

ROCHESTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT (Rochester Jewish community 1925-1975)

Interviewee Hyman Dankner

Interviewer Mark Friedrich

Date(s) of interview 21 June 1976

Setting (place of interview, people present, impressions)

A Monday morning at Quality Bakery; the business is closed for weekly cleaning and maintenance. Although his son is present, periodically using the telephone, the interview was conducted alone in the small business office of the firm. Mr. Dankner was quite cooperative and at no time nervous; although occasionally wondering why he was selected to be interviewed, given his inability to participate in the active Jewish community. Although his son is present, Mr. Dankner frequently speaks about him without acknowledging the latter's presence. Candid interview.

Background of interviewee

Mr. Dankner was born in Montreal in 1913, emigrating to Roch. in 1953, partly because of Canadian anti-semitism. He has operated the Quality Bakery on Joseph Ave. since 1953 on the corner of Boston & Joseph. Although not intimately involved in the decisions about community affairs, Mr. Dankner feels that the time required for his business and the geographical location of the new JCC have precluded his active participation. His knowledge of Joseph Ave. & the neighborhood since 1953 as well as his own experience of immigration are valuable, although restricted to business activities and impressions

Interview abstract: Mr. Dankner discussed at length the changes in his business with the transition of Joseph Ave. from a predominantly Jewish to a black neighborhood. Although a contributor, business has precluded his own participation in Jewish community activities ("too costly") his leisure is spent w/his family & friends. Speaks of the '50's Jewish community in the neighborhood, but his experiences are equally divided between Canada & USA; his dislike of Quebec emerges frequently. He received no personal help from community as an immigrant. Received help from Jewish ~~spotters~~ creditors with the reconstruction of his street. Wide ranging interview.

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

- \* Social history \_\_\_ Jewish community
- \* Family \_\_\_ community relations
- \* Demographic/residential \*\* \_\_\_ Religious life
- \*\* Economic \_\_\_ Jewish education
- \* Political/civic \* \_\_\_ Anti-semitism
- \* Zionism/Israel

Interview log

- a) corresponding to tape numbers, sides of tape, and casset recorder nos.
- b) including references to others in the Rochester Jewish community

June 21, 1976

Side-A

- 005-022 biographic: born 1913 came to Rochester 1953; baking business in Montreal till 1942 came because of relatives and family decision.
- 022-034 Begining of Quality Bakery and business growth-change of business operation (wholesale) instead of ealier retail business.
- 034- Joseph Avenue, Urban Renewal resposible for changes, retail trade still continues on the weekends, continued customers.
- 048- will not relocate because of customers, but possibility of moving
- 056- Joseph Ave. in the 1950's and changes from suburban exodus.
- 067- Character of the remaining Jewish businesses
- 071- Jewish customers only on the weekends; contrast with the 1960's.
- 087- 1964 riots did not affect his firm directly.
- 096- Effect of riots on the neighborhood , flight of businesses in particular.
- 118- Mr. Dankner's residential moves from 1957.
- 137- Business growth and philosophy of business ("God's been good").
- 146- Decision not to move back to Montreal: children's opposition to the proposal.
- 155- Attendance at Beth El and other temples which are convienent.
- 171- Business observance of holidays.
- 183- Employees: 50per cent Jewish, although uses union hiring.
- 193- Civic organizations and business/professional organizations: cannot attend conventions, but subscribes to trade magazines, because of his business requirements and the character of his firm, mentions problem with UJA and a maxim of his father.
- 223- Speaks of his son's allergy to flour ( son not present) and probléms of integrating his son into the firm.
- 242- His own family and their location at the time of the interview.
- 252- Character of family gatherings.
- 257- Son's education: high school, military, UR nighttschool, and practical experience of the business.
- 270- Unaware of any restrictions at UR; mentions recent course given by Prof. Karp.

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Side-A

- 286- Canadian anti-semitism and his own family's attempts to emigrate.
- 309- Personal experiences with emigration and his satisfaction with Rochester and Joseph Ave ( on the weekends).
- 328- 1964vRiots--started by people from Buffalo; unaware of any anti-semitic overtones.
- 342- relations between Jewish and black communities in Joseph Ave.: changes "rough", recounts recent incidents and his personal philosophy.
- 366- Incidents on Joseph Ave; note involvement is minimal; feels more violence in Brighton than Joseph Ave.
- 391- Vague knowledge of FIGHT and integration of KODAK--"I don't follow too much".
- 409- Contributions to "colored" groups.
- 425- Baden St. Settlement in 1954 and changes after 1964.
- 448- business competition.
- 466- Business requirements have restricted association with Jewish organizations: apologetic tone?
- 516- Personal Jewish education, although incomplete.
- 533- Children's Jewish education limited in Rochester because of their age when arriving here.
- 538- Considers grandchildren's Jewish education more extensive.
- 550- Views on intermarriage; personal experience with his "child" (probably daughter) as a youth; nephew's intermarriage; little problem with his own children; cites son's early description of small-town gossip.
- 652- Location of JY more convenient than present JCC; limited experience with present JCC.
- 696- Son's early use of JY and view that JCC would be better if closer for children.

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Side-B

- 003- Distance and inconvenience of using the present JCC--calls it the "JY".
- 013- Problem of Jewish residential segregation in Virginia Colony and his own absence of restrictions on his moves.
- 032- GOOD: role of Jewish organizations in the US in combatting anti-semitism and a contrast with Montreal where he "was made to feel inferior"; Canadian anti-semitism.
- 060- Canadian French nationalism and impact of DeGaulle.
- 067- Parents use of Yiddish, who came from Rumania and Poland; his marriage in Montreal.
- 087- Extent of his family in USA and Canada.
- 101- Terrorism in Canada, inflation, strikes and restrictions in Canada.
- 133- Family in Canada, Rochester and California; still in contact.
- 152- Cancer cures.
- 155- Holocaust was the "main topic" in Canada during 1940's; speaks of Canadian opposition to Jewish immigration.
- 168- View of the cause of Holocaust: "when one mad man gets so powerful"
- 175- Holocaust immigrants to Rochester and Montreal - - he commuted to Montreal during late 1940's and early 1950's; activities of the Jewish Congress.
- 194- Personal involvement in the settlement of refugees.
- 223- No personal assistance in his own immigration--doubts help except for the destitute; problem of Joseph Ave. streetwidening and the assistance he received from Jewish creditors.
- 270- Golda Meir (pamphlet about her on his desk) was seen on television when speaking at UR.
- 290- Israel and the UN, where the leadership "changes too fast".
- 309- GOOD: Israel and the need to establish a home country, although no one from his family has gone to Israel.
- 332- "Jewish Identity": feels himself secondarily an "American" and primarily a Jew



Interview 1  
Tape 1  
Side A

- Q. This is Mark Friedrich. This is June 21, I'm with Mr. Hyman Dankner in his office at Quality Bakeries. Could you say your name and when you were born so I. . .
- A. My name is Hyman Dankner. I'm originally from Canada, born in 1913.
- Q. It should work. Why did you come. . . why did you come to Rochester?
- A. Well, I liked the City of Rochester very much, the flour city. My family liked it, and therefore we . . . we sold out what we had up in Canada, and we came down here. That was one of the best things we ever did.
- Q. That's good to hear. Were you in the bakery business in Canada, too?
- A. Yes, I've been in the bakery business all of my life. My father before me owned and operated a bakery in Montreal, Canada for many years until he passed away in 1942.
- Q. Did you come here in 1954 immediately?
- A. We used to come here on visits. I have a sister married to a Rochester boy, and we came here on visits every occasion we. . . we could. And we enjoyed coming here, and got to like the city very much. And, we made up our minds, that is my wife and I, made up our minds that we were going to relocate, and move to Rochester. And that's what we did in 1953, and we've been here ever since.
- Q. And you. . . you took over Quality Bakeries?
- A. Yes, we bought the Quality Bakery before coming here. We negotiated to buy the bakery and we did. And, we . . . we grew and made the bakery larger as time went on. Things were good, and we improved our products and our varieties. And we enlarged our bakery three or four times in the past twenty years.

