

JACOB RAPPAPORT

Tape 1 interview 1 July 30, 1976

Nancy J. Rosenbloom

Side A

- XXX A. Personal: Mr. Rappaport arrived in Rochester in 1893. He was born in Poland in a town that is now part of Russia. In that town, all the people were either Poles or Jews. He had two sisters and one brother. His grandfather had already emigrated to Rochester. His father, who was in the forest business had enough money to bring the family over. His father went into the dry goods business in Rochester. Residential patterns: Vienna Street, Baden Street, Nassau Street and then Morris Street.
- Mr. Rappaport attended school for two years in Rochester but he really learned English on the street.
- XXX 1915: Mr. Rappaport bought the photo studio. His younger brother worked at Eastman Kodak and got some of his friends jobs there.
- 1908: Mr. Rappaport was married. The neighborhood where he had grown up was all Jews and other immigrants. The Germans were not nice to the Jews. Some incidents of antisemitism between Irish and Jewish; then they became friends.
- XXX B. German Jews: The German Jews belonged to Berith Kodesh and the Polish Jews had their own organizations. Garson Meyers mother was active in helping the Polish immigrant Jews.
- XXX C. Early Years of the JY: Mr. Rappaport tells an interesting story of how ten men came together and rented a house on Joseph Avenue. They borrowed money from the clothing business to help pay rent when times were really bad. Finally, they admitted girls as well. After Harry Present contributed 1000 dollars they moved to Hyde Park. Here Haskell Marks was President. They had speakers including nonJewish speakers.
- D. Early Zionist organization: Recollections of Herzl.
- E. Residential patterns: After marriage moved to Benton Street then Goodman Street in 1923 and then Vick Park A in 1947.
- E. Temple Beth El
- [Tape interrupted when Mrs. Rappaport came in]
- F. Main Street: Trolley car; Jews shopped on Joseph Avenue. There were Street parties and many small stores. Occasionally the Yiddish Theater would come through Rochester. Mr. Rappaport saw the play on Dreyfus Affair about the turn of the century.
- XXX G. Unionization of clothing Workers: Mr. Rappaport had been working for three weeks at the time of the first strike. He did not strike. They lost the strike. Memories of Gompers, Sidney Hillman and Roosevelt. The strikes were quite violent. Mr. Rappaport began to work for AL ROSENBERG. He worked a 54 hour week and on Saturday. When they threatened to reduce his hours and therefore his pay he quit and vowed only to work for himself.
- XX H. Temple Beth El : Mr. Rappaport liked Beth El. He was not really observant of the Sabbath although he housed the Rabbis frequently during the Holidays when more rabbis were brought in for the double services.

SIDE B

Rabbi Blau

Rabbi Minken

- XX I. There really was never unity in the Jewish community; not now and not then. Granted, today the community is more unified. Mr. Rappaport gave as an example the proliferation of synagogues (two on Hanover Street) and the fights over the cemetery plots. Mr. Rappaport remembers the influx of Sephardic Jews. They (the two that he knew owned fruit stores)
- J. Antisemitism: After 1900 "not after the poor Jews, after the Rich Jews"

JACOB RAPPAPORT Interview 2 August 5, 1976

Nancy J. Rosenbloom

Tape 2

SIDE A

A. Depression in Rochester

Mr. Rappaport owned a small studio during the depression. The bank and his landlord were good to him during these years.

B. The photo studio was located (and is currently located) on West Main Street. Mr. Rappaport talked about central downtown area, the business area, recollections of the neighborhood- its hotels and businesses. The city was ruined when the bridge was removed from downtown dividing East and West Main Streets.

C. Recollections of downtown Rochester.

Changes in downtown Rochester.

Front Street area.

D. At Mr. Rappaport's studio portraits were taken of "the poorest people and the richest people."

E. 1964 Riots

F. Mention of Emma Goldman's trip to Rochester.

G. Relations between immigrants in about 1900. Each immigrant was cared for by his own family; everyone was poor. Some immigrants did return to the old country. The government was generally friendly to the immigrants.

H. TILLIE ROSE

Wife's participation in Hadassah.

Everyone worked for Zionism in the early years.

I. Mr. Rappaport has not been active in any public organization.

SIDE B

J. Changes in Rochester

The impact of the automobile.

Changes mostly for the worse.

Recollections of cottage at Charlotte, George Eastman, the clothing industry.

In the early days people "made their own fun"; there were no movies, people went from home to home.

K. Future of Rochester: Mr. Rappaport is not optimistic. He is not overly concerned with intermarriage from the perspective of the Jewish community; more concerned with each person's personal happiness and to ensure that people should marry within their own faith.

Interview I  
Tape I  
Side A

Q. Today is July 30. This is Nancy Rosenbloom and I'm interviewing Mr. Jacob Rappaport at his home on Abersaw Road. How long have you been in Rochester?

A. I came here in 1893. I was 13 years old.

Q. Where. . . where were you born?

A. I was born in. . . it belonged to Russia, it was Poland, it was in a small town. The only people were just Jews and Polish.

Q. And did you come to Rochester with your family?

A. Yes.

Q. Your parents?

A. My parents.

Q. And do you have brothers and sisters?

A. Yea, I have two sisters. . . one. . . two sisters and two brothers.

Q. What made them choose Rochester?

A. My. . . my grandfather lived here, were here before my father came and two brothers here and a lot of cousins. How they got here I don't know. That's why he came to Rochester.

Q. Did they help him come over financially?

A. No they were all poor practically.

Q. Do you recall HIAS? Does that help?

A. Huh?

Q. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society?

A. I can't hear you.

Q. HIAS? That's the name of an organization H -I. . . Hebrew. . .

A. HIAS.

Q. HIAS.

A. Well I didn't know much about it. You see my father didn't need any help to come here. He had some money.

Q. What. . . what was his occupation?

A. In Europe? He was in the forest business. Russia has a lot of forests and they would buy things at auction and they'd hire people to cut it, ship it, all kinds. Where I don't know.

Q. When you came to Rochester, what kind of job. . .?

A. He started to peddle dry goods. And for a number of years as things got better for him he opened up a little store and finally he got along all right.

Q. Where did you live when you first arrived here?

A. We lived on Diana Street, Baden Street, Nassau Street, corner Chadam and Nassau. We had a dry goods store there. Then my father retired and moved on Morris Street. Had a. . . no church there, had the shul there.

Q. Did you go to school?

A. I went to school two years.

Q. Is that where you learned to speak English?

A. Huh?

Q. Is that where you learned to speak English?

A. Well, everybody you met they spoke English.

Q. Well did they have any special classes for immigrants?

A. No. No. School two years and I quit. I went to work.

Q. Doing what?

A. In a tailor shop.

Q. Just for a short while?

A. Huh?

Q. For a short while?

A

A. I worked for five years.

Q. And then?

A. Then I went in business for myself.

Q. In . . . into the photo studio? Into . . . no. . .

A. It'd take too long to tell you what happened to me before I got in the photo studio.

Q. Do you . . . do you want to tell. . . or to. . . ?

A. It wouldn't be much interest.

Q. OK. Let's see. How. . .

A. Went in photo studio in 1915.

Q. OK. That was always your own. . . your own business?

A. Yea.

Q. Were you the only one working there?

A. What's that?

Q. Were you the only one who did. . . you did everything?

A. Not. . . My two sisters got married. My younger brother went to school, graduated high school and finally found himself with Eastman Kodak Company as a stock boy or something. You had some ideas that he had and they kept it and answering him see, he went along. And after a while he became foreman. He never worked on the banks, in the pressroom where they make the Kodak. From there they kept advancing him. They finally came to him, they says we're gonna advance you. We want you to take care of a different department. But he wanted to pay it off. He says I can't take that department. He says every little while somebody'll come and ask me about what to do with this, what to do with that, problem. I don't know. He says I never worked on the things. He says we don't need a man for there. You want a man that knows how to run the department. A man comes to you and asks you a question, push a button, go to foreman, lot of self-foremans there. And hand 'em over to him and that take care of that. Been there 42 years. He got

- A. (Continued) he wanted to retire so he quit and he went to California and he died just about four months ago.
- Q. Was it unusual for a Jew to work at Eastman Kodak?
- A. Yea. There wasn't many Jews that worked there. Very few. If you got some of his friends jobs. He got Matthew Morris, got a job he became formen. He was quite a mechanic. And got brother-in-law of his, he got along good, was very well liked. People liked him very much.
- Q. Did you ever consider working at Kodak?
- A. I never considered working for anybody. They wouldn't hire me anyway.
- Q. At the photo studio did you do all the different things, all the different steps involved in the process?
- A. Oh, I run the photo studio. I didn't know much about it then but I learned as I went along. And I. . . there wasn't much business when I bought the place, but I was very successful in my business.
- Q. Has it always been on Plymouth Avenue?
- A. It's always been on West Main.
- Q. On West Main.
- A. I was in four different places there. I'm still. . . still running the place.
- Q. Your grandchildren help? Right?
- A. Well, my son takes care of it.
- Q. So it's a three generation . . .
- A. Yes.
- Q. . . business almost.
- A. Up to a year and a half ago I was still able to go down there to work a little. I can't anymore.
- Q. I know. I used to see you downtown. Like around noon.
- A. All the time.

Q. Yea. Let's see. Do you remember what it was like living in Rochester between, oh, 1900 and. . . before the Depression? When you. . . did you live at that time off Joseph Avenue, near. . . did you stay in that same neighborhood?

A. Until I was married.

Q. When. . . when was that?

A. 1908. Yea, I know what it was like. All Jews lived in the same section.

Q. Were there other immigrant groups?

A. What's that?

Q. Were there other immigrants, Polish or Italians?

A. Yes, there. . . oh Italians start comin' in around 1915, something like that. Before that where we lived, the neighborhood we lived in, it's practically all Germans.

