a Hillel School and that kind of education for their children, it's important that the Jewish community support that. In the old days, the Jewish community always supported Jewish education, Bonnie, there was always a community school. Laheder, or a Talmud Torah, that Jewish kids were able to go to, and I. . . I really feel it's our responsibility to educate them in whatever way we can. . . whether I believe in parochial schools or not, if there are Jewish children whose parents feel they should have a Jewish education and not go to public schools, then it is our responsibility as Jews in the city to make sure that they have a place to go for their Jewish education. . .

MB. We feel the need not the greed.

FB. Oh, I don't feel there's anything greedy about that. . .

MB. Maybe someone who has. . .

FB. Well, I feel. . .

MB. Somebody who has. . . no. . . no, I told you, a synagogue is different than a school. There are. . . there's those. . . education for a synagogue. A synagogue is a synagogue, but a school is not necessarily a school. If a person wants his child to have a . . . a Jewish experience as part of his daily public school life, then he should be willing to pay for it himself. He shouldn't ask me to support his desires. That's the difference. I'd support his desires. . .

FB. Well, I don't know how a child can get a decent Jewish education in the limited number of hours that there are in the day. . .

MB. Would you like me to tell you? Very simply. OK? If you spend two hours a week, two hours total a week in Hebrew school and they have parents who live Judaism in the house, the child will learn Judaism.

FB. Ah, but let's be realistic. . .

MB. Oh, well, then. . . then you. . . then you what's your saying is. . .

FB. I don't say you have to educate the parents, the young people who are the mothers and fathers of these children, and then there's nothing wrong with. . . with educating the grandparents either. . .

MB. No. . . parents, they don't the responsibility. They're willing to pay for anything. Like I work with children with learning disabilities. And one of the things we have are parents who will do anything in their power with the dollar sign to help their kids, but ask them to give of themselves, time-wise, and work with the child, they promise you, but they never do it. They never do it, the same way. . . in so many cases today they're willing to give money to go out of their way to provide their child with anything that money can buy, but they really won't do it themselves. That's the same thing here. They. . . easy way out is to have Hillel teach your kid, teach them the way to be a Jew. . .

END OF TAPE II, SIDE A

Interview with Murray and Frances Blanchard  
July 11, 1977  
by Bonnie Kantor

Interview I  
Tape II  
Side B

(Transcriber's note: In the background of Side B of Tape II, it is obvious that

conversation is taking place. However, for some reason only tones are recorded, the actual words were not picked up properly.)