- A. (Continued) And we're enjoying a very good business. Location is not what it used to be, but we have changed our method of operation somewhat, and we're doing a large wholesale, we're trucking our stuff out to different stores, supermarkets. And we're still enjoying good volume of our. . . of the business we've had all these past years.
- Q. What. . . what was it like when you first moved here on Joseph Avenue? That was almost 22 years ago.
- A. Twenty-three years ago on Joseph Avenue was a busy little thoroughfare. And slowly when they started changing over and urban renewal came in things started to change rapidly. Stores were relocating, many landmarks here on the avenue have moved out on the outskirts, different areas of the city. But we have been enjoying our store trade here as we have in the past, with the exception that on. . . during the week our business is not as rushy as it used to be, but we are still having a greater amount of customers coming on weekends than we ever had because we maintain the quality of our products, and we enjoy having the same customers come back year after year after year. And that's the reason we have not relocated as yet. We're thinking about it. If things . . . our business in any way goes . . . gets smaller as far as our store trade is concerned, we will think of relocating because our store trade was always our mainstay. And as of today our mainstay is the wholesale. Because of lack of people on the avenue, they all relocated.
- Q. Is this prior to 1959, 1960, this was. . .
- A. A booming. . .
- Q. This was still a booming. . .?
- A. Yes, prior to 19. . .
- Q. Still predominately a Jewish neighborhood?
- A. Yes, it was predominately a Jewish neighborhood, and was enjoying a good

- A. (Continued) volume of business from the Jewish population. But since then people are moving out to the outskirts. They're all moving out, and that's why many of these stores here are empty because there is no people around actually that would do the shopping the way they used to.
- Q. Yes, I guess it's affected almost all of the original businesses.
- A. Yes, yes. Most of the original businesses that were here when I first came and after that have more or less moved out. There are still some what I call diehards that are still doing a good business here. There's Schmidt's down the street, fish market. There's Webber's Dairy and there's Zimmerman, there's . . . oh, there's quite a few that are still doing a good business. And that is the reason they're remaining on the avenue.
- Q. Have . . . have their customers changed from the Jewish customers? Or do Jewish customers come from the suburbs?
- A. Yes, yes. On weekends we still have many Jewish customers come to the avenue. But, during the week our customers. . . They have changed. We have a variety of American people from all walks of life come, whereas prior to '60 90% of our business was Jewish people. But now since the area's changed and different people are moving in, we do enjoy doing business with them, but it's not the same type of clientele we had before.
- Q. Yes, I can see Joseph Avenue has. . . I. . . I'm not from Rochester, but I've seen. . . well, just driving up here where there used to be an awful lot of large buildings and there. . .
- A. Yes, the landmarks. . . everybody. . . everybody in the Jewish life somehow or other was connected with Joseph Avenue, or surrounding area, everybody that I know here had lived in this area some part of their life. And we still enjoy being here. We're not molested. We're not bothered. And that's why we're here.

Q. I mean your business was here when they. . . when the so-called Joseph Avenue riots. . . ?

A. Oh, yes. We were quite a ways from the riots. The riots were east of Clifford Avenue, oh. . . east would be that way. And we're . . . and we're northwest of Clifford Avenue, so we weren't really affected outside of the humdrum and the noise and the police and all that. But other than that we weren't affected. So we. . . our. . . our business slowed down somewhat during the riot period because everything was up in the air, you know?

Q. I would guess that the riots just speeded up people leaving the neighborhood?

A. I think that had a lot to do with it, yea. The riots did speed up the neighborhood being depleted of population.

Q. Do you think that they would have moved anyway?

A. Maybe so, but not as rapidly as they did. They would have moved more slowly than they have, especially the business people. I think many of them would still be here. A lot of them hated the idea of leaving Joseph Avenue, and they were a little bit skeptical on how they'd make out elsewhere. When they knew that Joseph Avenue was always good for business, it always has been. But it's since. . . since the riots, like you say, people have started to move out and the businesses have sort of followed the people, which I imagine is natural. But, we have a pretty large investment here, and in order for us to move it would be a very costly affair. And unless we had to we just would wait. We are enjoying like I told you the wholesale end of it is very good. And again I repeat we maintain our quality, which is very important. And that's why we're still in business. There used to be many Jewish bakeries at one time. I say many. There used to be at least 8 or 10 Jewish bakeries and we're down to two or three. We're down to two or three for different reasons, urban renewal had something to do with it. And then ingredients

A. (Continued) went up sky high, and sugar sort of. . .

Q. Sugar. . .

A. Oh. . . oh that really put us on our toes. So, many bakers couldn't cope with it and therefore had to close.

Q. Did you yourself used to live in this neighborhood?

A. I used to live right next door where the parking lot is now. I lived here for three or four years.

Q. This is like in 1950. . .

A. In 1954, '55 and '56 we lived next door. We relocated in '57. We. . . we moved out. We needed the area for parking at the time. We were having problems with parking on the street and therefore we. . . we threw down the house and we made a parking lot, which we needed very badly.

Q. And you moved to a suburban town?

A. We moved to suburban. . . yes, we moved to Brighton. And we've been living there ever since.

Q. It's always interesting to find out why people moved to a certain place.

A. Well. . .

Q. Why did you move to Brighton instead of Pittsford or Irondequoit?

A. No special reason except my sister and her husband and family live right in Brighton, and that's the only relatives we have here, so we thought it would be best to live close by. And they suggested that if we're to see each other as often as we would like, we'd have to be closer than, for instance, say Irondequoit, which is across town. Although since then the expressways have come up and traveling doesn't take too much time.

Q. You moved in 1957?

A. Yea.

Q. Yes, that whole interchange and everything was not there.

A. Yes. In fact, . . . but all in all Rochester's been very good to us and Joseph Avenue has been very good to us. Of course, we worked hard, but it's . . . it was enjoyable. It was a very small bakery, we were three people working here at the time. And now we have up to 30. So, we sort of moved along with the times. Matter of fact, the business I'm sure as well as any other business, either you go ahead or you go back. There's no such think as standing still. So, we. . . we've been going ahead. We've been trying and fortunately G-d's been good, and we . . . we came a long way I think. The children are very happy. They like Rochester. We had often thought of maybe moving back to Montreal. We took a vote and the kids said no. My wife was skeptical. She has her family back there like we all do, but she missed her friends. But since then she's been acclimatized and she enjoys it very much.