Q. German Jews?

A. No Germans.

Q. Germans.

A. And it was hard for a Jew to get a place to live in. So, I remember going down on Kemper Street. My mother says there's a place to rent there. I was about 17. I drove down on my bicycle and I won't rent it to no Jews. Germans hated the Jews. As far. . . as far as I can remember.

Q. Before. . . before the First World War? Back around 1900.

A. Before and after too. And even now.

Q. Why do you think?

A. Huh?

Q. Why? Did they used to . . .

A. I couldn't tell you.

Q. They weren't competing for jobs were they?

A. No. They just. . . they didn't . . . they used to call the Jews shady. If a

- A. (Continued) Jewish peddler would be over in some section of the city, especially in the Clinton, South Clinton location, sometimes they get beat up.
- Q. Do you . . . did any of your friends ever get beat up or . . .? Do you remember . . .?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Real incidents of. . .
- A. Huh?
- Q. Would you call that anti-Semitism?
- A. Nothin' else.
- Q. Not just kids beating up other kids or . . .?
- A. Kids used to fight with . . . when I first come here over on Hand Street there was a Catholic school, all Irish. And No. 9 School Jews. They fight with one another all the time. Never with knives or chains, but with fists. And after a while they became friends.
- Q. How about the German Jews?
- A. Well when I first came here to this country the German Jews had a . . . a man by the name of Shiffrin. . .
- Q. Shiffrin?
- A. Shiffrin.
- Q. Shiffrin.
- A. Probably heard of him, Stella Shiffrin knew him? That was a hired hand because the immigrants would come and inquire. The German Jews were already settled here and they were in the wholesale clothing business and were well-to-do. They hired him to take care of the poorer Jews that came in here and needed help. Well, a Polish Jew come in and he needed some clothes, didn't have clothes, they had all kinds of clothes down there. I don't know whether they had it in B'rith Kodesh Temple. They must. I suppose if you didn't have shoes, you'd give 'em an order to send. So no Jew had to go on welfare. As time went on the Jews coming got

- A. (Continued) bigger and more and more. The Polish Jews had a little organization for their own Jews. And a man if he needed fifteen dollars or he needed something to start in business, they had a little organization where they found it, you could pay it back without interest. If some Jew was in distress, needed help, had an aunt, Meyer, Mrs. Meyer. You heard of Garson Meyer? His mother and some other women they. . . they had little organization they called the . . .(Transcriber's note: name of organization is two words in another language.) And the did find out if they needed help. And if they were proud people that wouldn't accept anything, they'd get a couple of baskets of food and they'd put it on the porch and they wouldn't know who brought it. And they helped one another.
- Q. Do you. . . do you think the Polish Jews was there really resentment, feelings of resentment towards the German Jews?
- A. Oh, yes. But they took care of 'em just the same.
- Q. How was it expressed? Do you think. . .
- A. How was it what?
- Q. Expressed. The resentment.
- A. I didn't hear you.
- Q. How do you think that the . . . the Polish Jews expressed their resentment? Did they just talk among themselves?
- A. Oh, no. There was no quarrels among them because they never mingled with 'em, see?
- Q. Do you remember the Baden Street Settlement as it would be . . . was that organized by the German Jews?
- A. By the German Jews. German Jews had a little hospital there, infant summer hospital. They also had a vacation organization. They used to take care of mothers and children. The German Jews did a lot of money. . . I remember

- A. (Continued) the Baden Street Settlement. I remember when the JYMA was first established.
- Q. You once. . . you once told me about that, how some young. . . young people got together?
- A. It was about 10 men, they were older than I was, and they met once a week on the. . . on Joseph Avenue, to discuss things. Another fellow, myself, he was 19 I was 17, I lied about my age and they let me come in, you know. Paid any dues or nothing. I remember. There was Gordie Lipsky, you heard of him. There was fellow by the name of Bretkowski, fellow by the name of Levinson. They have a meeting then fellow by the name of Samuelson, Lester Fisher. Then they finally decided to give the younger kids a chance. And they rented a place on Joseph Avenue, a house, had one. . . two-story house. So they got kids to . . . to pay 10¢ a week, they got 'em some dumbbells, some dominoes, place to go out and come in and play. And other things, had meetings. So every little while they need some money to run the place. They had a fellow by the name of Samuelson, he was president of the organization. I belonged to it, I joined it right away. The boys would meet, could go take a walk and come back again, maybe play some dominoes or something like that. And he'd go down St. Paul Street, that's where the clothing industry was. They'd bring back the money. They tell 'em we need some money for the boys. So went along that way for a long time. Finally moved from there, Samuelson dropped out, on Baden Street. Had a fellow by the name of Tenofsky, they were bakers. He was studying to become a doctor. He never went to college, he takes examination. So we move there and he had a room there for. . . for himself where he was able to stay. At that time we took in girls. So on Baden Street they'd have parties, have dances. And they were. . . was a fellow by the name of Present. By that time I was still a member, but I was dropping out, getting kind of old. Gave 'em a

- A. (Continued) thousand dollars. He was in the jewelry business. Present's Jeweler's now. And they moved over on Hyde Park, you know where that is? Right near where the big building is now.
- Q. Across from Franklin Square? Where the Greyhound Bus Station is?
- A. Yes by that. And you never forgot the fellows, everytime he'd come up he'd talk to us, he gave \$1,000. Anyway they went along, it was a big place. Then we got. . .we got in a fellow by the name of Haskell Marks. He became president. Haskell had one leg, one leg cut off trying to catch a streetcar, running for streetcar, when he was a kid and cut his leg off. Very smart. He was able to get good teachers to come to the club once a week, different ones to speak to the boys, which was very nice, all very. . .I don't know just what happened at that time and the time they started building the . . . the JY building. Finally signed worth over half a million dollars, they put the building up. It was just. . . he was a bachelor, he was just happened to take an interest. And from then on I lost track of . . . you'd know more about it than I do.
- Q. One of the earlier . . . early directors. . .
- A. Huh?
- Q. One of the early directors related to you? Rose. Mr. Rose. Was he a director of the JYM&WA? Aaron Rose?
- A. Aaron Rose was a young fellow, he wasn't a director. Maybe he was. . .
- Q. Maybe later. About 1930? Maybe later.
- A. Maybe. I don't know.
- Q. Haskell Marks was also a Ward Leader.
- A. Huh?
- Q. Was Haskell Marks a Ward Leader? In politics? Haskell Marks? Was in politics?
- A. Treasurer, he was elected Treasurer of the city, he was in jury duty.
- Q. At. . . at the house on Hyde Park, was there a swimming pool?

A. No.

Q. Just sports. Rooms for sports?

A. Hmm?

Q. There were sports activities there?

A. What?

Q. Sports? Athletics? Athletics? In the building on Hyde Park?

A. Huh?

Q. What?

A. What'd you say?

Q. In the JY on Hyde Park. . .

A. Yes.

Q. There were athletic facilities?

A. There was what?

Q. Athletic facilities?

A. Yea they had things like that.

Q. Who were some of the speakers? Do you recall?

A. One of the speakers. . . remember they had a man by the name of Lowenthal spoke to us once here one time. It wasn't just Jewish, there were Gentile speakers.

Q. Not just Jewish topics?

A. Huh? No.

Q. Like Palestine. . .

A. No, they didn't have much to say about Palestine those days yet.

Q. Do you remember when they started talking about Palestine and . . .?

A. Yes. Right there after the Second World War. . .

Q. Oh, not till much later? Much later.

A. Well, they . . . oh, yea but first they had a Zionist organization.

Q. Were you active in the Zionist organization?

A. Well, I was. . . belonged to it now and then.

Q. Young Judea?

A. No, just an organization. My. . . my sister, Mrs. Rose, was very active in the Zionist organization. My wife was in.

Q. Was your wife from Rochester?

A. Yes.

Q. Born in Rochester?

A. I don't think she was born, I think she was about a year old or something like that.

Q. Go on.

A. She was my age.

Q. You said when you got married then you moved away from Katherine Street and that whole area?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that when you moved to this side of the city? When did you move to this Vick Park A?

A. Oh, later.

Q. Years later.

A. I moved on Benton Street. We got married in 1908, I moved in Vick Park A. . . I moved in Goodman Street, that was the year they Beth El Temple on Park Avenue. I moved there in 1923. And I moved in Vick Park A in 1947.

Q. Have you always been a member of Temple Beth El?

A. Well the year after they got started.

Q. 1916 or. . . ?

A. No Beth El got started before then. 'Course Lester went to pay him back. . .

Q. Oh. . .

A. Course Lester was Bar Mitzvahed in 1923. I was a member of Beth El from about

A. (Continued) oh, 1917.

Q. When you were growing up yourself did you belong to an Orthodox shul?

A. I didn't belong to it. My father was . . . used to go there every. . .

Q. Where, what shul?

A. On Morris Street Shul.

Q. Is that where you were Bar Mitzvahed?

A. I was Bar Mitzvahed on the boat.

Q. On the boat.

A. Yea, that's right.

Q. Did they used to have services every week on the boat?

A. They had services in the morning, Polish would have services in the morning, then the Jews would have services after the Polish got out.

Q. Did. . . did a lot of people from your neighborhood in Russia come or was it just your family? Was it friends as well?

A. It was from all over, travel by boat, you know.

Q. OK. Hi. One time you were telling me about the trolley? The trolley car in Rochester?

A. Yea, they had horsecarts.

Q. And then. . . then did they put the trolley line in through downtown?

A. What do you mean? I can't. . .

Q. Well, did. . . did the trolley line cut Rochester in half? Like, what I'm trying to figure out is how, you know, how Rochester looked in terms of . . .