Q. Were both you and your wife born in Canada?

A. Born in Montreal, yea, yea. But we're American citizens.

Q. As of birth?

A. Yea, we were born in Montreal and we lived there for forty years then we came to Rochester. And it's. . . it still is a very nice city.

Q. Were you affiliated with a congregation when you left here?

A. When we moved here?

Q. Yes.

A. Yes, we joined the temple across the street, Congregation B'nai Israel at that time. Now they're affiliated with others. Then when we moved to Brighton we joined Beth El, it's close by. And we still belong to both temples.

Q. You do?

A. Yes. Yes, convenient here. Reasons sometimes you can't rush back to Winton

- A. (Continued) Road where Temple Beth El is, right across the street. And it's convenient, it's very convenient. And besides it's good to have temples all over the city.
- Q. Yes, there used to be ten or twelve in this neighborhood?
- A. Yes, yes. Yes there used to be. Now we have two. One alongside of us, the Kippeler Shul it's called. And we have the B'nai Israel across the street. Which makes it nice. So Jewish people do come, not as often, but on holidays, on the Sabbath, they still come. And we have the Beth Joseph not too far away on St. Paul Boulevard, so we do have synagogues and temples around here. Makes it very nice.
- Q. Do you . . . do your employees get off holidays, Jewish holidays?
- A. Yes, we're closed on Jewish holidays. That is, high holidays. The other holidays those that want to take off there we allow 'em to take off. It's . . . we always have enough help around so if there's any holidays that they'd like to take off they're entitled to. They take off all other holidays, Labor Day and . . . they take off all those holidays that we're closed. Generally we're closed on most legal and Jewish holidays. We are closed on Passover, Rosh Hashanah, there's Yom Kippur, other holidays. We . . . we're always closed on those holidays.
- Q. Are most of your employees Jewish? Are they . . .?
- A. I'd say . . . I'd say about 50% Jewish and about 50% American and other. We employ union help, our help is unionized. And whatever the union sends us, that's what we have to take.
- Q. Oh, I see. This is like out of a hiring hall?
- A. That's right.
- Q. I'm not too familiar with this kind of. . .

A. No, huh? Well, when we bought the bakery it was a union bakery and we couldn't change it. That's the way it's been ever since. But, we've had a very good, and still have, a good affiliation with them. And we somehow get along very well.

Q. I would imagine that you've a member of various civic organizations? Chamber of Commerce or. . .?

A. I'm a member of the Knights of Pithias. Chamber of Commerce, no. I subscribe to most of the different organizations. I've tied up with the bakery all the. . . I really. . . I haven't gone to conventions, which I used to go quite a lot, and I haven't gone to conventions in several years now. And that's a very important factor in. . . in this type of business, to keep abreast with the times. So, I subscribe to all these different bakery magazines and I keep posted, you know, on what's. . . what's new and so on. But, I've been more or less tied down here. The type of business is. . . if you haven't got efficient management here it's a very tricky business, you can make money but you can lose it much, much faster. And that's why it. . . it takes a lot of supervision. And the way it works now if I'm not here my son is here. See everybody works more or less by the clock, and there's a lot of waste time, and if you're not with it, you know, you can go down the hill very rapidly. So that's why I've been more or less spending most of my time here and keeping my eye on the business. And that's one of the reasons I feel we've been successful. You know, if I were to run around and. . . I tried for a while collecting for the UJA. I tried spending time away from here and I found it was very costly. And I didn't let it get too far, you know. My father once told me many years ago, there's no sense in putting a lock on the door after they steal the horse, always wise to put it on before. And I remember that all through my years, and it's been very good philosophy.

A. (Continued) I try to . . . to be above everything that's going on all the time. And I'm hoping my son will be the same. He's got a very good head for business. He's got one problem. He's allergic to flour. That doesn't make it very good, but there's enough here to keep him busy, administrative and hiring and taking care of the trucks and the customers, big enough job to handle. He does all the ordering, does all the buying. It's just that he helps out in the bakery some, too, but he wears one of those masks that you see there. But, it's not the best thing in the world and his only complaint is that I shoulda had more than one son. I've tried to for years and now. . . But, so far he's managed to stay free and clear of anything other than being allergic to. . . to dust and flour and pollen and whatever have you. He's just. . . I think it's hereditary. But, he is allergic and his children are, too. But he's learned to live with it and he copes with it. But actually he could never dig into the bakery end of it like he'd like to because of that. But, he knows enough about it that he can hire the right people to watch over it for him. And he's doing a very good job.

Q. Do you have other children besides. . . ?

A. I have a daughter. I have a daughter, she's married to a doctor.

Q. Does she live here in Rochester?

A. She lives in Rochester. She has two children. My son has three children. And they seem to be very happy. My son lives in Irondequoit and my daughter lives in Brighton. She was a school teacher, helped send her husband through college. And they're very happy, doing very well. My son's got a very nice family. In fact you're looking at it right there.

Q. He has three children?

A. Three children. Right, a boy and two girls. Nice family. I'm proud of him.

Q. I can imagine with your. . . with both of your children living near. . .

A. Yea.

Q. . . . near you that you do have family get-togethers quite. . . .

A. Oh, yes. We do, oh yes. We get together very often. We get together very often. We enjoy getting together. Very compatible. That makes it. . . that makes it all the better.

Q. Did your son receive any formal education?

A. Yes, he graduated . . . he graduated high school and he enlisted in the service. He wanted to get that out of his system, and he spent a year overseas, and then he came back and started going to night school and helping me out in the daytime, taking business administration at the U. of R. And then he worked himself into the business. He could never go ahead further with his education. But as far as formal education in bakery is concerned, he got only practical end of it here and what he read in books.

Q. About general business. . .

A. General business, yea.

Q. Which I assume he'll apply here at the bakery or pay the accountant. . .

A. That's right. Well, he's a bright boy and he . . . he knows what he's doing. And he's doing a good job.

Q. When you moved here were you aware of any sort of quota system at the University of Rochester?

A. No, no I wasn't.

Q. There was one.

A. There was? You mean as far as education is concerned?

Q. As far as Jewish students there was a quota system.

A. I really didn't know that. They must be keeping it under raps pretty well, because I really didn't know it. I was getting brochures from the University of Rochester.

Q. It may have been the period it was beginning to change.

A. I see. Is it that way today?

Q. No.

A. No. Well, thank G-d for that. I was happy to hear where Rabbi Karp became a professor at the University of Rochester. And the new course I believe at that time they inaugurated in their semester. Am I right?

Q. Yes, I believe it was a general religious. . .

A. Yes. That's what I was told. As far as knowing that a limited amount of Jewish students were allowed, I really didn't know that. I really didn't.

Q. Well kept secret.

A. Yea, probably. I know in Montreal we have some colleges that . . . well, it's well known that only 5% of the students can be Jewish. I know for a fact. That's one of the reasons I left Montreal because this two-language country didn't suit me. In fact, my father before me tried to migrate to Burlington, Vermont with my mother and we were six children. And he could have bought a bakery pretty reasonable, but at that time the U.S. Government, you know, wouldn't allow 'em in unless they had a \$25,000 cash bond in order not to become welfare recipients of the state. And, that sort of blocked everything. We couldn't move at the time. This is going back many years ago. That's not recently. This is going back about 45 years ago. They wouldn't let us. . .

Q. That's not too far away though.

A. Well, we were very depressed because my father wanted very badly to come to the States and they wouldn't allow it. They wouldn't allow it for that one reason. That putting a down payment down on a small bakery and having no capital behind you wasn't enough to warrant allowing a family of eight to come in.

Q. That would be a lot both to buy the bakery and plus have \$25,000 in a bond

Q. (Continued) that you couldn't use.

A. Yes, that's right. Sort of collateral. Whereas if anything happens to your business that you wouldn't become public charges. And that's. . . that's the way it was. But when I went through immigration to buy this bakery, of course I bought the house and the bakery, and I had no problem. The only thing they wouldn't let me keep here was my Canadian car which I brought back and sold it there, 'cause otherwise they wanted. . . and then the following year they changed that ruling completely, you could keep your car. When I went back home and sold it for a small amount of money, to salvage whatever I could. And that's the way things happened here. But all in all I'm satisfied. I don't think I could have done much better anywhere else. We're pleased and we're healthy and we're happy and that's the most important thing. And Joseph Avenue has been good to us. Like I said it changed. It has changed, but not that drastically where we still don't do the business on the weekends. It's amazing. They still come down to Joseph Avenue. It's really amazing. I guess maybe we're the only bakery on the avenue this size. There are other bakeries. . . there's another bakery down the street, but much smaller. But they still come out weekends, we still do a good business.

Q. It's been alleged that the '64 riots had anti-Semitic overtones, do you feel that they did?

A. I don't know. I really don't know. There were so many different rumors, so many different versions. I don't know. I thought that it was started from outside, people from Buffalo that started here a commotion, and I believe that Rochester was the city that started all the other riots that came up afterwards. It started here actually I think in a big way. But, as far as it had anti-Semitic tones it might have, I really don't know. I

- A. (continued) really can't say. I honestly can't say. I've never really bothered to look into it to that. . . to that . . . maybe it did, but not to my knowledge.
- Q. How. . . how would you characterize like the relationship between, if we can say that there are two separate communities, between the Jewish community and the black community? Particularly when this neighborhood was beginning to change?
- A. How do you mean?
- Q. Well, was it. . . was it an amiable relationship? Or was there was a lot of violence against. . . against store owners?
- A. I. . . well, I wouldn't say it was amiable, no. I would say it was . . . it was kind of rough. When the black people came in they just really started to take over. We have some youngsters coming in here trying to create disturbances, but nothing. . . actually nothing to speak of, but it's not . . . some of them. . . we enjoy doing business with many black people, they're very friendly, they're very nice. And then there's the other kind, but in every. . . in every category you've got some good and some bad. That's the way I look at it. I don't try to look at the bad things in people, I try to look for the good points. I. . . I don't relish looking for the bad points, and I figure that it's much better that way. Somehow I. . . I've been fortunate so far and that's the way I've been going on. But, I don't think it's been too amiable, the changeover, I really don't.
- Q. But there are no specific incidents that you can . . . just a general feeling?
- A. You mean general feeling?
- Q. Or were there specific incidents?
- A. Oh, there are specific incidents, oh sure. Everytime something specific happens to a certain. . . well, there was a store up the street, Kasdin Shoes.

A. (Continued) Now somebody came in with a shotgun, colored fellow with a shotgun and held him up about . . . she closed down soon after that, closed her place down just recently. Now there are certain incidents like that. We had three youngsters, black youngsters, come in here on a Friday morning at five o'clock one of them had a gun and one had a knife, this is several years ago. They took some money away from the bakers. They were caught. And I don't know the outcome of what happened after they were arrested, but that was the only incident actually that I can say in 23 years, that's pretty good. And that could happen. . . I think it happens more around my way where I live . . .

Q: In Brighton?

A: Yea. And it's hushed up, it really is, hushed up. But, I can't . . . listen you can't . . .and then everybody. . . cause of one incidents. I mean, I can't see it. But, like I said, I think we're very fortunate that we stay pretty clear, and they don't bother us too much. We try to do right by them. And they come in and they do their shopping here.

Q: Were you here when this. . . I believe you were here when this FIGHT organization was established by the . . .

A: Yes.

Q: Saul Olinsky?

A: Yes, yes. I read about it, and he did organize it. But, somehow it didn't go over too big. I think there was internal problems they had amongst themselves. I think the leader wasn't doing a good job, and he was taken off the job and somebody else was elected or something to that effect. I don't remember. And they were trying to get their black people into different places like Kodak and so on and so forth. They had some success there I believe. I don't know. But, I. . . I don't follow too much. I didn't follow

A. (Continued) too much of what when that was going on because it was quiet. We. . . we all remembered the riots, they were pretty bad. And anything after that was sort of moderate, something you know. . . everything was done in a verbal state, which is all right, rather than have what we had then. I wouldn't like to go through that again. Some of the bigger cities had it worse than we did.

Q. I was just wondering because I believe that that FIGHT organization does come to various businesses in this neighborhood and solicit funds. And. . .

A. Yea, yea. They. . . they. . . they stop in. They. . . they sell us . . . we . . . we deal with them. Postman he's a colored fellow. He's always selling us tickets to some benevolent association something or other. But, we deal with them. They come to us for ads in certain booklets that they make. But we do business with them like any organization. Listen, when they ask us for funds for picnics for the kids in the summer, we. . . we're glad to oblige. Anything to keep 'em off the streets, they're no different than anybody else. Other than that I don't have too much to add.

Q. Was the Baden Street Settlement down the street still active in. . .

A. Yes.

Q. . . . 1950's?

A. Oh, yes. Still is now. In fact, we sell 'em merchandise. We deal with them. They have different organizations. They buy baked goods from us. They're still there. 1953. . . yes, they were active then. Oh, yes, some of our customers worked there at the time. The Matrischkas at that time were working there I remember. That's right. They used to come here from work. We were open later then in those days. We were open nine o'clock at night to service the people who worked late. They couldn't get any baked goods after six or seven, so we decided to stay open until nine o'clock. Then we changed that

A. (Continued) policy soon after the riots. We phased out. We cut our hours down. We close at six now every day. We're closed Monday.

Q. But, you're open like Sundays?

A. We're open Sunday. . . Sunday is our big day, Saturday is a very big day. Friday is a big day. We're closed on Monday. It's been the policy of this business for many years. Most of the businesses I know close Mondays. Those especially that operate Sundays. Those that operate five days are usually closed Sunday and Monday. Now the supermarkets are open seven days a week and nights. And it's become legal from what I read in the paper recently. Where was it? Syracuse or someplace judge said it's legal, there's nothing in the book that says you can't be open Sunday. Or it's too confusing to actually spell it out the way the law was written.

Q. The blue laws or whatever?

A. Yea. Yea, blue laws is what they're called. But, there's been controversy back and forth and goings on in court. The larger supermarkets were haggling, staying open Sunday, Sunday morning, test. . . test . . . testing of different stores. Police were arresting 'em or having 'em brought to court and so on and so forth. But that's all quieted down now.

Q. Right. You mentioned before that the whole. . . the whole nature of the business has required your participation all the time, more or less all the time. So business has limited your professional organization contact, going to conventions and things like that. I. . . I assume that the same business requirements have affected your affiliation with civic and Jewish organizations? You mentioned the United Jewish Appeal.