A. Well, they all came down the main street, it was a trolley line. When they had the horsecarts they had a . . . a track on the street. Then when they took the horses off, that was about that year. The trolley's on. . . they had a conductor and a motorman. And they needed a little barber stove, you'd freeze in there. And at night if you wanted to you just couldn't get home unless you

- A. (Continued) walked. There was no taxi. People used to have horses and they had streetcars on Joseph Avenue, Clinton, St. Paul Street, all take you up to next street.
- Q. Did most people . . . most of the Jewish people did their shopping on Joseph Avenue?
- A. No.
- Q. No?
- A. There was all small grocery stores. There was no shopping centers, no supermarkets. There was a lot of stores on Joseph Avenue, small stores. Nothing big. Little store, just to make a livin' that's all. We had a liverer.
- Q. Was it fairly lively? Lots of people? All the time?
- A. Yes. Used to have . . . we'd get together, we'd have parties. There was no movies in the old days. We'd just have our own fun.
- Q. You told me once there was a Yiddish theatre that came through? Was there a Yiddish theatre?
- A. Here?
- Q. In Rochester?
- A. No, they used to have a travelling show coming through. Rent a hall, have it, then they'd move on somewheres else.
- Q. Did they come frequently?
- A. No, not very often. Maybe once a . . . once or twice a year. There wasn't much good anyway.
- Q. Do you remember when they unionized the clothing workers in Rochester?
- A. Yes. I went to work after I was 15. My sister worked in a . . . Maple Avenue Levis shop there. She got me a job. I worked. . . he was very nice to me, he was showing me how to do things. I worked there for two or three weeks and they went out on strike. So I was off. They . . . they lost the strike.

A. (Continued) The . . . the clothing company had to cut us, you know what I mean by cut us? Get the stuff ready to work. They had. . . they worked in their factory there and they send the work out to different contractors. When they went out on strike the cutters were still cutting clothes. They ship a lot of it down and they have it made. And they go off and sell it just the same. After a while they had a fellow by the name of Gompers in there. And finally they got the cutters and they went out on strike, lost that strike. Then a fellow by the name of Sidney Hillman, you heard of him. And from that time on there was no more strikes. Every year they'd have a meeting in New York City and they'd come back without a strike, they'd get shorter hours, more pay. And that's the way it run until World War II, Roosevelt forced Sidney Hillman to reduce. . . and they had a man here by the name Chapman who used to hear . . . and now they don't have strike.

Q. Do you know Abe Chapman? Did you know Abe Chapman?

A. No I don't. Saw him, but I don't know him.

Q. He was pretty powerful in the union.

A. Yes. But Sidney was the boss.

Q. Was it a pretty violent. . . violence involved with the strike? Was there a lot of violence involved with the strikes?

A. Violence, yea one girl got killed. Some German fellow killed her.

Q. Did you. . .

A. I can't remember. . .

Q. Did you go out on strike also? Were you in the. . .

A. No, I had just started to work.

Q. You had just started.

A. I didn't go near them. See from that time I go to work in different little shops, finally got in a place, Al Rosenberg. He had a place, a shop, on

- A. (Continued) Joseph Avenue. He was the nicest man, you'd want to work. He had a foreman who did work for him. And I worked for him for quite a while, but he didn't have steady work, just season work. So finally got a job out on . . . at that time the clothing workers moved over and got their own shops on St. Paul Street. And we used to work 58 hours a week from seven to six. And then job like that also had to work Saturday. Worked from eight to six. So it was 54 hours, Saturday we'd work a half a day. So when I got the job for Saturday my father used to wake me every morning to work. Saturday. . . so you had to my own. I worked there a year and a half. Finally decided they should have piece work. I was makin' \$12 a week. What are you gonna pay? They told me. I worked a couple of days. I worked the same as I did. Instead of gettin' \$12, I'd be makin' about eight, nine dollars. I says I wanna quit. So, you had to. . . Sunday came down, come back we'll give you the same pay, a dollar more. No, I says, I'm quittin'. You'll be sorry. I says I'm not comin' back. work for you anymore. From that time I didn't work for nobody else.
- Q. When you joined Temple Beth El in the early days, was it. . . was it a change in terms of. . . of changing from an Orthodox to a Conservative temple? Did you change anything yourself?
- A. Well the change was much better because I had a nice place, clean, orderly, the service is about the same, no different.
- Q. You had stopped observing the Sabbath before?
- A. Huh?
- Q. You'd always worked on Saturday? For a while you'd been working on Saturday?
- A. No, I didn't. . . only worked on . . . that year I remember I. . . Saturday, workin' on Saturdays didn't mean nothin' to me.
- Q. Yea.
- A. Friday nights I'd go to temple. Saturday I didn't go.

Q. Later on when they decided to move Beth El from Park Avenue out here. . .

A. Yea.

Q. Were you pleased? Did you think that was a good idea?

A. No, I didn't.

Q. I. . . somebody was telling me about a Ben Rosenthal? And. . . and how they wanted to buy a few houses on Meigs Street? Do you remember that? Did you. . .

A. I knew Ben Rosenthal, yes.

Q. Did. . . did you make your opinion known that you wanted the temple to stay on Park Avenue?

A. Yes. It burned down.

Q. It burned down.

A. But they were gonna move anyway.

Q. They'd already started it.

A. Already bought that place.

Q. Yea.

A. So many things happened. . .

Q. Out here?

A. No, I didn't approve of it. I was very comfortable there, I liked it.

Q. And by then there was a large Jewish community in that . . . living right there?

A. Yes. Now there isn't any. They're moving out.

Q. Out here?

A. Out this way. I would get. . . High Holidays I would get their rabbi or a cantor to stay in my house.

Q. Coming from where?

A. From out of town.

Q. Oh, and. . . and to hold the service.

A. They'd have an extra service. And I was kosher, that is I wasn't but the house

A. (Continued) was kosher. My wife was kosher. And that went on for a number of years. They never appreciated it.

Q. Yea. They. . . 'cause they used to hold double services? Right?

A. Yes. And I feed 'em and take care of 'em. At the end of the season, send me eight or ten dollars.

Q. Yea.

A. I send 'em back. Think they'd buy me a book or something.

Q. Yea.

A. Tell you, that went on for years until I moved on Vick Park A, only had two bedrooms. Fellow called me up, Mr. Rappaport, please help me, I'd like to have him come to your house. I says yea you can have him come to my house and eat, but I have no sleeping quarters. Then later Harry Harry, you know who I mean? Harry Harry? He was one of the founders of the . . . called me up, and my daughter too, for years guy has come, I says yea and this home. . . I told him I couldn't take care, I says they can eat here, I can't. . . I mean they can eat here but they can't sleep. So they sent him up to my house, they ate at my house, got him a place at the Normandy Hotel.

Q. Do you have any recollections of the different rabbis at Beth El in the earlier years?

A. I remember 'em all.

Q. I'm gonna change the tape.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE A

Interview I  
Tape I  
Side B

Q. Today is July 30th. . .

A. I think the first rabbi we had here was Rabbi Blau. . .

Q. Blau?

A. Yea, he didn't stay too long. He didn't like the congregation. Didn't think enough of their ideas. Then we got Rabbi Rosenberg. They had a cantor by the name of Berman. . . oh, yea they got Minken.

Q. Minken?

A. Yes. Maybe he wasn't right, I don't know. The next man. I used to go there listen to him talk every Friday night.

Q. Minken. . .

A. Huh?

MRS. Did Minken give sermons? Did Minken give the sermons? Did Minken give the sermons or was he a cantor?

A. Minken gave the sermons. Then there was. . .

MRS. Wasn't that Minken?

A. Huh? Minken was there, sure. Yea, I like Minken. And he was there for quite a while. And he got out I think he got Rosenberg. And he was there quite a while. Rosenberg wrote a book about Rochester, nothing there that fits in so. . .

Q. You don't think it's such an accurate book?

A. No.

Q. What are some of the things that . . . he talks a lot about the different institutions, the . . . the way the community was unified. Do you think the community was really that unified? The Jewish community?

A. It was never unified.

Q. Not then and not today?

A. More so today than it was then. And then we got a fellow by the name of Fisher. And a fellow by the name of Berman. . .

Q. Aaron Solomon?

A. Aaron Solomon was a cantor.

Q. A cantor.

A. He couldn't be a rabbi not yet because he didn't go to college. He wanted to come there but . . . he was a nice guy. You talk about unity, they put up a shul on Hanover Street. So, put up a nice one too. One of the members didn't become president, see? They elected somebody else, so he got mad and he pulled out and he got a crowd with him and they put another shul right. . . almost next door, next lot, on Hanover Street. That's how much unity they had. The same thing when they. . . I remember when they bought the cemetery. They had to have two. My grandmother was the first person buried on. . . pretty near the first person. Right around 1900, about 1900 I'm not sure. No never unity in Rochester.

Q. There were a lot of small synagogues.

A. Hmm?

Q. Lot of small shuls.

A. Oh, yes. They had two on Hanover Street, they had the new shul on James Street, I think they had two more on Chadam Street, small ones. They had one on Ryan Street. And later on when they built that big shul on Joseph Avenue then Kolko built that one on St. Paul Street right next to the old home. Then the Turkish Jewish had a shul, and still they got Rabbi Cohen. . .

Q. Very small, there aren't many Sephardic Jews left?

A. No.

Q. Did you know any Turkish Jews?

A. Yes.

Q. From . . . just from socially or working with them?

A. One of 'em worked for a brother-in-law of mine, fellow was called . . . know they had a new tool they were on Joseph Avenue. They had two. . . two. . . fruit stores. I knew both of 'em they were very nice fellows.

Q. Did the Sephardic Jews stick together? Or . . . ?

A. As far as I know they did.

Q. They went. . . were they friendly with the other East European Jews?

A. Friendly with the. . .

Q. Married each other and. . . ?

A. That I don't know. After I was married I lost track of that. I knew what was going on, I didn't have. . . I used to go down there, some of the folks liked on Morris Street I used to go down there everyday.

Q. That was when you moved to Goodman Street?

A. Hmm?

Q. After you got married you moved to Goodman Street?

A. No I moved on Benton.

Q. Benton Street.

A. And then I moved on Goodman Street. Then Vick Park A. And I had a cottage down in Charlotte which I enjoyed very much.