A. Yea. I. . . I tried to take more time off and do some work for the . . . for our people. I went collecting for the United Jewish Appeal. I went to several of their meetings. I try to go to other meetings. I try to attend

A. (Continued) meetings of the Knights of Pithias. And then it entailed going to different hospitals and entertaining or help to serve patients, which . . . cookies and stuff which I'm happy to donate. But, it started to become too involved, too time-consuming. And I at that time. . . I. . . things. . . I didn't have all the equipment I have now, and have breakdown I was needed, don't always get a serviceman at night. So, I decided I was . . . it was too much for me, and I thought I'd stick to the business. You can't have both, not. . . not the way I was set up at the time. I couldn't do both. So what I do is . . . now with my leisure time which I have a little more of, I utilize it to play a little golf, belong to a club.

Q. The. . .

A. I belong to Midvale. Play a little golf, socialize a little more, play a little cards. Now my son took over a little more so I have a little more free time. But, prior to this I just couldn't do all those things. I just couldn't cope with them. 'Cause this to me was a full-time job. It still is.

Q. Both day and night.

A. Oh, more or less. We operate twenty-four hours a day. Oh, yes. Yea, the night shift, day shift and inbetween shift. In order for us to get all our merchandise out and in twenty-four hours you got to have a lot of people doing it. And we make a lot of variety, too. That's one of the reasons I feel we're still in business 'cause of a large amount of variety. So, I figure that it's better to watch my business, that's my livelihood, more important rather, than doing anything else.

Q. I'm not too familiar with Canada except in a general sense. Did you grow up with a religious education? A specifically Jewish education?

A. In Canada?

Q. Yes.

- A. If I went out with a Jewish education? I don't know what you mean.
- Q. Did you grow up?
- A. Oh, yes.
- Q. Did you have a Jewish education?
- A. Not completely the way I would like to. Well, we had in those days. . . we had a rabbi come to the house and he taught us three, four kids. Three, four sisters and brothers we all learned the same thing regardless of age. And then we had. . . we had. . . went to city schools, things were different then. My parents couldn't afford any luxuries like going to full-time Jewish school or . . . or the way they're doing now, Jewish parochial schools, couldn't afford anything like that. No, we didn't have it that easy up in Canada. So my Jewish education was limited. It was limited.
- Q. Did your children receive a Jewish education once you moved to Rochester?
- A. Well, once we moved to Rochester they felt a little too grown up. My son was sixteen when we moved, and he went to a. . . he completed high school, and he went into service like I told you. My daughter was going to public school and then she went to high school, Benjamin Franklin, they both did. And, they didn't get too much of a Jewish education, no. But, my grandchildren are getting it now. They're getting it. Yea.
- Q. They're going to a Hebrew school?
- A. One goes to Hillel full time and my son's children they go to Beth David, where they belong, where they are members. They have Jewish school and they're getting a very good Jewish education. They put me to shame. They ask me questions that I can't answer. So that's the way it is.
- Q. Are both of your . . . like your daughter-in-law and your son-in-law Jewish?
- A. Yea. Yea, they're. . . they all are Jewish, all Jewish people.
- Q. Could I just ask your opinion on intermarriage?

A. Well, I don't see anything wrong with it. I don't. . . I personally don't like it because it's the children that are going to be hurt in the long-run. See, the children are going to be torn. They. . . they're not gonna know what education to go or what to believe in or what church to go in. It's not the parents as much as the children, they're gonna be hurt. That's all I have against it, but other than that it's all right. I don't see anything wrong. We're all put on this earth for a reason. But, as far as children, that's the unfortunate part. You gotta look ahead, you know. A child doesn't ask to be brought into the world. And if you're bringing a child in, you gotta try and do the right thing by that child. That's the way I feel. Then, again, everybody has different opinions.

Q. Were you ever faced with the problem with your own children?

A. Yes, not actually a problem but something came up where one of my children wanted to date a Gentile person. And it was brought about to my wife in a certain way where they're going out with this person. And my wife says you're not going out with this person. You're not gonna start anything, and she started to explain to the child, supposing you fall in love? Well, you go out once, twice, then you fall in love, what are you gonna do then? And it will be a little too late. So better we nip it in the bud here and now, and that's what was done and that was the best. . . I think that was the best for everybody concerned. I personally think so. Now the other party is married, married well, in their own religion. And in our case the same. So I think it's best. . . I don't say there's anything wrong, don't misunderstand me, 'cause I just come back from a wedding two weeks ago, a nephew of mine, my sister's son. He's gone. He married. . . he married a Gentile girl, very lovely girl. My. . . my. . . my youngest brother, his wife passed away a couple of years ago, a young person of cancer. He married a Gentile girl.

A. (Continued) He's got three children, she has two. Seems to be working out.

Q. Did . . . did those children maintain a Jewish identity?

A. Oh, they still maintain. My . . . My ne . . . my nephew still maintains, but the girl's children I'm sure they . . . they're of Catholic faith. They're maintaining their own. How it's gonna work out, I don't know. That's the only thing I have against it. Two people can be in love, nothing wrong with that, but then when there's children then that's when the trouble starts. That's exactly when the trouble starts.

Q. But other than that once instance that you recounted you had no direct . . .

A. No.

Q. . . . problems?

A. No, none at all.

Q. I was thinking with your children going to a predominately Gentile high school. . . .

A. Well, they went to Benjamin Franklin. My daughter went part of her time to Brighton High. So, there was always mixed. There was always Jewish and Gentile people around. I asked my son one time when he come home from Franklin how come he didn't walk home with these lovely girls? Dad, it's a small town and if you wanna start people talking, the baker's son is going out with Gentile girls, he says it doesn't take long in a small town. He was right. He was right. And so he didn't . . . he was very friendly with them but he never mixed too much with them. My kids went to the JY all the time, and they . . .

Q. The one downtown?

A. Well, it was on Andrews Street.

Q. Andrews.

A. Yea, now it's . . . my daughter does a lot of work in it, her children go to

- A. (Continued) the JY on . . . it's on Edgewood now.
- Q. The Jewish Community Center?
- A. The Jewish. . . yea. That's. . . well, we call it the JY. The Jewish. . . the same thing. My daughter does a lot of work there, and she's. . . she's busy with different organizations. She loves it. She. . . I don't know where she gets the time, but she's that type. Seems to work in different. . . Hillel and Hadassah and does a lot of hard work. But she enjoys it, see, that's what counts. And it's for a good cause.
- Q. Do you feel that the JY when it was on Andrews Street performed a real function for the community?
- A. At that time I would say it did a very, very good job. Firstly it was located more conveniently for everybody concerned. Now the Irondequoit people . . . it's quite a trek all the way out to Brighton or. . . quite a trek, you know. And therefore a lot of people would like to go but they don't for that one reason. It's too far. Before they used to hop on a bus, they were at the JY. And now it's pretty. . . it makes it a little tough. So, I think eventually. . . well, it happened. . . same thing in Montreal where they make two such buildings. They're gonna have a branch, eventually, I. . . I'm assuming that something will have to be done where they're gonna have to have a branch in Irondequoit, too.
- Q. I guess the Irondequoit Country Club is in Irondequoit, I think.
- A. Yes. That's a country club. That's not the same thing. In order to belong to Irondequoit Country Club you gotta be affluent. You can't just belong because. . . But to go to the JY, to belong to the JY or the Jewish community it's. . . you don't have to be affluent at all. You can be just a poor person and enjoy their . . . their activities.
- Q. Right.

A. Yes.

Q. The community center has like a sliding scale if you're too. . . if you can't . . .

A. Oh, yes.

Q. . . . pay the full fees. I presume that the JY is similar to that?

A. I think so. I think so. They have sliding scale. I imagine all these organizations have some sort of a sliding scale whereas the poor people can participate.

Q. What sort of things did your son do when went down there?

A. Well, he played. . . he played badminton. He liked badminton. He played different sports. He participated in different sports. He's sport-minded. Right now he. . . he plays tennis at. . . in the winter's he's cross-country skiing. He's skating, and he's doing something all the time with his family, which makes it very interesting. They all participate in the sports that he does.

Q. I know that the JY was the meeting place at least for a lot of fraternal, social groups in the Jewish community.

A. That's right. Now for instance my son, if it was closer, the JY or the Jewish community, his family would belong. The whole family would belong because their kids are excellent swimmers. They took lessons. They're swimmers. And the being so far just makes it inconvenient, it really does. There's a lot of time going and coming. And secondly it's . . . it's a long trek. The children can't go alone, you have to truck 'em, have to drive 'em back and forth.

Q. Yes.

A. So they do next best.

Q. I'll stop this and turn this tape over.

Interview I  
Tape I  
Side B

Q. So let's just. . .

A. That's true, it's very inconvenient to take a family all the way out there and to have one car, it's. . . it's. . . it's kind of a long, long trek. And I'm sure his children, who are very active in sports, they love swimming, they like dancing, they would be at the JY quite often if they could. But, being where it is it's kind of difficult.

Q. When you were looking for a home did you run into any problems with residential segregation or . . . ?

A. Yes. We did. In fact, the house where we bought at that time, I was told that . . . it was a known fact that Virginia Colony was restricted for many years. That's in Brighton. It's a small section of Brighton there called Virginia Colony. They told me it was restricted and that I'd have problems if I wanted to buy a house there. I never thought about it. And then my realtor, who was looking for a house with us, he happened to get this listing. And he said would you like to see it? And I said yes, I want to see it. We went down there and saw the house, we liked it. And put in an offer, and eventually we bought it. And there was no. . . I haven't heard anything since and I'm there since '57, gonna be twenty years next year. That's 19 years. . .

Q. Same house?

A. Same house.

Q. Which was originally you were told in a restricted area?

A. Now there are other Jewish people there. There was a Jewish party there before. There was Jewish families on the same street before I moved in. They told me it had been restricted and now they had sort of tapering off

A. (Continued) somewhat.

Q. Did your son or your son-in-law have any problems?

A. No. My son-in-law he built a cost, he bought some land and he built a house, not that I know of. I don't know if he had any problems, I don't think so. No, I. . . the reason. . .

Q. Perhaps that era is gone.

A. I think so. I hope so. If there is any of it left it's very minor, and I think Jewish Congress had a lot to do with it, Jewish paper The Ledger, and all these Jewish agencies that helped bring that down to where it is now, the level where it is now. And there is very little of it noticeable, anti. . . anti-Semitism. I. . . I. . . I very seldom see any of it or hear about it. I never. . . In Montreal I felt . . . many places where I went I felt inferior. I was made to feel inferior because of the anti-Semitism up there is. . . is much more predominant, or then was, than I. . . than here. 'Cause I used to come here on visits, you know, and I used to see Jewish postmen, I thought it was very nice. Back home you applied for a civic job anywhere your application went down the bottom of the list. In fact, . . . in fact, it's predominately French country. It's run. . . has been run by the church as far as I can remember. Now. . . now it's also being muted somewhat, quieting down somewhat there, too. But, it's still predominant. It's still there. The French people are. . . are. . . youngsters are bringing it back.

Q. With their interest in nationalism?

A. Yes, they got a new movement called the . . . group it's called the FLQ or liberated Quebec. Since DeGaulle was there, he didn't do much good. But now I read this morning's paper where the pilots and the 2400 of 'em went out on strike 'cause what they're trying to do is make French language predominant. In other words they're trying to . . . all these pilots and these people working

A. (Continued) in the airports transmit everything in French, and this is the reason, I believe, from what I read that the strike is on 'cause there were some near accidents on account of it . . . yes. That's a fact. That's. . . that seems to be what it's all about. Now this is the way it is. In fact, you go up to Canada, you travel on the trans-Canada highway, all the new signs are in French only. If you can't read French you're out of luck. And that's what they're working on now, all your stationery up there has to be bi-lingual. You want a job in any decent concern you have to be bi-lingual. French. . . any lettering on trucks has to be French first and then English at the bottom.

Q. When you grew up did your family speak French and then English or. . .?

A. We. . . well, French was compulsory in school.

Q. Yiddish.

A. Yea, well. . . my. . . my parents spoke Jewish and English. But they spoke Jewish to us so that we shouldn't lose the Jewishness. And very good thing they did because I speak Jewish very well. My wife does too. And our children don't because we neglected to do what our parents did. They don't speak as well as we do. 'Cause we never spoke Jewish to them. We never thought of it. We were too busy. We were always communicating in the English language. But, that's the way it is. Jewish was predominant. My father always spoke Jewish to us. My mother did, too. And we. . . we answered 'em in English. And the theory there was that they can learn English from us, they never had any schooling in Canada -- they were European people --. . .

Q. Where did they come from?

A. My mother come from a place near Rumania. And my father came from a place that at that time was called Koradenka, near Poland somewhere. And they met in Montreal and married in Montreal.

Q. Almost like coming from opposite ends of the world.

A. That's right. That was correct.

Q. And you continued the pattern of moving in your family.

A. Yea, yea. Well, most of the family remained in Montreal just we were the only ones who went to . . . left for Rochester. And I wouldn't have been as happy in Montreal as I am here, I know. Neither would my family. I don't think so. Of course, the kids would have married, but it's different. It . . . it's a big, big city and it's more like New York than New York is itself. And it was . . . it . . . it's . . . it's a . . . it's not living it's existing and fighting your way through everyday. Where here is . . . it's slower moving and it's different even now. It's much better here. We go up to Montreal on visits, these cab drivers zooming in and out, and there's like 6,000 cabs. Oh, it's awful. I'll tell you everytime you leave the house or the hotel, wherever you're staying, you're taking your life in your hands, that's a fact. It's awful. Well, maybe I'm not used to that after 23 years, but when I lived there I . . . it was bad but I could cope with it, you know. Doing it everyday. Fighting my way through.

Q. But things have . . . have, I mean, really greatly changed coming from the more restricted environment. I . . . I have heard hints that there still is a definite quota system for Jewish students in higher education in Quebec.

A. Oh, I believe that. I wouldn't be at all suprised. I wouldn't be at all suprised. You know, it's . . . it's very hard to explain, but we were in there . . . we were going in on a trip, my wife and I, one day and we were passing the U.S. Embassy. And, coincidentally, as we were passing the door blew out, bomb exploded.