Q. You were. . . you were talking before about your son's Hebrew education?

A. What's that?

Q. You were talking about your son's Hebrew education. Did he. . . he had a private teacher, a rabbi?

A. Used to go to the. . . after school to the temple.

Q. To Beth El?

A. Were there lots of . . . of people. By then was it a big congregation at

Q. (Continued) Beth El?

A. We used to always go down, on holidays we wouldn't have room enough for. . .

Q. Did he go to Hebrew high school?

A. Did I?

Q. Your son?

A. Huh?

Q. Your son? Lester. . .

A. No.

Q. No. The Talmud Torah? Do you remember the Talmud Torah?

A. Yes.

Q. But Lester never went. . .

A. No.

Q. Did he want to?

A. No, why should he? Because he joined Beth El. . .

Q. Oh, they had a Hebrew high school as well?

A. Wasn't in high school, that is, Hebrew school there every afternoon. And that's where he was Bar Mitzvahed.

Q. Do you remember any other incidents of anti-Semitism besides those early ones?

A. The what?

Q. Besides in the early, early years you told me about before, anti-Semitism in the 1930's or later?

A. 1930 I. . .I remember before 1930.

Q. Specific incidents of anti-Semitism?

A. At that time when I was little, early 1900's, and now anti-Semitism change. They're not after the poor Jew.

Q. No.

A. They're after the higher up. When Roosevelt appointed Morganstern as secretary,

- A. (Continued) he made more enemies than you could think of, he's the kind of Jew they were after, the rich Jew.
- Q. Yea.
- A. I have about friends that were Germans, but on the whole the Germans hated the Jews. And so did the Irish. They changed entirely.
- Q. The Irish changed?
- A. That's. . .
- Q. Now, you mean today?
- A. Yea.
- Q. Somebody told me that in the early days the JY was a . . . a sort of protection against Irish children who didn't like Jewish children. Is that true?
- A. Yea, that's true.
- Q. Was Rabbi Bernstein active in the early days of the JY.
- A. Oh, yes. He was active in all the organizations. One of the nicest guys that I know.
- Q. Do you think he helped to unify the Jewish community?
- A. Oh, yes. Yea before . . . they had a man by the name of Landsberg, see? He wanted to change even the Saturday to Sunday services. Then they had a man by the name of Wolfe, very nice guy too. And then they got Rabbi Bernstein. He tried to unify, he was very good both ways.
- Q. He's a Zionist also. He's a Zionist.
- A. Oh, yes.
- Q. Do you think he's had an impact on. . . on Rochester Jews in terms of Zionism?
- A. Oh, yes. All the Polish Jews were Zionists.
- Q. Before they even got to America?
- A. No there was no. . . in Europe? There was a move for Zionism there. First one was the way it got started at the time of the Dreyfus. . . he was Reform and he

- A. (Continued) found out all about. . . he's a Jew himself never located. . .
- Q. Do you remember reading about the Dreyfus case then in. . . in the early years?
- A. Yea, I remember seein' a play with it.
- Q. Years and years ago.
- A. No, I see. . . not. . . they had. . . they had a play come through here about 1900 on the Dreyfus. . . not in the movies.
- Q. A play.
- A. On stage. The Dreyfus case was in my time. I can remember.
- Q. Was public opinion behind Dreyfus?
- A. I was only a kid.
- Q. A kid, yea.
- A. I wouldn't know. That I wouldn't know any more than I would know what the public opinion was in the city when I was a kid.
- Q. How about the U. of R.? You always hear how the U. of R. had a quota system.
- A. It was anti-Semitic.
- Q. Did everybody just know that?
- A. Yea. Rush Reese. It was hard for a Jew to get in there.
- Q. Not very many Jews did get in there.
- A. Not many Jews did. Very few.
- Q. Today it's totally different.
- A. Today it's a Jewish college.
- Q. A Jewish college. Jewish faculty.
- A. There's no disharmony there now.
- Q. OK. How about some of the different Ward Leaders? Like did you know who Max Gristner was?
- A. Who?
- Q. Max Gristner?
- A. Gristner?

Q. Were . . . were you a member of the Chamber of Commerce?

A. No.

Q. No.

A. Yea, I was after a while. I was never active.

Q. Sam Dicker. Do you remember Sam Dicker?

A. I knew him well.

Q. Was he a pretty good mayor or. . . ?

A. Does it go on record?

Q. You want me to turn it off? No. No you have control over it anyhow.

A. Huh?

Q. You have final control over the tape anyhow. What do you. . . what did you think of Sam Dicker?

A. He was a hell of a nice guy. He was an honest guy too. But as far as being a mayor, he wasn't runnin' the show.

Q. He was what?

A. He wasn't running as a mayor should.

Q. Oh he wasn't. He was the first Jewish mayor wasn't he?

A. Oh, no.

Q. No?

A. They had a fellow by the name of Adler, he was. Did you say Mannie Goldman used to. . . the lawyer?

Q. He was interviewed. I. . . I didn't, but somebody else did.

A. The lawyer?

Q. Yea.

A. Harry Goldman's brother. . .

Q. Brother. . . Yea.

A. Well I think he was married to an Adler girl.

Q. From the clothing works, from Adler's Clothing?

A. No, I don't think so. I think he married Adler's daughter, the lawyer. Adler was mayor of the city. And they didn't want him anymore because they couldn't run him. They had a man by the name of Aldrich, he was the boss at the time.

Q. How about Joe Silverstein?

A. Joe's an awfully nice guy and he's a Democrat.

Q. Well Rochester was a Republican city.

A. Huh?

Q. Wasn't Rochester a Republican city?

A. Yes. And Joe was Controller I think. Never. . . he was never mayor of the city. That's the only Jew that was mayor of the city that I can remember was Adler. They also had a man by the name of Teppley, Teppley shoes. And he was gonna run. Seems like he did. . .

Q. Efficient. . . efficiently?

A. Yea. He did.

Q. He did. Republican?

A. Yea. And when it come for re-election they wouldn't nominate him again.

Q. Why?

A. Because they couldn't run him.

Q. Oh.

A. The bosses couldn't run him.

Q. Were you ever active in city politics?

A. No.

Q. In terms of ward politics or. . . ?

A. No.

Q. Do you. . . it really was a. . . a machine city with the bosses and. . . ?

A. As far as running the city they did a good job.

- Q. What . . . they were in charge of the schools?
- A. Huh?
- Q. What were some of the things that they did well? The school system?
- A. They did pretty well on the whole. Some of them made a lot of money, but that don't mean that things are not very good, they did a good job.
- Q. OK.
- A. I have some Republicans, officers, and so on, friends of mine too. Nice guys. One thing about Republicans if you work for the Republicans and went running for office and then you got beat, they always took care of you, got you a job. They always took care of their own people.
- Q. The Democrats too?
- A. Democrats, no. They always fight among themselves.
- Q. Is that, do you think, why Rochester was Republican for so many years because they were better organized? Republican Party?
- A. I. . . . I think so.
- Q. What did the Democrats used to fight about?
- A. Who the hell knows?
- Q. Personalities or. . .? Let's see. . .How about, I'm just going to ask you one more question today and I'll come back another time, do you recall when you first began to hear about the destruction of the Jews in Germany in the late 1930's or '40's?
- A. Sure.
- Q. How did people become aware of what was going on?
- A. It was a public affair. Everybody, we all knew.
- Q. Like through the newspapers, or. . .?
- A. The newspapers.
- Q. You know, because lots of times people say that . . . that nobody knew what was

Q. (Continued) going on.

A. Oh, yes, we did.

Q. You did? People did know? Like in the late thirties when Hitler first was . . .

A. When they start coming. . . coming here, the refugees. Before Hitler came in power yet.

Q. That was like in the early 1930's?

A. Yea, middle 1930's. My brother-in-law had a . . . a girl from over there, she was young. He sent her to school, she became a nurse. They had to vouch for her. They had to sign that they'd take care of her.

Q. Was she a relative?

A. No.

Q. Oh just a . . . just a girl.

A. She's a relative now if you talk to her. She's got two kids married, and they got children. Weiss her name is. Her husband works with the . . . he's with the Monroe County. There was a lot of them came over then. They brought their furniture with them. She has an uncle that lived in one of my apartments, he brought even furniture. He even brought a piano over.

Q. Why don't you think more came, more German Jews came?

A. Why do I think they came?

Q. Why? . . . why didn't more of them come?

A. A lot of 'em left.

Q. A lot of 'em did come.

A. A lot of 'em left. This city you could find an awful lot, from all over the world.

Q. Were they well-received by the Rochester community? Jobs and. . .?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Help and money. . .and. . .

A. Oh, most of 'em had money.

Q. Most of 'em were well-educated?

A. Yea.

Q. Not like after the war. Lot of people came . . .

A. Before the war.

Q. Yea, right.

A. Like Einstein came here.

Q. Right, right. Did they join Beth El or B'rith Kodesh or. . .? All. . . all the city then?

A. I wouldn't know.

Q. Yea. I think Arthur Lowenthal, was he. . . I think he was one of those.

A. Lowenthal?

Q. Lowenthal?

A. Refugee?

Q. Or help, did he help them. . . maybe he helped 'em.

A. Oh, yea. Lowenthals took a very active part in those years.

Q. Yea.

A. I heard his father speak to us once. The Lowenthals were German Jews.

Q. From way back?

A. Yea. Lowenthal was the first, he's a lawyer. I think he's elected in the Jewish community, one of 'em.

Q. Were you the oldest child in your family?

A. I was right in the middle. I had a brother, had a brother ten years older, my sister's five years older. I had a sister five years younger, and I had a brother four years. . . nine years younger. They're all dead.

Q. Are you the only one that stayed in Rochester?

A. They were all in Rochester.

Q. They all stayed in Rochester. So you like Rochester more or less?

A. Huh?

Q. You think Rochester's a pretty good city?

A. Well I haven't lived in any other city. I think Rochester's a nice city. Much nicer city now than it was when I first come here. There was that much animosity.