Q. Oh!

A. You know, happened to be on that street because we cut through west when we

- A. (Continued) go into the city when we come through Rochester. Now. . . I mean then the next day we read in the paper where mail boxes were bombed in West Mount, which is . . . West Mount would be like Brighton is here or a little better than Brighton. And the FLQ are starting to. . . to cause. . . We have a lot of that here, too, Washington. They send these . . .
- Q. The letter bombs?
- A. The letter bombs, yea. But, up there was. . . really for a while was really rough. But, it's always something doing up there, always. Now the strike's up there right now, I'll tell you the minimum wage was so much smaller there when we left than it was here. And now it's much higher there than it is here, much higher, minimum wage. Now things have radically changed.
- Q. Sky rocketed all over.
- A. Sky rocketed, all of them, but not so much like there. Unbelievable. And so many strikes there, everywhere you go there's strikes. And when they strike there, you know, it's for months. Like the postmen. . . the. . . the mail people went out on strike there recently. There was no mail for a month, a whole month. Do you know how many businesses went out? Mail order businesses.
- Q. Oh, it's impossible to function. . . I mean even almost a regular business. You would have to pay by mail.
- A. Oh, sure.
- Q. And receive bills by mail.
- A. You know, we went up there during the strike, mail strike, we went there for a funeral. And I was friendly with the undertaker before I left Montreal. And I asked Tommy, I says, how do you. . . He says what do you mean? We send our cars out to collect from people. We have to pay our . . . we have to pay our creditors, too, we send out to collect, the mail isn't going. He says, it's a terrible thing. People were just sending cars and trucks to make payments.

- A. (Continued) You have to stay in business somehow. But it's a terrible thing.
- Q. So, I . . . I . . . there . . . there's still a part of your family living in Canada?
- A. Yes. Yes, I have . . . I have two brothers living in Canada, and one sister living here, and one sister is living now in California. She lived here. I took . . . I took 'em down here to Rochester, her husband worked for me for three, four years. Then they moved to California, at the time it was better there for my sister. So, . . .
- Q. That was like about 1960 or earlier?
- A. 1953. . . 1963. It would be about 1964, 1965, that's when they migrated.
- Q. To California?
- A. Yea. Maybe a little later than that, I'm not sure.
- Q. Do you still keep in contact with her?
- A. Yea, we. . . we. . . we write. We. . . we write every now and then. We . . . we were three brothers and there's two sisters. One lives here, one lives in California. And my two brothers live in Montreal and I live here. That's the extent. My late sister passed away two years ago, that's the one next to me. She had cancer. That strikes every family somehow or other, terrible, terrible thing. They've found cures for practically every. . . practically everything else but not . . . not that yet. They're no nearer today than they ever were.
- Q. It seems that not even all this radiation therapy. . .
- A. No.
- Q. . . . it still isn't preventing it. You were in Canada while the Holocaust in Europe was occurring.
- A. Yea.

Q. How aware were you at that time?

A. That was in 1945, wasn't it?

Q. Well, like the rise of Hitler. . .

A. Well, in the thirties.

Q. I'm sorry, I don't remember when you were born.

A. Yea, I was born in 13. . . I was born in 1913. I was very well aware of it. I was. I mean that was the main topic. . . that was the main topic then. Everywhere you went that's all they spoke about, the Holocaust in Europe. And that even those that tried to escape were or have succeeded weren't allowed to go anywhere, no country wanted to take 'em in, or very few at the time. The United States wasn't takin' any in, Canada didn't want to take any in then. Greece and maybe one or two other countries let some in, but it was a terrible, terrible thing. Terrible thing. I hope. . . I hope that a thing like that never happens again. Just they let one. . . one madman get so powerful that he can take so many lives and ruin so many cities. And. . . unbelievable, it's really unbelievable.

Q. I'm not quite certain of the time that. . . like when you moved here just shortly before then the survivors bringing in and you emigrated here to Rochester.

A. Yes, yes.

Q. Do you remember how they were integrated into the community?

A. Yes, they came in here, some of them were our customers. I. . . the only language they spoke was Yiddish or French or whatever country they come from. You had to speak to 'em . . . most that came here spoke Yiddish. And some of them fortunately escaped with some money or jewelry or what have you, and they got a start here. And some of them went into business and back in Montreal some of them went into . . . did very well financially. They started

A. (Continued) off a good business and they did well. Here at that time I was commuting more or less, going back and forth quite a bit from Montreal. I used to go up there quite often, every holiday, you know. We were family conscious and we went back and forth. It's not a bad drive into Montreal and back, roads are very good. So, these people that came to Rochester, they. . . they were placed by the Jewish Congress got 'em jobs. I hired one. I hired one, two. Bakers. And they had the tattooed numbers on them. And until they got jobs I believe the Jewish Congress helped them out financially. This one baker I know was getting \$45 a week from 'em to keep going until he got a job. When he got a job well he felt that the world owed him a living, 'cause when he was doing well financially they asked him to return some of the money, which wasn't part of the plans and he refused. And the other one also got a job at another bakery and then he came to me. He's still with me in fact. This is going back many years. He still works nights. But, the Jewish Congress helped 'em and they got on their feet and they did well. And all the organizations helped out in. . . in a way, such as Hillel, allowed their children to go to the school for a very minor fee because of circumstances. All these things tended to help. And they got by. Some of them today are doing very well. A few that I did know that were customers, well they moved to greener pastures or. . . but they got along fine. Rochester didn't get too, too many I don't think. The larger cities I think got bigger influx. And from what I'm told that people who had a choice to either stay in Rochester or in Toronto, some of them chose Toronto. And they were happy there, too. And they made. . . they made a very good living there, too. Thanks to our, you know, our Jewish organizations that helped these people out when they first lived here. Big help, otherwise they're destitute.

Q. Did you have any need to. . . to use a Jewish organization for supplemental

Q. (Continued) aid or anything when you moved?

A. No. No, I did it all on my own. You know, I don't think I would have gotten any. If you're buying a business you're not destitute.

Q. Yes.

A. And they'll come to your aid, you know, when . . . when you're actually . . . when you need it, when you're down and out. But I never expected or hoped. But there was a time I was in bad trouble here, soon after I bought the place, thought I would have to pack up and go home. They tore up my street here for about six, eight blocks for widening it. It was a three-month job, and at that time my store was my only business. I had no wholesale or anything. So, I . . . I didn't want to leave the bakers go. I had three bakers at the time. At that time they were at a premium because you couldn't get 'em. If I let them go they'd . . . they'd get jobs elsewhere immediately and I'd be forced to close up. I couldn't reopen. My wife suggested that, you know, we close up. We lost. . . we took a gamble and we lost. But fortunately my creditors, the people I dealt with, some of them came to my rescue. Not only did they give me merchandise but they gave me money, too, they loaned me money without being repaid until I could. They had faith in the Quality Bakery. And they didn't know me too well, I was practically new here. And the people that did come here, it was pitiful to see in the summer when they came here from church, morning, walk through the mud to come to get the baked goods. Unbelievable, really it was unbelievable. And I managed. Whatever I had I put it back into the business, you know, I kept going. Just to meet the payroll, that's all I had to worry about, the payroll. The ingredients and people played along with me. And sure enough I got back on my feet again. I paid 'em all back. I still deal with these people. Even if their prices were double I think I'd stay with them. You don't find too many

A. (Continued) people like that.

Q. Were . . . were they Jewish wholesalers? I mean, that knew about the neighborhood?

A. Yes.

Q. And you. . .

A. Yes. Fine family by the name of Kolko Paper Company. They're a fine family. They helped me out. The sure. . . they helped me out. And the rest I did on my own. The bank was very nice to me. They were lenient. They wouldn't give me any money but they were lenient. They didn't know me well enough. I never expected. But they went with me, manager went with me to the City Hall, we pleaded our case. And the City Manager at that time's name was Aex, a-e-x. He says the only mistake they made was tearing up the whole street at one time. And they'll never do it again. Only half at a time. And now that's the way they do it. They tore that whole street up, nothing could get through here. The only way they could get through this little street here onto the parking lot from Boston. Not many people even knew how to get around, but that was all torn up. Three months. Three months. And I had everything sunk in here, everything. Pretty bad. Pretty, pretty bad.

Q. I just noticed by the . . . the pamphlet here, Golda Meir.

A. Yea.

Q. Did . . . did you see Golda Meir when she came here last year, spoke?

A. I. . .

Q. . . . spoke. . . when she spoke out at U. of R.?

A. I saw it on television. I didn't go to see her actually, but I saw her on television. I think what my street looked like at the time. . .

Q. This is June 11, 1958.

A. Yea.

Q. Why that's you.

A. That's me, yea. Photographer says. . . I was wearing my white coat, he says put a white hat on so they'll know you're the baker. Now you see this is all. . . this is the street, it's all torn up.

Q. Looks like a. . . a country town.

A. Yea.

Q. In the wild west.

A. Oh, you don't know how I felt then. But since then things changed. Things changed. I got some nice friends, enough jobs.

Q. That was intended to help the businesses here, I guess?

A. Yea. Yea, excuse me could I just. . .

Q. Oh, sure.

A. Thank you.

Q. I was just wondering that since you. . . you saw Golda Meir on the television.

A. Yea.

Q. Have. . . have your feelings towards the United Nations changed since the establishment of Israel?

A. Yes. Yes. Yes. The United Nations were doing a very, very good job. And some of the people up there running it, the United States, you know, were . . . were the right people. The trouble is they change 'em too fast. They change 'em too fast. Much too fast. When you get a man up there, U.N. Ambassador, and he's doing a good job then all of a sudden he's taken off. Some of them are good speakers, some are really . . . made themselves heard, and others aren't that forward. But, I think that . . . I think they're doing a good job as far as keeping everything on a peaceful basis here on this side of the world. And a lot going on on the other side. I don't know how they can stop. They don't want to get in touch with the Arabs. They

A. (Continued) don't want to hurt the Russians. It. . . it's a very ticklish situation, you know. It's politics. I really don't know.

Q. How do you feel towards the State of Israel? Do you feel it's essential to Jewish life?

A. I feel the State of Israel is not only essential but a necessity for the Jewish people to have a homeland, and that is the reason that all Jewish people, I think, do their utmost, you know, financially for those who can, and otherwise. I believe it's very important to keep the State of Israel alive and . . . and progressing all the time. Can't let go. That's one thing we mustn't let go. That's why we buy bonds, pledge money. And that's . . . that's very, very important. Without Israel we haven't got anywhere to turn to. You know, it's somewhere to go. At least you know there's a place that we'll be allowed to come as long as it's there. Follow me?

Q. Yes.

A. But without that we have nothing.

Q. Have either your children or any other members of your family been to Israel?

A. No. No, not yet. Hopefully I'm expecting to go. Soon as things quieten down. I haven't been there yet but I'm hoping to go.

Q. That would be interesting.

A. Yea.

Q. Let's see if we can think about anymore things that would be interesting to talk about.

A. We went through about everything.

Q. Well, if I just may ask you how. . . how do you feel when you hear the term Jewish identity? What is your sense of Jewish identity?

A. How do you mean?

- Q. I mean how can you . . . how do you . . . how do you view yourself? I mean, do you view yourself as an American or as a Jewish American or as a Jew that lives in America?
- A. I'm a . . . I'm primarily . . . I'm a Jew, secondly I'm an American. And I view myself as an American Jew. It's the only way I can.
- Q. Well, I mean . . . you . . . you have experienced all your parents' memories of Europe. . .
- A. Well, when I . . .
- Q. . . . your life both in Canada and now as an adult. . . ?
- A. The only experience that I have with my parents in Canada was . . . yes, whatever they told me, that life was very hard and things were not plentiful and other than that very little had been said. They always praised some of the things they had in Europe, and they didn't compare it to some of the things that they have in America. You know, there was both good and bad in both.
- Q. Well, this is a little bit fuzzy. I don't really know how else to phrase it, but how can you . . . well, what feelings do you have about the future of the . . . the Jewish community in Rochester? As it is both Reform, Conservative, Orthodox do you feel it forms one community or. . . ?
- A. Well, I feel that the Jewish community in Rochester will basically be Conservative. And I think that most Jewish people are going to Conservatism. The only reason. . . the only answer I got to that is because I think that they're keeping abreast with the times. In other words, Orthodox is . . . Judaism is . . . is very, very good if you can abide by it. And, you know. . . and . . . and maintain it. But to maintain it to the letter is impossible. And if you don't maintain it to the letter then you're not Orthodox. In other words, I'll give you a for instance. In the Orthodox religion if you live far away from your synagogue I heard a rabbi say it's better not to drive to

- A. (Continued) synagogue and pray at home. Yet in the Conservative religion they don't. . . you can drive to the synagogue, but they ask you to come to the synagogue. They don't tell you by which means. To me the most important thing is the praying, not how you get there, but the praying in. . . in. . . in synagogue with other people of your faith. Now, this is one instance, it's not the greatest, it's not the most important, but this is very hard to abide by the Orthodox religion 100%. I feel that a human being in order to abide by their so-called rules is physically impossible. This. . . this is my view. And I think that Conservative is happy medium. It's not going too far left, not going too far right. It's right there, and actually the. . . the learning and the Bible in the Conservative and the Orthodox is the same Bible. It's not a different Bible, it's identical Bible. Now, actually I'm interested in the praying part of it, the going to synagogue, rather than how I get there or why. Follow me?
- Q. Yes. Yes. Do you maintain a fairly religious atmosphere in your own home?
- A. We keep a kosher home, yes. And we go to synagogue. . . we don't go every week, we go on the holidays. We go to synagogue. . . but to say we're not Orthodox religious, I'm not, I'm Conservative. I abide by the Jewish faith as much as I possibly can. I don't say I go to synagogue as often as I should.
- Q. Everybody can almost say that. Would you say the same is true of your children? Both children?
- A. Yes. The same.
- Q. I guess I could ask him myself since he's right here. I guess we've exhausted the community.
- A. I think we more or less have exhausted everything.
- Q. Very informative. Very informative.
- A. Well, I thought that was the purpose, I didn't hold anything back, and I

A. (Continued) didn't put anything on. Just exactly . . . the last 23 years that's exactly what transpired since I've been here. And the gist of it is that Rochester is still a wonderful place for the Jews as well as anybody else. It's a good country. And I don't think the Jews here are treated worse. . . I think they're treated. . . the Jewish people are treated equally here. And they. . . and if it isn't so then it isn't on the surface, not obvious.

Q. You haven't seen it or felt it yourself?

A. No, I haven't. I really haven't. I really haven't. Maybe I don't come amongst the people that would be that way, but in that case I'm glad I don't.

Q. I imagine I should stop this.

A. What. . .

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B (Interview I)