Q. At all?

A. Huh?

Q. When you first came there was a lot of animosity?

A. Yea.

Q. OK.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE B

Interview II  
Tape I  
Side A

- Q. Today is August 5. This is Nancy Rosenbloom and I'm interviewing Mr. Jacob Rappaport at his home. I have to test the recorder. Maybe just say something so I can test the voice. Said you're gonna have four grandchildren this month? Four greatgrandchildren this month?
- A. Not this month.
- Q. Or this year?
- A. This year. Ann is gonna have another one.
- Q. OK. Today I thought maybe I'd ask you about the 1930's and the 1940's in Rochester and the Depression in Rochester. And one of the things I wondered is what it was like being a small store. . . small photo studio shop owner during the Depression. Whether your shop was hurt by the Depression or whether you kept going.
- A. Business dropped way down. Hardly any business. After the Depression and had a hard job gettin' my son to college. He was in college that time. He come home and say Dad I'm gonna quit. What's the matter? You can't afford to send me to college. I. . . I say I'm all right, I can afford it. And he worked part-time. He was in Schnectady, he worked in a General Electric on a Sunday. He worked seven to seven I think. Worked in the office. Had to stay there and anybody came in to register so he could study there and get paid.
- Q. Was that when he was in Union. . . Union College or in law school?
- A. Yea.
- Q. Union College.
- A. Then from there he went to law school. Anyway I. . . I managed to get him through.

- Q. You didn't have to take a second job during those years?
- A. Who?
- Q. You. You could. . . just from the photo studio.
- A. What could I do ? I'd have to close the photo studio.
- Q. Yea, yea.
- A. Well, people were good to me. My landlord was good to me. My bank was good to me. They carried me along until things got better.
- Q. Do you remember when the banks closed?
- A. What's that?
- Q. Do you remember when the banks closed?
- A. Oh, yea. After Roosevelt got elected they closed the banks. The next morning you would say. . . you had a few dollars in the bank, you could. . .you could throw it out, didn't want it. After Roosevelt got elected things got better.
- Q. Yea.
- A. Want to talk about me it's different, but you want to talk about general. It was bad times down there. People committed suicide.
- Q. Here in Rochester too?
- A. Yea. In Rochester too. They lost everything they had. People come in to my place, want the children's picture, they didn't have the price to pay for it. I'd often give it to 'em, they say they pay you back. One man came back. But after Roosevelt got elected things got better for everybody, not just me.
- Q. Were you ever affected by the Blue Laws? You know, when stores. . .?
- A. No. The Blue Law had nothin' to do with me.
- Q. With you. It was mostly just department stores and grocery stores?
- A. Oh, yea. Grocery stores were affected. Every time they. . . one year they elected a Democrat in the Seventh Ward, fellow by the name of Carson, and he closed 'em up, that's. . . that following Sunday. Finally got opened up again.

- A. (Continued) With me I could. . . my business could stay open seven days a week. I used to work those seven days.
- Q. Did you have any real competition from anyone?
- A. I had competition all the time. But I survived, most of 'em dropped out.
- Q. How about some place like Woolworth's?
- A. What's that?
- Q. How about places like Woolworth's when they put in those. . .?
- A. They didn't bother me too much.
- Q. Why did you choose to put your business down on West Main Street? Was that the central downtown area?
- A. West Main was a good business. Studio was there and I bought it out.
- Q. When did R.I.T. move down around there?
- A. Move out?
- Q. What were they down there already when you bought the shop down there?
- A. I think they were. I can't. . . I don't really remember. I think they were a small concern at that time.
- Q. And over the years the neighborhood changed several times didn't it?
- A. What?
- Q. Neighborhood down on West Main Street?
- A. Still belongs to the City of Rochester anymore. As far as business is concerned, business has been entirely. . . we had a department store there. That went out of business about 'thirty I guess, no before that.
- Q. What department store was it?
- A. Duffey-Powers had a beautiful store, corner of Fitzhugh and Main.
- Q. What. . . yea, go ahead.
- A. We had a wonderful hotel there, they had two hotels there. Powells hotel and the Rochester Hotel. Man by the name of Duffey, Duffey's more. . .

Q. Yea.

A. And he was a rich man. He built the department store and he says to the people I'll buy that, now I got you a nice hotel, go ahead and do something with your property. Nobody moves. And as time went on, things got worse on West Main. No business on the street. As far as I'm concerned, I'm doin' a good business down there. I'm established, 61 years. Now let's see.

Q. What were some of the other businesses that were down there besides the hotel and department store?

A. There was millinery store, furniture stores, men's clothing store. There was some saloons. There was, oh, all kinds of stores. Book stores, glove store, an appliance store. You name it and I can name you. . . they're all there.

Q. Why do you think they started to. . . to close up and. . . did they move up Main Street?

A. Some of them did. Some of them went out of business. Some of 'em died. And so on. West Main isn't a business street anymore.

Q. No.

A. When they in the city, started it, one day took that bridge off. . .

Q. By front street there?

A. Yea, you know there's was stores there all the way up, they opened up, so divided the streets. State Street was a good business street at one time. And that in my opinion, that had a lot to do with it.

Q. That was there at the Four Corners?

A. What?

Q. The Four Corners was. . . was the . . .

A. Separated at Four Corners, West and East Main.

Q. Right, yea.

A. Only thing that remains on the West Side was the. . . the Conti Building, City

- A. (Continued) Hall, they. . . whatever they call that building where they had court houses and that. . .
- Q. Yea.
- A. But the lawyers, but as far as businesses, retail businesses, nothing.
- Q. Who. . . who were the clientele that came down?
- A. Hmm?
- Q. Who were the clientele that came down? Who were the shoppers?
- A. On West Main?
- Q. Yea. Just everyone?
- A. No, some people don't care for the department stores, you know, they have their own little people that they know, storekeeper know them, they know just what they need, what their needs are. And then they used to have two railroad stations, B&O and Pennsylvania Railroad.
- Q. Oh, so there was a. . . a. . . a station down there as well?
- A. Rail station. And people used to come in from the country towns and. . . and some of 'em shop there, all over.
- Q. When would you say this started to change?
- A. Oh I would say it started changing about 19. . . about 1924, '25.
- Q. Oh so right in the peak of. . .
- A. Yea. Duffey-Powers had to go out of business. Duffey, he was called Duffey and Macinerny. Well Duffey supplied the money his son took over and had the business was there, the building was there, beautiful building. And his son was a very fine gentleman, a lawyer, he didn't know anything about the business. He had to hire people, rob him half of the time. So he finally had to close up.
- Q. Were there a lot of Jewish storekeepers down there or was it. . . ?
- A. A lot of Jewish merchants, yes.

Q. A lot of Jewish merchants.

A. There were quite a few. I could name some, you probably about a . . . at least a half a dozen Jewish stores down there.

Q. Who, for example, offhand?

A. There was a hat store. There was a woman had a clothing store there. There was a book store, Goldstein had it down there. Keating had a betting place. Shoe store. All Jewish merchants.

Q. Well what would be the difference for example between a Jewish merchant on West Main and one on Joseph Avenue? Was there a difference?

A. No.

Q. It would just be the kind of business they had or. . .?

A. They were on West Main and then there was Jews on. . . on Joseph Avenue. Joseph Avenue was a good business street.

Q. A wealthy business street?

A. Huh?

Q. Fairly wealthy or prosperous?

A. Some of them just made 'em busy, some of them weren't very good. You had people comin' in from all over. I say, it was a well-organized street.

Q. How about the organization on West Main Street, the Chamber of Commerce? Was there anything comparable to . . .?

A. The Chamber of Commerce? You mean decide to bring West Main back? We had Rochester Savings Bank, they had an organization. I know I belonged to it. But I told 'em then, it started about middle thirties, pay five dollars every year in dues. We have meetings. I told 'em then I says, you'll never get West Main Street back to where it belongs because you waited too long, there's nothing we can do. Oh, yes we can. Well they never succeeded.

Q. Did. . . did they ever try using the city politics to help West Main get back,

- Q. (Continued) you know the Wards? Or the . . . the bosses, did they. . .?
- A. Tried everything, they couldn't succeed. It was gone for. . . they might as well have been in Batavia than on West Main.
- Q. I wonder if the Depression had a major affect on it?
- A. Huh?
- Q. Do you think the Depression had a major impact on. . .?
- A. No, it had nothing to do with West Main.
- Q. It had been. . . it had started a decade before?
- A. Yes. Had nothing to do with West Main.
- Q. Then by the 1940's East Main Street was already built up?
- A. It was built up before that.
- Q. Most of the businesses went to East Main at the time of the big fire they had.
- Q. In. . . in the Reynolds Arcade?
- A. Sibley got burned out.
- Q. Sibley's.
- A. McCurdy just started. That was in 1906, '05 or '06. I was there and I saw the fire there. Reynolds Building got all burned out. Was a fireproof building. But the whole store, everything, burned out. Next to that was two department stores. They got burned down, they tore down. Then afterwards, then after Edwards built up department store and Sibley. . . well, Sibley was closed, building. . . McCurdy got a head start. See they. . . they wouldn't buy Christmas there. I remember McCurdy. And of course the rest of department stores never opened up again. Then Reynolds come and a very prosperous department store, good store too. But when they opened up the. . . the shopping center. . .
- Q. Midtown?
- A. McCurdy was there. . .
- Q. Midtown?

A. Midtown. That ruined Edwards.

Q. Yea, yea.

A. Not only ruined Edwards, but everybody on the block.

Q. Yea.

A. None of the stores doin' right. . . McFarlin's had to move out, National was still there.

Q. How about down where the expressway is now? You know, in the Third Ward, around Troop Street?

A. What?

Q. Around Troop Street and up Plymouth Avenue there? Was that. . . was that all part of the residential area that people used to come down and shop or. . .?

A. That was a residential area. They had some good . . . what do you call it. . . buildings there.

Q. What were there trolleycars or busses running?

A. Huh?

Q. Busses that came downtown?

A. I came on a street. . . trolley. I don't remember just when they . . . the busses started. First they started electric busses, they worked on the same order as the trolley did, had the wire. And then the busses start. Not too long ago.

Q. Yea. How about Front Street? Were there a lot of saloons down there?

A. What's that?

Q. Were there a few saloons on Front Street?

A. Front Street had secondhand stores, saloons, bums.

Q. Any Jewish bums?

A. Bums?

Q. Jewish bums?

A. No.

Q. Kosher. . . was there a kosher butcher there?

A. On Front Street?

Q. Yea.

A. They didn't sell kosher meat, yea Bersky's had a market there. That was a chicken store there you know, sell live chickens.

Q. Kosher? Jewish?

A. They were Jewish store but they didn't . . . they sold live chickens.

Q. Chickens.

A. You take 'em home. Or if you wanted 'em killed I guess they could do that too. There. . . years ago there was a haymarket down there, before the automobile came.

Q. Let's see. Well what have. . . what have been some of the changes in that area around the photo studio? When R.I.T. . . . let's see, R.I.T. moved out.

A. Yea.

Q. What was . . . was that a . . . ?

A. They're still in existence today on the corner of Main and Fitzhugh, Duffey-Powers department store was.

Q. Oh, that was the corner where the Duffey-Power. . .

A. Yea.

Q. I see. Now it's the Mariner House. Now it's a . . .

A. That's the hotel.

Q. That's the hotel. OK. Then would you say. . . when. . . when business started picking up again right like in the mid-thirties? In the mid-1930's?

A. Right after Roosevelt got elected.

Q. And. . . and all the way through the Second World War then was that hard times again?

- A. No. Everybody wanted to work could get a job.
- Q. What. . . whose pictures do you take down there? Mostly whoever?
- A. Whose pictures?
- Q. Yea.
- A. I take the poorest people and the richest people and all people that you know about. Mr. Sibley, Mrs. Sibley, Hanson the musician, all the Hickocks used to come in to my place. There was. . . I had all kinds of business down there.
- Q. Were those individual portraits?
- A. Yes. Election did a lot of my portraits on the. . . in the newspapers.
- Q. Oh, they go in the newspaper?
- A. Yea.
- Q. Was this always a one-newspaper city? Gannett?
- A. No. When I was a boy I sold newspapers. We had Democrat & Chronicle, Morning Herald. They had Union Advertiser. They had the Times. Then we had the Post Express. He was. . . Post regulation was he was running it. No Gannett didn't come in here until, oh I would say around the thirties. Not. . . not much. . . not much before that. I can't just remember.
- Q. You think he's a pretty. . . pretty fair press or. . .?
- A. Hmm?
- Q. Is it a pretty fair press? Fair press?
- A. What?
- Q. A fair press or is he . . . is he opinionated, the Gannett press do you think?
- A. Gannett paper is all right, good paper. He tried to run for president one time.
- Q. Gannett did?
- A. Yes, he didn't get nominated. I think that was in the forties. He had his headquarters in Philadelphia. I happened to be in Philadelphia at the time and I stopped in the hotel where his headquarters were.

Q. Did he have a lot of . . . was he a Republican or a Democrat? Republican?

A. Republican.

Q. He couldn't get a big enough organization behind him?

A. Well, he didn't get nominated, he didn't get first . . . first backing.

Q. But would he have been running against Roosevelt anyhow?

A. That was before Roosevelt.

Q. In the forties?

A. I think it was in the thirties.

Q. In the thirties?

A. Yea.

Q. OK. How about . . . how about the 1964, the riots? Remember the riots?

A. Sure.

Q. Did that have any impact on . . . on where your business was?

A. They were on the Third Ward, didn't affect my business. They start on Joseph Avenue and then went to Third Ward. They got the militia out here. I don't know the kids, break in, take it or the State Militia while they were here.

Q. Were you suprised at that black community got so upset?

A. Sure everybody was suprised.

Q. No one had expected it to . . . to . . .?

A. Nobody expected it. Just my opinion.

Q. How about Sol Alinsky? Do you have an opinion on Sol Alinsky?

A. Who?

Q. Do you remember Sol Alinsky when he came in after the riots and tried to organize the black community?

A. Yea. I know. . . I remember that, yes. Well I don't know what the people thought of him. I didn't think much of him.

Q. Even though there were so many Jewish shops that were destroyed during the

Q. (Continued) riots. . .

A. Yes. . .

Q. . . . do you think that there was anything special between blacks and Jews? That they were specially angry at the Jews? Or do you think that it was just the fact that they happened to be the shop owners?

A. Well, they start comin' in, there was quite a few colored people there in the neighborhood. Why I don't know why they started the riots.

Q. Then after that it was just. . . it just blew up.

A. They just started the riot, they wanted to rob the stores and they succeeded too.

Q. Yea.

A. Oh, that was awful.

Q. Yea. There was a curfew then. There was a curfew.

A. Huh?

Q. A curfew?

A. Yes.

Q. And. . .

A. Militia was there a long time.

Q. OK. Maybe we'll go back a few years. Did you ever go to hear Emma Goldman when she spoke in Rochester?

A. I did.

Q. What. . . what did she used to talk about?

A. I heard her once. She was in Russia and she came back, and she was against Russia.

Q. This was after she came back, after the Revolution?

A. Yea. She always spoke on North Clinton Street and there must have been a dozen policemen in the hall.

Q. They were expecting a . . .

A. They didn't know what to expect. She was deported, you know.

Q. No, where did. . . I didn't know that.

A. McKinley got killed.

Q. Yea.

A. And the World's Fair in 1901 or '02.

Q. Yes.

A. And the Polish men killed the President. He was a follower of Miss Emma Goldman. And he said she was the cause of his going crazy and killing McKinley.

Q. Oh.

A. She wasn't a citizen. They finally got something on her so they deported her. I knew her brother. I knew her nephew.

Q. Does she still have family left in Rochester?

A. What's that?

Q. Does she still have family left in Rochester?

A. Oh, I imagine so.

Q. Who was. . . who was her nephew?

A. He was a doctor. He became a doctor after. . . I don't know where he is now, where he was. He's probably dead too. He was a little older than I was. I was only a youngster when Emma Goldman got deported.

MRS. I going now.

A. All right.

Q. Yea I'll be here awhile.

A. I'll be here too.

MRS. Yea. OK. Bye-bye.

Q. Bye-bye.

A. Bye-bye.

Q. OK. Well. . . go ahead. . .

A. It's the only time I heard her, this one time.

Q. Did she try and organize people into . . . ?

A. Oh, she had a big following. She was an anarchist.

Q. In Rochester she had a following?

A. I don't know if she had any following in Rochester or not. I don't know much about her. All I know is by her name. I knew her family, they were a very respectable family here.

Q. Do you think Rochester was proud of her or. . . ?

A. No.

Q. . . . they were ashamed of her?

A. Of course they were.

Q. She was a rabblrouser.

A. She was.

Q. OK. How about when you came, since you came so early really you came in the 18. . . early 1890's right? 1893?

A. Yea.

Q. Then as immigrants started to come ten years later and twenty years later, you were already settled and. . . ?

A. Yes. They were coming here all the time, the immigrants were comin' in.

Q. Was there a lot of. . . yea, go ahead.

A. Lot of what?

Q. I was gonna say a lot of contact between people as the immigrants came in?

A. No.

Q. Each wave that came. . .

A. Each one had their own friends, family you know and they were all poor, they seemed to get along all right. They never had to go through welfare for

A. (Continued) anything.

Q. They. . . yea, go ahead.

A. Maybe one or two Jewish families had to go, but you took care of your own people.

Q. The Hebrew. . . was there the Hebrew . . . the Hebrew Loan Society, the immigrant bank?

A. It was just a small society, the most they could loan somebody would be \$10 or \$15 to carry 'em over for a while. No big loan society here.

Q. Yea. Did you . . . did you know how to speak Yiddish? Do you speak Yiddish?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. And read Yiddish?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you used to get the Yiddish papers?

A. No.

Q. In. . . in Europe. . . between you and your brothers and sisters, did you speak in English or in Yiddish when you were growing up?

A. Spoke English and Yiddish.

Q. And Yiddish.

A. After a short time we didn't speak it . 'Course my younger brother and sister were little when we came over here.

Q. Did anyone ever think of going back among the Jewish community?

A. Yes once in a while somebody'd go back. I had a cousin came here and he wanted to go back.

Q. Why? Because things were too hard here or. . .?

A. Or his family was there, he wasn't doin' as well as he thought he was and he went back.

Q. How about, were people ever deported because they came over illegally?

A. Hmm?

Q. Did . . . did the government ever send Jews back to Europe because they came over illegally? You know. . . ?

A. This government?

Q. Yea.

A. Not that I know of.

Q. 'Cause later there was a quota, you know. After. . . after 1908. . . after. . .

A. Well, then they couldn't come here if there was a quota.

Q. Yea. Did you feel as if America was friendly. . . friendly to the immigrants? Or was it just the Jews who had been here longer that really welcomed?

A. Well, the government was very friendly. I'm not talkin' about the people, but the government was.

Q. In terms of schools and different officials and. . . ?

A. Well, the schools. . . if you had kids and you want to send 'em to schools, they didn't get any special classes or privileges, they went to school.

Q. Or. . . or different bureaucrats, you mean? The government was . . .

A. I can't tell you. All I know every Jew came over the government didn't treat 'em bad.

Q. Yea.

A. Treated 'em the same as any other immigrant.

Q. Yea. OK. I wanted. . . last time when we were talking you. . . you told me your sister, is that Tillie Rose? Is that. . . is that your sister?

A. That was my sister-in-law.

Q. Oh, your sister-in-law, who was active in early years of Zionism? Of Hadassah?

A. Yes.

Q. Is taht right? Can. . . can you tell me anything more about those. . . her activities or about your wife's activities in Zionism in the earlier years?

A. Yes, they all worked for Zionism.

Q. When was this? Say, back in the 1930's? Before the Depression?

A. Before. . . before the thirties. Long before.

Q. What were some of the activities that they used to. . . to have?

A. Had organizations. They paid dues. Had to pay \$6 a year I guess. And then they. . . they had activities for Hadassah. They'd have and raise so much money and send it to Hadassah.

Q. Always to Palestine? The money went to Palestine? Let's see. Well, what. . . were those the only. . . was that the major activities then was fundraising? Was it. . . was there also speeches and social activities or. . .?

A. There was no social activity about it. What money they could raise they send it.

Q. Do you think most of the women in Rochester. . . was it a large organization?

A. They were all in Hadassah as far as I know. Every woman that I knew was in Hadassah or Pioneer Women. They all worked for the same cause. They were the ones that built the hospital there in Israel long before Israel got. . . got to be Israel.

Q. Was your wife active in Hadassah all. . . all her life?

A. Yes, yes she was.

Q. You. . . you've travelled to Israel haven't you?

A. Huh?

Q. You've been to Israel? Have you travelled to Israel?

A. Yea, I was there.

Q. Once?

A. Once. 1965 I went with Ann. She worked. . . she was in school in England. I met her there and we went to London and there. We were in Paris, Italy, I liked Italy very much. I liked Israel.

Q. Was Israel what you expected it to be?

A. I didn't know what I expected. All I know when I got there I couldn't get hardly anybody to speak Yiddish with me.

Q. To speak Yiddish?

A. Yes.

Q. What did they speak? Hebrew?

A. Hebrew. Or French.

Q. But not Yiddish?

A. Not Yiddish. Maybe some people did there.

Q. Would you call yourself a Zionist?

A. Well, I don't see why I couldn't call myself that.

Q. Have. . . have you ever been active in. . . ?

A. I haven't been active in any public organizations.

Q. OK. I just wondered. I wondered whether living in America has changed your allegiance to Judaism or had made you more Zionist and not. . . having lived in America?

A. Well, there was no . . . no.

Q. No.

A. You mean if I'd a been in a different country?

Q. Had you stayed in. . . in Poland or?

A. They never wanted to help the Jews.

Q. Yea.

A. We were all good Americans as far as that's concerned.

Q. You know because some. . . some people, I mean like, even Debbie for example who. . . who moved to Israel for a while, some people would have more feeling. And you just wonder what it is that motivates them, you know?

A. 'Course we had no country when I was small. They had nothing to look forward

- A. (Continued) to. The . . . the religion is changing now. They're all goin' back to the Orthodox.
- Q. Do you think so?
- A. I know so.
- Q. Why do you think that is?
- A. I don't know.
- Q. Even the Reform temple's becoming more Orthodox in its own way.
- A. Yes. Well the Orthodox Jews wasn't very inviting for the young people. It wasn't even up-to-date, you know what I mean? And if you worked on Saturday you was out, see? And then we rebuild again. That's what I would say. We got away from the religion. And some way or other it's comin' back now. I can't tell you why. Orthodoxy was on the way out, now they're comin' back.
- Q. Yea. I know. You're not the only one who's said that, that's what most people have been saying and been telling me that. You know, the St. Regis Street Shul is more Orthodox than Beth Sholom and growing and, you know, people are more enthusiastic about religion.
- A. It was all Orthodox until Beth El bought that place down on Park Avenue. Then they got Conservative. And by that time the Temple B'rith Kodesh kept on changing too. The German Jews were walking away from it.
- Q. Coming back to Beth El?
- A. No, gettin' away from Jewishness.
- Q. Altogether.
- A. Some Reform even.
- Q. Yea.
- A. There was nobody but German Jewish that was on that temple that time.
- Q. Did you ever consider joining B'rith Kodesh later? Later on?

A. I didn't consider changing my temple, but I had no objection to belong to B'rith Kodesh. I just soon belong there as went to Beth El.

Q. Beth El. Yea. OK. I'm gonna change the tape.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE A

Interview with JACOB RAPPAPORT  
August 5, 1976  
By Nancy J. Rosenbloom

Interview II  
Tape I  
Side B

Q. OK. This is Side B. Today is August 5 and this is Nancy Rosenbloom interviewing Mr. Rappaport. I know one thing I wanted to ask you, when did you get your first. . . buy your first automobile?

A. 1917.

Q. 1917?

A. Yea.

Q. Were. . . you were among the first to have a car or. . . ?

A. No. Quite a few had automobiles.

Q. Did people drive them downtown or drive them out to Charlotte or. . . ?

A. Drive anywheres they wanted to, there was no. . . no stop signals, no nothing. No electric. . . no lights.

Q. Wasn't that dangerous?

A. Hmm?

Q. Wasn't that dangerous?

- A. Yes. I drove an automobile in 1911. An uncle of mine bought a . . . an old Cadillac. It had a cranker. They couldn't drive it, so I come down there lots of times and I drive it. . . so I drove an automobile. When I was a boy I had . . . drive a horse. And I knew the roads and everything. And when I bought my automobile my brother-in-law, Dave Burger, Emily Rose's brother, he lived with me. He says to me, he says, when you come to a cross. . . a cross and you see somebody coming against you fast see, don't try to pass him, it turns . . . See, I remember that.
- Q. Oh.
- A. First time I saw signal was in the . . . early in the twenties, '19 or '20. I was going through Charlotte Springs. I had to go through. . . oh, no I think it was the corner of . . . anyway I was in Albany and I'm drivin' down Albany, the capital, still down there, going down. And I'm driving down I see a red change to green and I . . . I went through that, see. And I was wondering what the hell that was. So I stopped a policeman there I saw, I called him over, and I says to him, what's this mean? He says where are you from? Rochester. Oh, you're not from Albany, no. Don't you have signals? I says no. So he explained me what it was. I said nothing there.
- Q. Oh. That's funny. I. . . I wondered, you know. because downtown has undergone so many changes with expressway and with automobiles. So I was just trying to think of the different. . . the impact of . . . of the automobile. Whether maybe, is that when suburban plazas. . . ?
- A. As far as I'm concerned, I think Rochester went through a lot of changes for the worse, not the better.
- Q. What. . . what would be one of those changes?
- A. They still have big trucks going through Main Street.
- Q. Yea.

A. Wish they'd build that hub then we wouldn't have that.

Q. Yea.

A. And they tore down so many houses and stores to build roads. Seems funny, they ruined a lot of sections.

Q. That started. . . that started many years ago?

A. Huh?

Q. That trend started many years ago?

A. Yes.

Q. Who do you think some of the people were behind those changes? Were they. . . were they powerful . . . I mean do you think that was politics involved in that?

A. There was some politics involved, I don't know what they were. All I know they did ruin a lot of things that they did I sensed was foolish.

Q. Yea. Bad planning. No planning.

A. They . . . Water Street was a good business street. Front Street was a good business Street. Mills Street was a good business street. They killed them all.

Q. Yea.

A. They killed that building down on Main and Plymouth, put the hub through, they threw away a lot of stores, lot of apartments. They killed the stakes there.

Q. Were there ever people living. . . living down there, intermingled in?

A. There was nothing but houses on Plymouth Avenue South. There was a big apartment, seven story apartment I think it was. And all of that was. . . was either remodeled to small apartments or big homes. That was all the way. And they tore everything down.

Q. I wonder if there were. . . that was never a Jewish neighborhood though?

A. Never.

Q. Never. How about when you moved onto Benton Street? Was that a half and half?

Q. (Continued) Half Jewish, half Gentile?

A. No. Very few Jews.

Q. Very few Jews. Did you have Gentile friends? Neighbors that were friends?

A. Some were good neighbors and some were friends, some were anti-Semitic. Who the hell knows?

Q. Yea. Did Ben. . . was Benton Street ever . . . did it ever become a Jewish neighborhood? Around Benton Street?

A. Yea, right now.

Q. Oh, now it is?

A. It's . . . all that street. . . lot of Jewish there. Field Street, Benton Street, all those streets.

Q. Oh, I didn't know that. All right.

A. And Addis Street. Right up the road, Courtland Terrace. Yea.

Q. You know they put a yeshiva up there. Did you see the yeshiva?

A. I know where they put it.

Q. Up on Pinnacle.

A. Yea, that's right.

Q. Do you think Rochester needed a yeshiva?

A. I couldn't express my opinion on that.

Q. Opinion, yea. OK.

A. There are lots of things that I couldn't. . .

Q. Yea. How about some of the changes on Park Avenue, 'cause you lived off Park Avenue for a long time too?

A. Well, there was a lot of Jewish families then. When Beth El moved out most of the families started movin' out too. There was . . . when I lived on Goodman Street, there was about six, seven families on the street there.

Some of 'em lived off of the side streets, Holland Street, Meigs Street, Vick

- A. (Continued) Park. Had about four families there at that time. Now I think. . . I don't know as any families left on Vick Park, Jewish families.
- Q. For a while Park Avenue was a hippie land.
- A. Hmm?
- Q. Remember when Park Avenue was a hippie district? For the beatniks? Beatnik types? Maybe hippies?
- A. No. No hippies.
- Q. Not on Vick Park Street, but off Park Avenue.
- A. No, no hippies.
- Q. No? Now they have all sorts of small shops there.
- A. They always had small shops.
- Q. They. . . yea, it's. . . it's changed. I think it's changed a little bit though.
- A. Not an awful lot.
- Q. Not an awful lot? Why? It was the same type of small supermarkets and shoe stores and. . .?
- A. Oh, sure.
- Q. Small stores. Do you think that's a good business neighborhood?
- A. Well, the Star Market is doin' a big business.
- Q. If somebody was going to open a book store, where do you think the. . . the best. . . Park Avenue? Do you think a book store would go off Troop Street there?
- A. No, I wouldn't say that. In fact, it could go on a more business street than Park Avenue. Monroe Avenue'd be a better store.
- Q. Monroe would be better? Do you think that Third Ward area will ever be renovated? Do you. . . do you know they're trying to renovate the Third Ward? Clean up the houses in the Third Ward? And make. . . make it a business area?

A. It was a business area.

Q. They're tryin' again today. Do you think it'll work?

A. No.

Q. Too many people already moved away?

A. I don't think it'll work in the city anymore. They can throw houses down, they can put houses up in just a day.

Q. Yea. Oh, I know. I was going to ask you something before. You told me last time you had a cottage in Charlotte?

A. Yea.

Q. Did you have that all the time? For a long time?

A. Oh, I had it for about nine . . . seven years.

Q. Were . . . again, were there many Jews that had cottages down there?

A. Living there?

Q. What did you used to live there during the summer? Part of the summer?

A. Yea, just a sprinkle of Jews there.

Q. Again, was there any special anti-Semitism or . . . Not really.

A. Not so much. Kind of wore off by that time.

Q. When was that that you had the cottage?

A. In the twenties. I think I got it in '21 or '22. I had no trouble there at all.

Q. Did . . . did you ever send Lester to camp? To . . . to . . .

A. Yea, Lester went to camp. . . Rosen's camps at the Adirondacks one time, one year. He went to . . . I thought you wanted to know about the Jews in Rochester?

Q. The reason I asked about camp is, I interviewed Robert Berman. . .

A. Yea. . .

Q. . . . who told me about the beginnings of Aaron Rosen's camps.

A. Yea. He'd know.

Q. So that's why I asked about. . .

A. Well, he went to Citizen Military Training Camp in Plattsburg one year.

Q. Oh, oh.

A. But he was. . . sixteen I think he was. They gave him a uniform.

Q. That wasn't a Jewish camp? No.

A. Oh, Jews, no.

Q. No.

A. That was . . .

Q. That was a mili. . . that was a . . .

A. Military training camp.

Q. Camp. OK.

A. I know I called for him. Then the next year he wouldn't go back. Why? They didn't have to do any kitchen duties or anything. Everything was cleaned up. He says I don't want to go back, he says I don't want somebody telling me when I can go to bed and I have to get up.

Q. The JY camp was a little different though, wasn't it, the. . . the. . .

A. Well, they . . . the JY camp wasn't much.

Q. How about down in Lakeville?

A. What?

Q. Wasn't it down in Lakeville?

A. Wasn't much of a camp.

Q. But then later Aaron Rosen. . .

A. Aaron Rosen went in business for himself and he bought a camp. Had one of the nicest camps in New York State. He had over 100 kids there. That was a beautiful place there. He got sick so he couldn't take care of it anymore. And his son took care of it a couple of years. Then he sold it. Oh, it was an old estate, beautiful. Had a lake right in front of the house.

Q. Yea. Was that. . . were there mostly Jewish children that went to that?

A. There were all Jewish children went to his camp. None of the kosher types.

Q. And it. . .it was private, it was not the JY camp?

A. No, it was a private camp.

Q. Yea. I wonder if he was in competition with the JY camp?

A. No.

Q. No?

A. JY couldn't. . . had nothing to do with a camp like that.

Q. His was far better? Far nicer?

A. The camp here isn't bad, but before that they had nothing.

Q. Yea. OK.

A. This camp could be cleaned up a lot too.

Q. Seneca Lake?

A. Yea.

Q. They've left it "primitive"; they've left it rustic. The JY has left that camp rustic. Primitive.

A. Yea.

Q. Have you been down there recently?

A. I was down there when Ann was a counselor there.

Q. Right. Maybe ten years or. . .

A. That was at least 10 years ago.

Q. Yea. OK. I'm sort of skipping around. Here's another question. How about George Eastman? Did you ever meet him or . . .

A. No.

Q. Did he have a reputation around town?

A. Reputation? Well, I wouldn't want to say anything against the man. You remember found the film. . . he was . . . he was a good executive. When he built that house he bought some houses on a back street there for his help. I don't think

- A. (Continued) he cared much for the Jews. He had Jewish people workin' for him. But they were all outstanding professionals.
- Q. Was Garson Meyer, I think. . . ?
- A. Garson Meyer was one of 'em. He's my cousin. Had people from out of the country. By the time he . . . but as far as help was concerned, you know, bench workers, very few.
- Q. Yea.
- A. There wasn't any of 'em had too many. They were all. . . lot of . . .
- Q. Do you think that that Rochester. . . that there's good reason to call Rochester a George Eastman's town or. . .? You know, 'cause people link Rochester only with Eastman Kodak.
- A. Yes, because he's well-known all over the world.
- Q. But do you think Eastman Kodak had the only . . . had. . . had the tremendous influence on the economy of the city?
- A. They had a lot of it, yes. That's why there's so many rich people in Rochester. Become rich with Eastman when he first started.
- Q. How about. . .how about the clothing industry?
- A. Clothing industry was big here at that time. That's how the Jews got jobs. They could get a job in the clothing industry.
- Q. But then the clothing industry, that started dying years ago, didn't it? Or. . .
- A. Yes, quite a number of years ago. And now you don't know who owns. . . there are still some clothing companies here. Those are all out-of-town lines.
- Q. Yea. And now the Jews, you see the Jews. . . there are a lot of Jews at Eastman Kodak now. Don't you think?
- A. What?
- Q. Don't you think there are a lot of Jews at Kodak now?
- A. No.

Q. No, not at. . . still not?

A. No.

Q. Or Bausch and Lomb?

A. No.

Q. OK.

A. There are very few Jews in any factory.

Q. Most of them went from working in shops to a lot of professionals now, you think? Doctors. . .

A. Yea, we got an awful lot of doctors in this city now. Well, the Jewish population kept growing and they started sending their children to college, they became professionals.

Q. Yea. OK. Have you ever. . . oh no, I was going to ask you if you were ever a member of any of the senior citizen groups at the JCC? The JY?

A. Oh, now?

Q. Yea.

A. No, I don't know anyone. I went to dinner about 15, maybe 20 years ago. Had a testimonial dinner for Haskell Marks. I didn't know nobody.

Q. Why? You think they were just a different group of people? Or. . .

A. Different group of people. The older ones dropped out and they don't want us. I didn't know.

Q. Oh, they were younger people?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Or just. . .

A. Just younger people.

Q. People you had never been friends with as. . . as you . . .

A. Never saw 'em before.

Q. Never saw 'em before. Yea. Is. . . Is Haskell Marks passed away?

A. Oh, a long time ago.

Q. Time ago.

A. Haskell was my age.

Q. Well, who were some of the other people that were in your circle of friends?  
You know, their names?

A. That I used to associate with?

Q. Yes. Yea.

A. Yea? Let's see, visit one another and so on? All my age, I was the only one  
left.

Q. Oh. Were they people, for example, that . . . that you'd been friends with  
since the early 1900's?

A. Yes.

Q. And that in the early days had been part of the JY group?

A. That's right.

Q. And most of 'em had stayed in Rochester all through the years?

A. No, some of 'em moved out. What more can you say?

Q. You know, 'cause today one of the things they talk about is how many people  
move all the time and how far children move from their parents and. . .

A. That I wouldn't know.

Q. Yea. And one of the things you wonder is whether Jews have a tendency to stay  
closer with their families or whether they move just as much as anyone? You  
know, it's hard. . . it's hard to . . .

A. Well, I don't know that. Well, my grandson moved out. He's in Syracuse because  
he got a job. . .

Q. A job.

A. If he'd got a job in Rochester, he'd 'a stayed in Rochester.

Q. But of the other grandchildren, Ann is still here.

A. Ann is here. 'Course her husband studied to be a doctor and he could. . .

Q. Stay.

A. . . . go anyplace that he wanted to.

Q. And Jane is here.

A. And Jane is here.

Q. And the two little ones are still here?

A. Hmm?

Q. And then the two younger ones, you don't know where they'll go. It's hard. . . it's a hard thing to measure because you don't know what kind, you know, how to measure it. But that's what sometimes people do, they go through census lists and they look and see how long families have stayed in the same place.

A. I don't know of any difference between Jewish people or Gentiles.

Q. Yea.

A. They go where it's best for them.

Q. Yea. . .

OK. I'm gonna. . .OK. I'm sorry.

A. There wasn't any movies. There was. . . we'd make our own fun. And once a week we'd get to one house, next time to another's house, and so on. People dance once in a while, but otherwise there was nothing. There was no clubs.

Q. Those were in the really early years.

A. Yea, it's a different Rochester now entirely.

Q. And you don't think it's changed for the better? Sometimes the last question I ask people is are you optimistic about the future of Rochester?

A. No.

Q. But I wonder if it would be any different any place else? You know?

A. I don't know.

Q. No one knows.

A. I think it's just the same thing in a lot of cities.

Q. Well there's been a movement out to the suburbs for one thing.

A. Well, golly, but still the Jews stick together. They're on the east side. And some of them are in Irondequoit. You don't find any Jews on the west side.

Q. I think it's 'cause Jews do tend to feel more comfortable around other Jews.

A. Yes.

Q. Even though there hasn't been any anti-Semitism here for. . .

A. Not to speak of.

Q. Not to speak of. For many years, for ten, for twenty years.

A. Mostly we have our temples here, temples in Irondequoit. So why move on the west side?

Q. Yea.

A. Where you don't know anybody.

Q. Yea. What about intermarriage? Do you think intermarriage poses a real problem?

A. You got that?

Q. Yea.

A. Marriage. . . intermarriage is much more now than it used to be.

Q. Yea.

A. I don't know. Some of 'em turn out to be good and some don't.

Q. Yea.

A. I wouldn't trust my judgment on that.

Q. Yea.

A. Personally I think you should marry your own kind.

Q. And certainly for the strength of the Jewish community?

A. Huh?

Q. And for the strength of the Jewish community.

A. No, I don't figure that at all.

Q. You just mean personally. The person is happier.

A. Personally.

Q. Yea.

A. The Jewish community will get along all right. Have some very nice Jews in this. . . in this area. I don't know 'em now, but I never did know 'em. Mostly a lot of nice people here in this city.

Q. Yea. Well.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE B