

A TEI Project

Interview of Marcia Alper

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1. Transcript

1.1. Session One (March 16, 2008)

John

Alright today is March 16th 2008. My name is John Carlton, and we're interviewing Marsha Alper today at her home located at 2286 Lambert Drive in Pasadena, and Marsha as I mentioned, first of all I think we'd like to just get some basic facts about your life, and so I'll work through the pre-interview questionnaire as part of our interview.

Marcia

Right.

John

Alright? So we've got your name, Marsha Alper. Do you have any other names? Your maiden name for instance...

Marcia

My maiden name was Ufland. U-F-L-A-N-D.

John

Alright, and how about your date of birth?

Marcia

11-02-34.

John

And where were you born?

Marcia

Boston.

John

What were your parents' names?

Marcia

Emanuel.

John

One M or two?

Marcia

One M. Nicknamed Bob. That was what he was commonly called. They never used the name Emanuel, and Anne with an E.

John

One N?

Marcia

Two N's.

John

What was your mother's maiden name?

Marcia

Rosenberg.

John

And when was your---where was your father born, do you know?

Marcia

In Minsk. In what was, and I guess it's now again Belarus. He referred to himself as a white Russian. .

John

Yeah. I've always heard the term "White Russians", and until the break up of the Soviet Union I was never quite sure where it was.

Marcia

I think they were as opposed to the Bolsheviks who were red. I'm not really sure though.

John

And where was your mom born?

Marcia

In North Hanover, Massachusetts. I'm laughing because she was...her birth was never recorded. The doctor forgot to record it. So my father who had been born in Russia had papers, and my mother who was born in Boston didn't.

John

Okay, and your...your spouse's name...

Marcia

Marshall Edward.

John

I can't remember. One L or two?

Marcia

Two. One has the star and the---

John

That's right.

Marcia

Born in New York. I think in the Bronx. February 9th 1930.

John

And when were you married?

Marcia

June 7th 1956.

John

Where?

Marcia

In Boston.

John

And can you tell me a little bit about your children. How many do you have?

Marcia

We have four children. The oldest is Ian...deliberately mispronounced. I-A-N.

John

And what's his age?

Marcia

Forty-seven, and he lives in Sta. Cruz.

John

Where was he born?

Marcia

He was born here in L.A.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Second child is Robin, born in Washington, D.C.

John

About when?

Marcia

February 27, 1963. Ian was September 13th 1960.

John

Okay, and where does Robin live now?

Marcia

Robin lives in Orange County.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Julia Lynn, born August 7th 1965, living currently in Boston while she attends school.

John

Where was she born?

Marcia

L.A.

John

and---

Marcia

Sharon Amy born April 27th 1967 in L.A., currently living in Seattle. I think it's the switch. It seems to be---yeah.

John

This is touchy

Marcia

Yeah I'll have to...I wasn't sure if it was the lamp, the switch or the plug, but today it's obviously the switch, so...

John

Yeah. It's not sticking. Oh well.

Marcia

Sorry.

John

Okay, education. High school---when did you graduate from high school?

Marcia

I graduated in 1952 from the Jeremiah E. Burke High School for Girls.

John

There's not quite enough space for (LAUGHING). In Boston?

Marcia

In Roxbury, which is part of Boston.

John

And how about college?

Marcia

Simmons College---two M's. Class of '56, and I put it that way because graduation actually was not until the following January because physical therapy students had to stay an extra six months.

John

And what degree?

Marcia

Bachelor of Science.

John

In anything in particular?

Marcia

In Physical Therapy.

John

Any other degrees?

Marcia

No.

John

Okay, and there's three lines for employment here...(LAUGHING)

Marcia

I was a staff physical therapist and supervisor at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in L.A., and then I was home for many years---

John

What was the time period of that?

Marcia

March '57 to August '60.

John

Okay.

Marcia

And I went back to work in October '77 for Farmer Brothers Coffee in their office Coffee Service Division as an outside sales rep at a time when very, very few women were working in that position and working in commission-only jobs, and then I don't have the exact dates---1980, somewhere on January, February 1980 until December '83 I was an executive recruiter.

John

Til when in '83?

Marcia

December.

John

And did you work at Farmer Brothers until...until you went there?

Marcia

Right.

John

Okay.

Marcia

And then from July of '84 til December of '96 I was part-time pharmaceutical sales representative.

John

For which company?

Marcia

It was for a company called MMD which supplied part-time sales reps to various pharmaceutical companies on an as-needed basis for relatively short-term, and relatively is accurate, my last company was five years with the same company. Others were much shorter duration.

John

Alright. Is that it?

Marcia

That's it.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Checkered career. (LAUGHING)

John

And what year did you move to the L.A. area?

Marcia

I moved out here in February of '57.

John

And we'll get back to that in detail---

Marcia

Okay.

John

Later on. And at that time did you move to the Pasadena area or---

Marcia

No. No...Mickey had moved out here in October of '55 to go to work for JPL, and I---when I took the job at Cedar's we only had one car so we lived in that area of I guess it's Hollywood, L.A. so that I could walk to work, and I worked there til as I said, August 1960, and then Ian was born in September of 1960. In the Spring of '61 we moved to D.C. Mickey was part of a team that had been sent back to work with NASA on early Apollo project, so we moved back to D.C., and that's why Robin was born there and then came back here in September of '63. Knowing that we would eventually be living up here, we settled here. In October of '63 we bought our first house.

John

And what year did you join PJTC.

Marcia

Well that's interesting. I meant to do this before, and I'm sorry. It won't take long. I don't want to waste the tape. I came across these recently. These are High Holiday tickets, Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center 1958, 1959. I don't know if these are---

John

Why don't we kill the tape.

Marcia

Okay. I didn't know if you would want these for any kind of archival material.

John

Yeah I would think that would be---

Marcia

I didn't even realize I had them.

John

I noticed they don't have the little push-down tabs.

Marcia

No. No, Mickey came up with those by the way.

John

Oh really?

Marcia

Yes that was his idea because we used to sit in the lobby and have desks, and as you---we sit there with alphabetical signs in front of us, and as you came in you were to pick up your envelope, and we were tired of the people who just walked past us. So Mickey says, let's make it so they can't ignore us, and we put it on the ticket. So we were here '58-'59. I would assume

also '60. We still lived in Hollywood at the time so we only came up here for the services...not...

John

You mean for the High Holidays?

Marcia

For the High Holidays. I don't remember much else about it, you know, our attendance.

John

And then you moved back to D.C.

Marcia

Right, and then we re-joined the Temple in '64, September '64, having moved back here the previous Fall.

John

And---

Marcia

And I must say by the way, when we joined nobody noticed, and when we left nobody noticed. It always kind of amused me when I see what we do now with welcoming letters---

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Overloading people with paperwork and welcoming phone calls and follow-up interviews when you leave.

John

But I suppose you didn't really expect that back then, or did you?

Marcia

I had no idea then what to expect having personally joined another synagogue so I didn't know what to expect, but it did kind of amuse me. We also, when we first joined, the dues for us was \$50 because Mickey was under 30.

John

Fifty dollars?

Marcia

Fifty dollars.

John

Times have changed.

Marcia

Yes.

John

Any other Jewish organizations that you've been a member of?

Marcia

As an adult or ever?

John

Well let's stick with adult.

Marcia

Okay.

John

We'll get back to the other stuff.

Marcia

Mostly women's---well Sisterhood at the Temple, and then through Sisterhood, Women's League for Conservative Juniors which is the umbrella organization for the Conservative Sisterhoods, and I've been involved with them...I don't remember the first year I was on the board, but probably mid-70's, and except for the few years when I was the executive recruiter in an office where I couldn't leave to go for meetings, I've been involved with them pretty regularly and have been a board member and a vice-president in a number of positions.

John

Okay. So that sort of finishes the questionnaire part of things, and let's move now into the sort of topical interview. And I'd like to talk now, just about your Jewish background a bit and about your parents, your family life, and stuff like that. First of all, what can you tell us about how your parents came to this country.

Marcia

Well, my mother you know was born here.

John

Yes. Okay.

Marcia

My grandfather, my father's father was a wanderer, and the family legend is that he left the house in Russia one day to get either a collie or a newspaper, depending on who's telling the story, and six months later his wife got a letter saying come and bring the children, I'm in America. I have no idea how much basis of truth there is except that he did in fact come to America. I don't know where he landed. I think it was 1888, and I believe they went to Albany, New York. I have no idea why. He was a tailor. There were a number of children born there who died. He stayed long enough to become an American citizen, and then either because America wasn't the golden Medinah that he thought it would be, the golden state, or because he was concerned that he wanted my father to be bar mitzvahed in Russia---didn't think that he could get that in Albany, the family went back to Russia by way of Scandinavia. He told me that once. And then at some point decided he still didn't like Russia so he went to London, where I think they had some family members living. He apprenticed as a wood carver.

John

We're still talking about your grandfather?

Marcia

No my father, I'm sorry.

John

Oh okay.

Marcia

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. My grandfather moved the family to London, and he had a tailor shop there. My grandmother apprenticed her sons, three of them as a woodcarver, and one of them---I don't know why---as an upholsterer, and my father later moved to Paris, worked on the Notre Dame cathedral and married there. Married a Jewish woman named Therese Nathanson and had a child, Maurice or Maurice. When the War broke out in 1914, America made the offer that any citizen could come back to America. They had ships, you know, would take them back, and my father took advantage of his father's being a naturalized citizen.

John

So during the time period that they were living in Albany, your grandfather--
-

Marcia

Had stayed there---I'm sorry---had stayed there long enough to become a naturalized citizen.

John

But your father at that point had not---

Marcia

He was derivatively a naturalized citizen on his father's papers. So he and his wife---I think he came earlier, from Ellis Island records that I've seen, and I think the wife and son came a few months later, and they went to Boston because she had family there.

John

So this is around the 1914 time?

Marcia

1914, 16 something like that. They lived in Boston. Oh, in 1919 she died in the flu epidemic, and my parents were married I believe in 1923. I'd have to look that up.

John

Do you remember when your father was born?

Marcia

They didn't know. They really never knew. The date---he took the date of April first, and---

John

Of which year?

Marcia

It was either '85 or '86. My mother found after he died another insurance statement or something that had a different date, but they really didn't pay much attention to that, and I know that many of them in my mother-in-law's case especially. They would lie about their ages. The child was younger to get milk, older to get a job. So they really didn't know, and my mother made up her birthday also. She was six weeks old when her father's leg was

amputated. It was so and so related to Passover, and so she picked March 14th.

John

So they moved to Boston because---

Marcia

Because Therese...

John

His first wife's family was there.

Marcia

Yeah Therese had family there, and my father worked as a woodcarver, and then he married my mother. My brother Maurice, my half-brother, was I think nine when they were married. So I think they were married in '25. I think something like that. I'd have to look. I've got all the dates that I don't know of yet. He would stay as a woodcarver until the Depression when that job evaporated.

John

And what kind of projects did he work on as a woodcarver?

Marcia

They did a lot of church work, and they did a lot of furniture. He--- unfortunately carvers don't usually sign their work. Although my sister and I did find in a library in Medford, outside of Boston, a wall like a bar relief, framed, a carving of ships that had been going into and out of Medford Harbor at a particular time. I guess it was a shipping area, and so there was this bar relief in wood of I think five ships, and that has my father's name on it. So I asked the librarian at the time if I could buy it. He became extremely offended and upset with me because apparently it was done under the WPA projects. Remember the WPA was sponsoring artists, and so therefore it belonged to the American people and would take an act of Congress. So I have no idea if it is still there. He also worked on the Williamsburg project when Rockefellers began restoring Williamsburg, Virginia, and outside the governor's palace in Williamsburg in the Rose Garden there---I don't know if it still is---was a plaque on the wall in stone telling the story of how they had excavated that area and found coffins, and they decided they were military from the buttons, that it had probably been a military hospital. Nurses and soldiers buttons and insignia they found determined that, and so in commemoration they gave out this commission for somebody to carve this in the stone, in marble, I think Tennessee marble, and my father's boss was given, got the commission and gave the job to my father. The marble was brought into my parents' home, and he worked on it there. He---I guess most woodcarvers didn't also do stone, but he did, and he was working on it when my mother went into labor with me. I was born in the Boston Lying In Hospital, and they wouldn't accept my mother until---Oh she had to have a \$50 deposit, and my dad got an advance on his salary for that stone and brought it to the hospital so they would admit her.

John

Did your mom have any high school---

Marcia

My mother and her sister were very unusual in that they both graduated high school in a small town outside of Boston called Hyde Park, and there were not very many girls at all and not very many Jewish girls who graduated high school at that time. She graduated in 1912, wanted to go to college. Her father said you don't need to go to college to have babies. She tried, and it was physically too difficult for her.

John

I see.

Marcia

She decided that it would be fun to have a store. So after she and my father were married, she took her father's wedding gift---which I think was \$500---and opened a card and gift shop, which the only Jewish merchant in that area called the Square, Madipan Square, and she ran it for almost 40 years and supported a very large family because my father really never worked full-time after the Depression. He went into the store with her.

John

Really.

Marcia

Wood carving never came back so he would have odd jobs. He would---there was a very prestigious and wealthy little town next to us, and there was a private boys' school called Milton Academy, and every year they wood carve on a plaque the name of the boy who was the outstanding scholar or something like that, and that job my father had annually for many years.

John

But other than that he---after the...

Marcia

I don't know of any other jobs. There may have been, but I don't know of any.

John

Now besides your half brother Maurice, did you have any other brothers or sisters?

Marcia

I have three sisters...had three sisters. The oldest two were twins, nine years older than I, then another sister six years older, and then I came along in '34. Not an auspicious time for another child. Besides my brother who was 20, I had a 20-year-old cousin living with us whose father had just died, the man for whom I'm named. He was going to college, so he lived with us, and then my father's brother, wife and two girls came in when he lost his job, and all of these people were supported by my mother.

John

That's rather amazing.

Marcia

Yes.

John

Any of your siblings go onto college?

Marcia

No. No. I am the second one in my generation to have gone to college.

John

Who was the first?

Marcia

The cousin that was in the house.

John

Oh I see yeah. Let's talk a little bit about Judaism when you were young.

Marcia

Well it's kind of interesting. Nobody talked much about what they believed in, or what you observed, or why. It just was. Boston, and probably still today, people live in pockets, and if I know where you come from, I'd pretty much know your ethnicity, your income, your political affiliation, your race. South Boston is Irish, middle to lower class. Italians lived in East Boston. My area was Jewish, not particularly affluent. After the War, if you could afford it you moved to Brookline or Newton. We never made it. So we were in the better part of the wrong side of the tracks. Living in Madipen, the ghetto was Madipen, Dorchester, and Roxbury, and Madipen was kind of the better part. But---so everybody was Jewish. I remember a Chinese laundryman's son in grammar school. Maybe there were other non-Jews. I was not aware of them.

John

And this was true even at school?

Marcia

Oh yeah. That is sort of what I'm talking about, in school. So...so it was Jewish, but levels of observance were very, very varied. People didn't describe themselves as whether they were orthodox...well, everybody was sort of orthodox because there really, locally, was not another choice. There was a conservative temple, where my sisters and I were all married later, that was several miles away, and then there was the reformed, but that was all the way over in Newton. So if you did anything, it was not labeled. I know that many of my friends' homes were not kosher. After the grandmother died, kashrut was often thrown out.

John

How about your family? Were your parents observant?

Marcia

Yes. Yes, and it was very strange. My grandmother was---we lived...we lived in 2-storey homes. Some of the streets had 3-storeys. Ours was two. My aunt, uncle, cousin and grandmother lived on the second floor. My family was in the bottom floor. They owned the house jointly. My grandmother was

very observant. My mother worked on Saturday. My father worked on Saturday, and as you grew up and were old enough to work, you worked on Saturday, but I remember this big age gap between me and my siblings so they were all out, but I couldn't sew. I couldn't knit. I couldn't embroider on Saturday, but every once in a while if there was enough money I was allowed to go to a movie, or my older sisters could go to Woolworth's or go buy records, and it was never defined. We could, in my family---the downstairs family---we could boil an egg on Shabbat but not fry it. My mother felt frying was cooking, but because many people would leave a pot of water boiling on the stove, simmering---

John

So they didn't turn the fire on.

Marcia

They never turned the fire...there is a Yiddish word...I don't know it...for a little plate thing that sat over the grate, and you could put your teapot on that. It was kind of I guess a dispersion...diffusion...

John

Yeah, made of asbestos kind of material.

Marcia

I have no idea.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

But they would put the tea kettle there so that there always was hot water without making a fire. So to her the boiled water---even though we turned it on---wasn't cooking, but taking out a pan to fry an egg was cooking.

John

And no one ever explained how that---

Marcia

No one defined any of this. No. No. I know that my mother would get up in the morning, on Saturday morning, make her breakfast and go to the store. Now if it was not around one of the busy seasons, she wouldn't go in as early. She might not go in til noon. Her mother would walk to the scholl which was two streets away, the orthodox scholl.

John

Do you remember the name of it?

Marcia

Yeah. It was ____ (33:16)---I'll have to ask my sister. I think it's ____ (33:20) Israel or ____ (33:22) Jacob. I'm not sure. On Fesenden Street in Madipan. Annie Chesler by the way was born on the street between Fesenden and my street.

John

Oh really!

Marcia

Yeah she lived there. I don't know if she was born there. When my grandmother came home, she was a very---well when I knew her she was a very tiny woman---she would go up the stairs and then later come down the stairs heavily blowing her nose, clearing her throat. My mother told me this--that was to tell my mother that she was coming, and if you were smoking, put out the cigarette. If you've just heated a cup of coffee, put it away, and the reasoning was if she didn't see this then she didn't have to say anything, but if she saw it she had to tell my mother she was committing a sin. If my mother kept on doing it, my mother would be sinning, but if my grandmother didn't know then nobody sinned. (LAUGHING) My grandmother would come downstairs on a Saturday very often and say to me, "Marsha did you practice today?" because I took piano lessons, and I'd usually have my nose in a book, and I'd say, "No bubby I didn't," and she'd say, "Your mother works very hard for that money. You should practice my kid." Blew my mother's mind and my aunts! Because they were never allowed to touch a piano on Saturday, and my uncle upstairs was not allowed even though he was a trained musician. He was not allowed to play on Saturday. So there were these adaptations I guess. My grandmother as everybody else worried that I was overdoing, and it wasn't healthy for a girl to do as much as I was doing. Believe me, I didn't look like a thin little waif, but they worried because I was going to regular school and piano and Hebrew school, and that might be too much. So one day my grandmother came down. In the seventh grade we started carrying lunch to school, and she said, "So do you have milk?" Oh four glasses of milk a day or your bones are gonna fall on the ground. An immutable rule. So bubby asked me if we had milk at lunch, and I said "Yes we could buy milk, except when I had a meat sandwich," and she thought about it and she said, "Does your mother give you an apple in your lunch?" and I said "Yes." She said, "Okay what you should do is drink the milk, then eat the apple to get the milk out of your mouth and then have your meat sandwich." Because theoretically you can have milk before meat with a certain amount of time in between.

John

Yeah right.

Marcia

And again my mother and my aunt were astounded.

John

So as time went by it sounds like your grandmother got a little more flexible with things.

Marcia

With us. Not in her own apartment where she was living with my aunt. There you had to have---

John

They were kosher?

Marcia

We all were.

John

The whole family was kosher.

Marcia

Absolutely. It was just taken for granted, but she was much more rigid up there. I mean Shabbat candles had to be lit half-an-hour before the time on the calendar. Well, if you were expecting company---

John

Just to be sure?

Marcia

Would you wait for the last minute to be ready? And if the Shabbat queen is coming to your house then you have to be ready a half-an-hour before the expected time, but for us---and I don't know if my sisters had any of these experiences...not that I know of---but I was given this kind of, little bit of hogwash. My mother and father---there was no money to eat out---so that kind of problems with kosher didn't exist, but my mother would go into Boston for the shows...the gift shows for the store where she had to do the buying. So there were occasional meals out, and I remember once going for lunch with her. She took me to the gift show, and we went out, and I remember ordering chicken. Again, nothing was explained. Nothing was laid out, but somehow I knew---and maybe because of what she ordered---

John

Now your parents worked on Saturdays. Did they---

Marcia

And my grandparents worked on Saturdays because my grandfather had had a store...

John

I see.

Marcia

In a non-Jewish neighborhood, so yeah.

John

Did they have Friday night services back then?

Marcia

Not the way they do now.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

The men---the observant men---would go right from work and then come home. Did my parents go? No. No. I never saw kiddish done at home on a Friday night because the store was open until 9 o'clock, and each of us in turn would be given the job of taking their supper down to the store. My aunt would pack it, get it heated up in glass jars if it was soup or containers. No Tupperware. And wrap it all in bath towels and put it in a cloth bag, and you'd go to the corner, get on the street car, go to the store which was I

don't know a couple of miles away, and my parents would eat the supper which would still be warm, and then you'd go back home. So no, we had lit the candles, we girls. My aunt would come downstairs and light them with us, but interestingly enough I never saw this done...never knew about it until I began teaching.

John

Really?

Marcia

Why? I mean we would all stand there---four girls lined up, but in her home she told me she did it. I don't know why. We never covered our head. Well girls I guess, unmarried, didn't have to, but I don't remember my mother covering her head when she was home like in the summer when she didn't have to be in the store as much, but my aunt would have covered her head.

John

What other Jewish holidays did you celebrate in the home? Did you do seders?

Marcia

Oh yes which were really---I look back, and I can't even imagine how they did the work because seder is usually during Easter, Easter week, and Easter week was a big week in the store, and this was as I said a non-Jewish neighborhood where the store was. So Easter was a big time. Seder started at 9:30 probably because the store closed at 9. My aunt would have done most of the cooking. My mother would have helped. The nine of us, my immediate family and my aunt, uncle, and cousin would all sit at the table. My grandmother would sit against the wall in a chair. I have no idea why.

John

Not at the table?

Marcia

I don't know why. I never thought to ask. That's just...that's where bubby sat. Meals were simpler. The seder even was simpler, not as many courses as I do now. I follow my mother-in-law more. We'd have soup. We'd have this very unusual ____ (41:09)---I didn't know they were unusual until I came out here I guess. It's like no one I know makes. They get baked in the oven and cut with a knife and fork. I didn't know from mutzabals that were light and fluffy. So yeah there was a seder, and that was observed, but then again my mother would have had to go through the cleaning out of a house. We didn't do things like the ____ (00:52) and looking around for the condiments (00:54), but we didn't do that. But you knew...when we came home from school for lunch in grammar school, you knew when you opened the door that it was Pesach because the enamel kitchen table and all the shelves in the pantry were re-covered with new oil cloth, and if you've ever seen oil cloth, there's a very distinctive smell.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

And you knew it was Pesach. Dishes were all changed. Pots, pans, 2-dish pans, different dish towels, different ____ (1:35) had a soap, red for ____ (1:35), blue for milk. You can still get those.

John

Soap?

Marcia

To wash the dishes. There was no liquid soap. You had to take a very heavy soap.

John

So different soaps.

Marcia

Yeah because you might have taken the dish cloth and washed...and put it over the soap and then washed a ____ (1:56) dish---

John

I see.

Marcia

So you had a different cake of soap, and you had a different dish pan.

John

And this was just all done. It was just---everyone did it. It wasn't commented on...how all of these different things.

Marcia

No, and I think that probably some of my friends didn't have the dish changing and stuff. I mean I knew that not everybody kept it as strictly as we did, but no---rules were never really explained, if they even thought about them. For instance, when we got married, Mickey and I had to decide because we were keeping a kosher house. We had to decide when Ian came along when could he have a glass of milk or ice cream before he went to bed, and so I would go back and think about my childhood, and if the store closed at 6, my mother would have been home about 6:15. Dinner couldn't have been on the table any earlier than 6:30. You know, even if one of us heated it up. We went to bed fairly early as young children. So if I had a glass of milk, it was probably around 8:30, no three hours, but never explained, talked about, questioned---certainly never questioned.

John

Did your parents subscribe to any Jewish newspapers, or were they involved in any Jewish organizations?

Marcia

Boston had a...no, no Jewish organizations. There wasn't time. Boston had a newspaper, the Jewish Advocate. I don't know when that came into the house. I was not aware of that. My mother by the way would go to shul...my mother and my aunt would go to shul for yizkor (3:40) on the holidays. They of course observed the High Holidays. Okay what else? Hanukkah. And we lit the candles, and we'd have one day for presents which is what I still do.

John

What about your Jewish education?

Marcia

Well that's---there's some questions there that I really can't answer, like why I had one. As I said, all the shuls were orthodox around my area. Further away, there was one street that had a large number of synagogues. They would often be defined by the style...oh by location of the people who went there. There was a Russian Shul. There was a ____ (4:41) Shul or what we would call Habad (4:43) now, but everybody was sort of orthodox. So the problem was that boys went to Hebrew school. There was no such thing as Sunday School except in the reform movement. My twin sisters, my older twin sisters did not go to Hebrew school. The reformed temple in Newton had opened like a satellite Sunday School in a Jewish community center not far from us, and my sisters were sent there---my two sisters. Then, my cousin upstairs and my third sister were I think about a year apart---very, very close. Possibly that's why she was sent to Hebrew school because when he went, she went. She was sick for a year when she was twelve and dropped out of Hebrew school. So maybe because of that I was sent to Hebrew school, because she had done it also. I don't know. I don't remember that. I just know that I went first at the corner of the street there was a house that was a shul. It was called ____ (6:09), and I remember going there for a year for Hebrew school, and then my mother switched me to a Hebrew school about a half a mile away in another orthodox shul. There were some girls in the class, and you went---you wanna tell this to your kids? We went five days a week, Sunday morning, Monday through Thursday afternoon, 4-6 in the afternoon, 10-12 Sunday morning, five days a week, ten hours a week, six years. You started learning the alphabet the first year. At the end of the first year we started reading Genesis, and six years later you had finished Deuteronomy.

John

Boy.

Marcia

I don't remember what else we learned with it.

John

How many girls were---do you remember?

Marcia

No I was trying to think about the other day, and I really---somewhere actually I think I have a picture of that class, and I'll have to go look for that.

John

Now the boys went on to bar mitzvahs. Right? The girls didn't I assume.

Marcia

Yeah. The boys were taken out of class to be taught for bar mitzvah and to be taught things like the kiddish because we weren't going to be taught the

kiddish. We were girls! The other thing that was interesting when you contrast it with today's Hebrew school---we were never taught about Judaism. I don't remember if we learned about the holidays and what you did, probably a little bit. I don't remember that, but nobody talked concepts. Nobody talked practices. It was...

John

It was just assumed that everyone knew that.

Marcia

Exactly, and I didn't realize this until my teenage years when (TELEPHONE RINGS)---I'll let the machine get it---when I went to Hebrew camp, and I learned a lot about Judaism there, but that was when I began to realize that we had never been taught these things in Hebrew school.

John

So basically you learned Hebrew, and you learned the Torah.

Marcia

Not...not to talk it.

John

No, no but to read the Torah and study.

Marcia

You learned to read it. As I say I don't really remember what else we learned. We were also by the way learning Ashkenazi Hebrew, and I remember...I remember when Israel was declared, and of course everybody adored Roosevelt. Those are the things I remember about it.

John

You went to camps?

Marcia

Well, not...not in those years. My mother came home one day when I was probably in the sixth grade of Hebrew school which would have been coinciding with the eighth grade of public school and had been talking to someone who mentioned that there was a Hebrew high school locally in the afternoon, not day school, and she came home and asked if I would like to go, and I had liked Hebrew so I said sure. So from then on, the same way I had paralleled elementary school, I paralleled high school and later college. Hebrew High you went at first 4 to 6, the same five days a week, ten hours a week. By the third year, I think, I'm not sure, you went 14 hours a---no, 12 hours a week. In Hebrew college you went 12 and 14 and 16 hours a week.

John

So---

Marcia

But...but...and it was one building. Same teachers. You started as a freshman in high school, and eight years later if you stayed you graduated with a bachelor's, but they ran a camp---a summer camp program---up in New Hampshire near the University of New Hampshire, I think near Durham. It

was called the ____ (10:25). It was a Hebrew speaking camp, and they offered a junior counselor program when I was ending the tenth grade. For eight weeks, you had to pay I think half the cost of what the regular cost was, and my mother went up to Hebrew school determined that she was only going to be able to pay \$75, no matter what they said. I think they were wanting 300. I'm not sure, but that was all she had, and she was gonna...if they weren't gonna throw me away because she didn't have money, and the head of Hebrew college was a very little man, very soft voice, and he said, "So tell me Mrs. Ufland, how much can you pay?" and my mother said 150. So I went for the eight weeks, and that really was---I don't even know how to explain it---but it solidified Judaism for me. We did have classes in the morning, but that was more of the same of school, but somehow that experience---that's where I learned grace after meals...the ____ (11:54). I didn't even know Jews did that. We had morning services every day. I, okay, did those, but somehow that gave me a foundation that I've really carried with me. It...somehow when you're---I don't know how to explain this---when you're living something, especially as a child, you don't always notice it, and you don't analyze it. You don't even understand it, but as a teenager, seeing the customs that I didn't---I didn't know for instance that orthodox people won't tear toilet paper. So every Friday afternoon, they would bring around packages of pre-cut toilet paper or like in the public toilets of your individual sheets for the kids to whom it mattered. They wouldn't turn the light on on Shabbat, so before Shabbat began on Friday afternoon, somebody had to remember to turn the light on in the cabin bathroom. Otherwise, they had no light to go to the bathroom, but those experiences---doing havdalah, doing the Shabbat really made an impact on me.

John

And how old were you when you started going there?

Marcia

The end of tenth grade. I would have been 16, and I went there two years. No, first year was counselor in training then junior counselor...and then...oh I don't even remember how did that work? You know I'm not sure. I know I went for two years, but I know that I had to get a job that summer to pay for college, so I couldn't go back to camp, and my freshman year I went to a city college which was a disaster, and then ____ (14:14), and the tuition was \$600 for a year which I could make waitressing from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and you declared on your parents' income tax that you made \$595, because anything over 600, they lost you as a deduction in those days.

John

Yeah. Well, just to sort of put a book-end to this phase I wanna make sure I understand. While you were going to a public elementary school, for six years you also attended Hebrew school, and then when you went to a public high school, you also attended Hebrew high school. Right?

Marcia

And then when I went to college, I also attended Hebrew Teachers' College in Boston.

John

For the whole time that you were in college?

Marcia

No I dropped out at the end of my junior year of college. I had the opportunity to live on campus with the scholarships from the Polio Foundation, and I had 26-28 hours of classes a year in my senior year, and I said I'm never gonna be a Hebrew school teacher, and that was the only thing to use it for, and I just couldn't deal anymore. I had been falling behind with missing finals and papers because I just---I wasn't able to keep up, but among the group of us who went, kids were going to Harvard, Boston University, _____(15:44). You know, we just took it for granted, and there were even at that time, there were three young men who were getting their doctorates at Harvard and their doctorates at Hebrew college, simultaneously.

John

Boy that's pretty amazing. Was---among the people that were your friends when you were a child, was this kind of Hebrew education...were you sort of unusual in this?

Marcia

Yes. I was often uncomfortable about it, feeling different.

John

Really.

Marcia

I was more observant than many of my friends. I went to Hebrew school, which many of my friends didn't. Then I got to Hebrew high, especially, and many of those kids were more observant than I so I, you know, kept being the odd man out.

John

Did you have two groups of friends? Like your---

Marcia

Yes.

John

Hebrew school, Hebrew high school friends and then your friends from public school?

Marcia

In high school they tended to merge a little bit because two of my very good friends in high school also went to Hebrew college...or Hebrew high.

John

And why did you do this? Did your parents push it---

Marcia

Not at all...

John

Or was it something that you wanted to do?

Marcia

My mother as I said came home that time and said I had just heard there is something called Hebrew high, and do you wanna go, and I said why not. I liked it. I liked...I don't know. I liked it. I joke now that one of the reasons I liked it was it was co-ed, and Boston schools were sexually segregated.

John

Public schools.

Marcia

High schools. That's why I said I went to the Jeremiah Burke High School for Girls.

John

Oh yeah. Now your elementary school was---

Marcia

Elementary?

John

Jewish right.

Marcia

Yeah. Yeah.

John

Was your high school also largely Jewish.

Marcia

No I don't know the statistics of either the high school or the junior high because we were I guess what you would call trapped, and first of all in seventh grade you had to choose whether you were going to be college or commercial, prep, and it's a long story. I won't go into it, but I chose college. In those college sections which lasted until the end of high school I remember a Greek girl, Angela. I don't remember anyone else not Jewish. There may have been. I just don't remember.

John

Did your public schools observe Jewish holidays?

Marcia

Oh no way!

John

Even when they were mostly Jewish.

Marcia

Oh yes. Oh yes. They not only didn't observe it. In high school I was in the Glee Club, and some of the girls asked the principal if we could be permitted to sing a Hanukkah song along with all the carols, and we were emphatically denied.

John

And as a Jew living in a Jewish area, did you have any feeling about being the Jew in a non-Jewish city and country?

Marcia

Absolutely. Absolutely. It was not uncommon for the Irish boys from outside of our area to come down to this Jewish community center I mentioned called the Hecht house to beat up the Jewish boys. We were always aware of that.

John

It was just something to do.

Marcia

Or at least that's how we perceived it. We were aware of that. My mother would occasionally get it in the store. Neither she nor my dad looked prototypically Jewish. My mother had silver hair. My father had a trace of an English accent. He was blonde, light skin, light eyes, and people would come in and make anti-Semitic remarks to their fellow Christian, they thought. So we got some of it. One of my sisters wanted to be a nurse and applied, I believe, it was at Mass Memorial. The interview went beautifully. She was practically assured a place. As she got up to leave, the woman said, "By the way, dear, what religion are you?" Phyllis said Jewish. The letter came two days later. No room in the class. So yes, you were aware of that. The colleges had quotas, many of them. I don't think Simmons did, and I don't think MIT did, but you had to send when you applied, you had to send a picture, and you had to have a letter from your clergy. So...yes there was a doctor out here many years ago, a very well-known ear doctor named Dr. Goodhill who had started out as Fineberg. Changed his name, and I don't know what they would do for the clergy letter...probably get a sympathetic priest or minister to write it for them.

John

Did this affect where you chose to apply to college?

Marcia

No. No I went to Teachers' College freshman year because it was very, very cheap. It was \$75 compared to \$600, and my father had already been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. My parents were 40 and 50 years older than I. So there was no money for them to pay for me, and I was permitted to go to school and not have to get a job to bring money into the house. So...go back and tell me the question again.

John

Whether...I think the question was whether this sort of discrimination against Jews affected where you---

Marcia

Oh being a Jew affect my college---no. I didn't really think about it. Teachers' College I knew wouldn't be a problem, and I had Jewish friends at Simmons. So it just didn't occur to me that that would be a problem.

John

And your going to college was what you were---other than your cousin---you were the first one to do that...

Marcia

Which again I didn't realize until a number of years later. Never thought about it particularly. I asked my mother once about that. Kids, at least I was, so unquestioning. I just sort of always took what was...this is what...here...this is it. It never occurred to me to really question why I was being allowed. It was just assumed I was going to college, and I asked my mother once about it, and she said because my grades in grammar school had been so good, but I really think it was living vicariously through me. She had desperately wanted to go to college. She was working as a bookkeeper after high school, 60 hours a week, 6 days a week and got herself accepted at Boston University night as a sophomore, coming out of a small town commercial course. The courses were---she used to laugh at my English courses because they were reading Milton, and it was just much superior, far superior to mine, but her classes had been of such a high caliber that Boston University accepted her as a sophomore. She lasted about a semester and then fainted on the train going home at night, and my grandfather said that's it. No more. So I think when I came along she saw her chance and was determined. I remember one uncle in particular. There was a lot of comments about why I needed to go to college, but I remember one uncle saying, "You don't need a college degree to diaper babies," which roughly summed up the attitude of a lot of other people, but it had just been kind of taken for granted in my mind.

John

Yeah. And among your friends---did they go on to college, most of them?

Marcia

Yes. Yeah. My friends were pretty much the Hebrew High group and then another group and yet they all went out to college.

John

Well it's closing in on 11:30 I think.

Michael

I just have two questions. When you moved to Washington D.C., did you join any congregation there?

Marcia

Yes. I don't think I need to show you the High Holiday ticket to prove it.

Michael

Oh. Okay.

Marcia

Yes we joined one on 16th Street.

Michael

Okay.

Marcia

Fifteenth avenue.

Michael

Were you active?

Marcia

No. No I had at that point one child and was pregnant with the second, and no...didn't think about those kind of things because the shuls in those days you just went to for shul...at least in my parents. So to me a shul was where you went to for services. You didn't do anything else.

John

They weren't community centers.

Marcia

No not at all. Some of them had Hebrew schools, not all of them. That's why I didn't go to the Fesenden street shul didn't have a Hebrew school. So I went to the other orthodox shul, but that's all you went for was services.

John

How many kids were in the Hebrew school? Or was it just---

Marcia

I don't...I really don't...after you leave, I'll try and find that school picture I'm thinking of from the graduating class which I was a year behind in a way in that when I graduated regular high school I was only in the junior year of Hebrew high so I wasn't quite parallel, but I graduated Hebrew school in '48 I think, and I...I can count the class.

John

Okay. Well, if it's alright, why don't we...Oh I'm sorry. We got one more.

Michael

What was the gender differentiation in the Hebrew high school? It was primarily boys or equal or---

Marcia

Never thought of it. Maybe the fact that I never thought of it means that it wasn't unusual, one way or it wasn't lopsided. I'm guessing. I would have to guess that there were more boys, but I'm not really sure of any proportions. I don't know if I have any pictures of that.

Michael

So the girls in there were learning Hebrew like you were learning Hebrew? And do you recall what the gender differentiation was in the college---the Teachers' College? Was that primarily---

Marcia

I don't really remember Michael. I'm really...I just really don't remember at all. There were obviously enough girls there that I didn't notice...that...we weren't this tiny minority. So I'm not at all aware of either one, either high school or the college.

Michael

Why would you---why would you learn Hebrew? If that time...this is my impression...

Marcia

Go ahead.

Michael

That the men would learn Hebrew so they could...because of their role in the public ceremonies...the participation on the bimah...reading the Torah and so on...

Marcia

No they would read Torah. People like Mickey went to Hebrew and finished after bar mitzvah. That was it.

Michael

Okay but for high school and college---

Marcia

Many of these...I don't know...again, I don't know numbers. I know that several of the boys went on to become rabbis. How many of them---I don't know because I didn't stay in Boston.

Michael

Yeah.

Marcia

So I don't really know what happened to many of them. The girls may have wanted to go on to be Hebrew teachers, Hebrew school teachers. Again, I don't know why they did.

John

Who read Torah at your shul?

Marcia

Old men (LAUGHING)

John

So in your shul, being orthodox, the women were often segregated...

Marcia

Well that's kind of interesting because only as an adult in the last few years looking back did I suddenly realize I never saw a mechitzah in my life. No. Remember most people in my neighborhood didn't belong to a synagogue. They bought tickets for the holidays, and they went on the holidays. They didn't affiliate as we think of it out here, and synagogues would often run several different services on the High Holidays at different places. So my grandmother, for instance, who I---I don't know if she belonged. I don't know if she paid dues to the Fesenden Street Shull---but that was her shul so she went there for High Holidays, but they also ran services at a place called the Bungalow and at a catering hall called the Eperion and I don't know where else, and I don't know if they were done---was one a more expensive location than the other? I don't know. One of the things you had to do on the holi---and the shul would run junior congregation downstairs, and I don't remember if that was a charge for that. I don't know, and they would hire a student rabbi for us, but you had to go upstairs on the High Holidays to see grandma, to see bubby...Had to...and you had to walk to where your folks were dovening (30:32) at the Bungalow. You just had to because I mean everybody knew that, and so groups of teenagers would be walking everywhere because everybody had to go see the family who were

often dovening in different places, but anyway the point is my grandmother would always be---it was a large rectangular room, not anywhere---well maybe as big as our sanctuary. It's hard for me to tell, maybe a little deeper, but my bubby would be sitting in the back, one of the back rows. I think there may have been women in the balcony upstairs. Why wasn't she up there? I don't know. Was it because she was too elderly to walk the stairs? She walked up stairs every day of her life to get up when she lived with my aunt. I don't know the answers. I never asked the questions. I know that there was one story I heard. My uncle was a convert, and for some reason that I don't understand, my grandfather who worked with him for the conversion gave him the name Avraham Ben Avraham. Well, Jews are never named the same...European Jews are never named after their fathers. So this was like screaming neon letters this was a convert. I had never had heard of that, and since that concept is totally unJewish, singling out a convert as a convert, I don't---I've never understood why that happened, and by the time these questions came up my mother was gone, and my aunt didn't know. Later he changed it, but he was called up for an ____ (32:26), and a man sitting near them sniffed and made some remark in Yiddish about giving an ____ (32:34) to a non-Jew because he was a convert---which again is another non-Jewish concept, and my grandmother turned to him and snapped again in Yiddish that God honors the convert more than the high priest, but the point of the story is my grandmother was sitting with my uncle, and my aunt must have been there because my aunt told me the story. Why weren't they in the women's section upstairs---I have no idea. So I've never been to a mechitzah because when I...after my grandmother died we moved to the conservative synagogue.

Michael

Do you know if that shul is still there?

Marcia

Fesenden street? I don't know. It's an all-Black ghetto now. I don't know. The temple I was married in later was sold to a ____ (33:30) group and then became a Black theater group or something because the whole neighborhood changed.

Michael

Did you learn Yiddish?

Marcia

I didn't, and it really bothers me. My grandmother refused to speak English to her children. She said you'll learn English on the street, but she spoke English to us. So I know a lot of Yiddish words. Both my parents were fluent in it. My aunt lived upstairs. She was fluent. So the four of them often talked, and there were cousins of my mother who called, and the conversation would be in Yiddish, but somehow none of the four of us picked it up, and I really regret that.

John

Did you have any Yiddish books and literature around?

Marcia

Not that I know of.

John

Was there a Yiddish theater at the time?

Marcia

No not Boston, or if there was we didn't go. It's not like it was in New York where it was, you know that whole area. If there was any I was not aware of it. You asked earlier about magazines, I don't remember Jewish magazines or newspapers. My father got political newspapers, but I don't remember---I don't...I don't even remember if they got the ____ (34:50) which is the Yiddish newspaper. They may have gotten that for my grandmother. I don't know although my father certainly would have been able to read it. There were a lot of things that were strange in that family besides all the psychological stuff (LAUGHING). The holocaust was never talked about. Never! I don't understand---my father was intensely political. We got the Boston Traveller. We got the Boston Globe. He was a member of the woodcarvers' union. He was secretary of the international union so he got all kinds of stuff. He subscribed to the PM which is a left-wing newspaper. I remember him being so emotionally involved in the Rosenberg trial, but I never heard about the holocaust, nor did we discuss it in Hebrew school or in Hebrew high or in Hebrew college.

John

I think that was typical.

Michael

It was typical of the age. I think the holocaust didn't really enter the consciousness not only of Jews but of Western civilization until the Eichmann trial in what was it '61...

Marcia

Wow.

John

And when William Shirer came out with his book and then the Eichmann trial all around 1960, and I remember at that point it was...it was huge...like...but it must have been some newspaper articles or news articles about the camps and stuff when they were freed, and---

Marcia

You know the other thing that I have always felt so guilty about...when I was I think in the tenth grade which would be '50, 1950---a young boy appeared in our Hebrew school class, and I remember he had on that was like a fisherman's cap---

Michael

Yeah...

Marcia

No not this...just the round with the little bill...he smelled. He didn't speak much English. I don't know his name, and I don't even remember how long he stayed, and he was from a DP camp. Why didn't any teacher say ahead of time---this boy, Johnny is going to be showing up next week...it would be nice if somebody were friendly to him.

John

But there was nothing said.

Marcia

Nothing was said. I don't think we ever talked to him. We just kind of knew he was from a DP camp, and I have ached about that. There was one other girl, and she and I became very friendly, who also had come from a DP camp. She had been a hidden child and survived that way, and she was giving a talk in Boston several years ago. My sister attended, and she was talking about how she came to Boston---I don't remember why---with her mother and went to high school at Burke and then went to Hebrew high and that she could remember going from high school to Hebrew high while her friend Marsha translated Hamlet to Hebrew for her. I didn't think I knew enough Hebrew to do that. I'm really impressed. So after I became very friendly with---

John

Yeah what is bodkin in Hebrew?

Marcia

I don't know what it is in English. I can guess, but I always feel so badly about that boy. I don't know how long he was there. I don't think very long. So it wasn't just in my home but in the school itself.

Michael

In the society at large.

John

You mentioned though that the creation of Israel was big news---

Marcia

That was big. I can remember the books of stamps or a card I think it was that had a space for ten dimes, and you tried to fill that up, and that bought a tree in Israel in Palestine. I remember being very angry when they named the country Israel. What was wrong with Palestine? That's what we grew up hearing and then realized okay if you go to the Hebrew it's ____ (39:27), the land of Israel so I forgave them, but you bought the trees for Israel. We would sometimes...while we were in Hebrew school...get these round cans and go out in the intersections, the busy intersections, and you'd stand there with your cans collecting money. I have no idea for what---possibly for Jewish National Fund which is the organization that plants the trees. They drained the swamps in those days. My daughter says, "Those weren't swamps mom. Those are wetlands." (LAUGHING) But they were...you know, to build Tel Aviv they had to drain the swamps. They were building dams and buying land from the Arabs, which no one talks about anymore. So

maybe some of the money was for Jewish National Fund. I don't know what else, but I remember standing with my can ____ (40:31) to collect the money, and I remember somebody came to Hebrew school once to talk to us about a youth organization, and it was either shomer hatzair or ____ (40:45). Shomer is a guard. Dati (40:49) is religious. It was either the young guards or the religious guards, and I had never heard of either group, and whichever group it was I thought oh how fun! And I said to some girl friend, we were gonna join the both of us, and she came back the next day and said, "My dad says I can't join. It's a communist group." Which it was. None of us knew what that meant though, but she couldn't join so my mother said, well she didn't know what that meant but probably better stay away.

John

So I take it your dad was on the left side of the spectrum but not that far left.

Marcia

No. Not communist left. Yeah he was a very interesting man that I wish I had...I wish I had thought to talk to him. He was not a presence really in the house, and you know it drives me crazy that I can't go ask questions and hear stories, but very involved in the union...very strong unionist, and my mother would die because he was the only Jew in the shop. Wood carvers weren't Jewish, except for my dad and my uncles. So he was usually the only Jew...a lot of Europeans, Swedish, Italians, Germans, and he was the shop steward so he was the one who went up and fought the bosses, and my mother would say, "Bob they'll fire you! You're the only Jew. Do you have to put your neck out so far?" And my dad was a principled man. Absolutely. He had to tell it like it was.

John

Well we'll call it a session.

Michael

Yeah. We'll be back.

Marcia

You know I told you I love talking. I don't have a problem.

John

This has been great.

Marcia

Do you want my tickets?

Michael

Yes. Yes.

Marcia

It's interesting though that I don't have 1960.

1.2. Session Two (March 23, 2008)

John

Okay. It's, let's see...March 23rd 2008, and I'm John Carlton, and we're continuing with the second session of our interview with Marsha Alper, and where we left off last time was pretty much I think wrapping up or talked about your life---

Marcia

I think so.

John

Through college. So why don't we start with your marriage. When did you meet Mickey? When did you get married, and all of that.

Marcia

My freshman year of college, as I mentioned, I went to a State Teachers' College, very tiny, not very many Jewish kids there at all, and my mother didn't like one of my friends who was a Jewish girl, didn't think much of her and was very unhappy when I went to---my first year I went to the junior prom with an Irish Catholic boy who was the captain of the basketball team, and she knew I had always wanted to go to Simmons---not for any noble reasons. I thought it was very prestigious, and so one day she came in and said, "Can you figure out a way to pay the tuition if you transfer?" because it hadn't occurred to me to change. I tend to be---I said, "Yes I had heard that you could waitress and make enough money." So I did, and I transferred over and joined Hillel, went to I think one or two meetings. The rabbi knew I read Hebrew and asked me one day if I would help him at a service. Our Hillel shared the rabbi with the MIT Hillel because we were a small, small school, and they were doing a joint Friday evening service. Would I help him by participating in the service? Well a large part of my weekly income at that time was babysitting Friday night for \$2, and I didn't really wanna give that up to go to Hillel because everybody knew you never met anyone at Hillel, and if I did give it up I wanted to go to an acquaintance dance. There were lots of acquaintance dances in Boston because you had girls' schools, boys' schools so the schools were to get everybody together, and I thought that was much more interesting also over at MIT, but I finally agreed to help in the service if I only did it that once. He would never ask me again. I went to the service. The girl who drove didn't want to leave to go to the dance, and so I was basically stuck. At the end of the service, the rabbi put on records, and we did Israeli dancing, and I noticed two men coming in and standing watching, and I went over and said, "You're not dancing," and they said, "We don't know how," and I said, "Come on. I'll teach you the horah." Well he never learned the horah, but he did call me after---a week or so later, and it's kind of a funny story. Mickey used to mumble very badly. All I got out of him was Mickey, MIT, and I knew he was from New York by the way he pronounced my name. My mother was not impressed, didn't want me going out with him. He was going to take me to a party that was HA! Forty miles away from my house! You didn't do that without---you know...near

Gloucester, and she said, "You cannot go. You can only go to a local movie." My sister said, "Go to bed. I'll talk to her."" My mother agreed that if she liked the way he looked, I could go, and Mickey walked in, and my mother fell in love with him. She said he looked so Hamish, home-like. I don't know what would have happened if she didn't like him because there was another couple. I mean, he didn't have a car. So---anyway...we were engaged six weeks later.

John

Six weeks after you met?

Marcia

Yes.

John

Wow!

Marcia

After Mickey...Mickey had come to the onek (4:38)...not the onek...the Friday night service with his cousin who was his roommate, and after they got back, Mickey said, "I'm gonna marry her," which just always blows my mind because Mickey was normally a very slow, deliberate kind of a person. He was still in grad school. I was in the beginning of my sophomore year in, so this would have been in '53...October '53. Two years later, he had accepted the job at JPL, and he came out here. My program of physical therapy was four and a half years, which was unusual. In those days, you started, and four years later you graduated, but this had an extra six months tacked on to it, the last year-and-a-half being, including like an internship program so we debated my coming out her with him, getting married in September of '55 and my coming out here and transferring, but his mother really didn't want us to do that. She wanted to come out with him, and I'm not going to go into that whole story, but anyway, we decided that he probably would be coming back in June of '56 to get his doctorate degree that---when he left he had finished all of his course work but not his thesis. So the schedule was he was to come out here in October, do his thesis and get the degree in June. So my mother said, "Why don't you get married in June, and then when you graduate, he won't have to come back a second time for the wedding." I think---and it only occurred to me in relatively recent years---my mother was not normally a very manipulative person or a devious person. She was right up front, but I think she figured correctly that my mother-in-law's goal was to break up the marriage or the relationship, and this would probably prevent that. So we decided that would be a good idea. We got married on June 7th in 1956 at the Temple of Michigan ____ (7:06) in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Mickey did not get his thesis completed. He spent the first year or two out here learning aeronautics and astronautics for the lab because he had been a civil engineer and didn't in fact get his degree until June of '62. So when I graduated in January of '57, two weeks later I moved out here, and we took a furnished apartment in Hollywood so that I

could walk to Cedars of Lebanon, because we only had one car. We stayed...we later moved to an unfurnished, but we stayed in that area until I think I went to D.C. in April of '61. Mickey had gone a few months earlier. JPL had put together a team to help NASA with early Apollo studies. We were in D.C. for a year-and-a-half. We went to services at this large synagogue on 16th Street, and I was very impressed that they had---on the High Holidays---they had babysitting, and they gave the kids lunch on Yom Kippur, which meant that the parents didn't have to go home and feed the kids and then come back. So later when we came here, and I discovered that we didn't have those programs, I pushed Sisterhood to starting babysitting, and a group of us would make sandwiches and bring them for---

John

For the kids...

Marcia

For the kids so that you didn't have to go home and feed the kids, and they would stay.

John

Let's sort of back up just a bit. Mickey came out here to JPL---

Marcia

Right.

John

And what was his position when he first came out, do you know?

Marcia

Staff engineer, I imagine. I have all of that documented, but I don't remember the exact title.

John

And you pretty much anticipated that you would eventually be moving out here with him.

Marcia

Well the deal was, as he told my mother, he would be out here for two or three years and then would go back to teach. MIT had offered him a teaching position, but he felt he had been there for eight years. He really needed to see what the world was like. So he took the job at the lab in his own mind---and I have my mother's for sure---that he would then move back eventually and teach.

John

Before you moved, did you have any conception? Or what was the impression back East of the Jewish community out in California? Was there any? Anybody think about that?

Marcia

I didn't. I knew there was Boston, Chicago and Hollywood. That was my knowledge of America.

John

And was it important to you that there be a Jewish community out here?

Marcia

You know, John, growing up the way I did, it didn't occur to me there wouldn't be. I mean I had grown up in the very Jewish environment! So it never dawned on me to consciously think things out.

John

Yeah. Now I think we touched on this last time, but you moved out here. You settled in Hollywood because of your job. Mickey's working at JPL. How did you first come into contact with PJTC?

Marcia

Herman Bank was a temple member at the time, and Mickey knew him from the lab. I think he was working with him or somehow. Interestingly enough, by the way, we thought there were no Jews at JPL or not very many and later found that the difference was that the Jews were mostly in the science divisions and not in the engineering divisions. We joined the Temple, we discovered all these JPL-ers! We had no idea they existed, but it was because of the engineering-science difference.

John

So when did you actually join the Temple?

Marcia

We joined according to my High Holiday tickets in '58. We first went to High Holiday services at Sinai Temple on Vermont, and I think I mentioned before Mickey's first introduction to Jewish community work. At that time, the Jewish community was already beginning to move westward, and the Vermont Street Temple was going to be left or sold, and they were going to build a new building out---as they later did---in West L.A. A group of people wanted to maintain a service---a minyan---at Sinai. Sinai had said if they could support it that they would give the building to this group for a nominal rent. Mickey got involved with the group of men who were trying to figure out whether this was a viable option, and they finally abandoned it because it wasn't.

John

Why did you end up joining all the way out in Pasadena, in PJTC?

Marcia

Because we knew eventually we'd be up here.

John

Because that's where his job was.

Marcia

Right. The first year that he was out here, somebody from Caltech had left, and they needed someone to teach, I think it was a Structures Course, which is what Mickey got his doctorate in. So they asked if he would take that one class, and he said yes, and he enjoyed the teaching, but after a while he came back and said, "This isn't for me. I need a structured world." So there went the idea of two or three years in California and then back to Boston.

John

Now when you joined PJTC what other temples were out here? Not just here in Pasadena but sort of in the area. Did you look at any others?

Marcia

Didn't look at any others. There were I learned later, a small shul in Sierra Madre and a small shul in El Monte. I don't know if Glendale had a reformed temple. I certainly wouldn't have gone to one. So, no, it was just...it was, as they say in Yiddish ____ (14:04)...it was taken for granted that we would...we would be here in Pasadena, and Herman had introduced us to the temple. We came up once for bonds for Israel dinner that I think was honoring David Goldman.

John

I don't know if you can put yourself back in that time, but if you can try, do you remember I mean what your early impressions of the Temple were?

Marcia

I hated it. I remember it very clearly. The synagogue that we were married in was one that my family joined after my grandmother died, probably when I was about 12 or 13. It was like high conservative. It was a magnificent temple, a very formal temple, but very strictly conservative. The services were 98% in Hebrew. There was a magnificent cantor who had trained for the opera in Europe. There was a choir loft up above with a grill, and the voices wafted over the conversa---the congregation. The organist was nationally known. The rabbi at that time and the cantor were both tall men, and they wore the very high hats, and when they carried the torah around this huge synagogue, it was something to see. The music, I just loved. I came out here. I don't remember whether they had built the floor yet. You know, Galpert was knew. It was newly built around that time...what we call Galpert sanctuary, and I've heard that there was a third floor. I don't remember, but it was, to me, a reformed service, and I really hated it...lots of English. I can't tell you any more about the service than that, except my impression that it was very reformed. Now, we never had joined a synagogue back East. I don't know anybody who did. How they got their money, I have no idea, but except for the High Holiday tickets...but you only went to the synagogue for services or for Hebrew school. I remember going into the lobby, and there was a bulletin board on the left, and there were all kinds of flyers...

John

This is the lobby at PJTC.

Marcia

Right, and they had a Mr. and Mrs. Club. They had a Wednesday Night Club. They had all kinds of activities, classes. They had a...they ran a Sunday night lecture series. I think Fran and Len Holper ran it, where they brought in speakers like Melvin Beli, the lawyer. Jerry Lewis came and spoke once. This was just eye opening to me, and I remember very distinctly writing my

mother and saying they have everything in the synagogue except God.
(CHUCKLES) So I don't remember how often we ever came up here. I know that they said Herman brought us up once to Bonds for Israel, which our temple did for many years. They would honor someone at a dinner, usually, and raise money for the bonds. I don't know when they stopped it. I know Mickey and I were honored. I know Shirley and Bob were honored. I don't remember who else, but we did come up at that time for that, and I don't remember anything else. I think we joined together in '59. I think we didn't join in '60 probably because the holidays I think were early that year, and our son was born on September 13th, so I wasn't going anywhere.

John

Yeah...

Marcia

So I don't know where we went. We probably went back because Sinai was still having services, but I don't know.

John

So Rabbi Galpert was there when you first came?

Marcia

Rabbi Galpert and the cantor was Tibor Moses.

John

Tibor Moses? And was he here---I'm talking about Tibor Moses...for the first few years before you went back to D.C.?

Marcia

As far as I know. As far as I remember, yes.

John

And do you know---was he a full-time or part-time cantor?

Marcia

I have no idea.

John

And when you first arrived, do you remember what the facilities look like?

Marcia

Not really.

John

Was the day school over there?

Marcia

No. No...that came later. Matt Stone built that.

John

And what was in its place?

Marcia

I don't know.

John

And do you recall---that was...well of course Knell Chapel was there, right?

Marcia

It would have had to be.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

And at that time there was an orthodox service over there for the High Holidays.

John

Really? Did they have---well, during the first...let's just sort of limit to this...the first period before you went back to D.C.

Marcia

Okay.

John

You came out for services and for High Holidays---

Marcia

High Holidays.

John

And then you went home, and your involvement in the Temple was pretty much limited to that?

Marcia

Absolutely.

John

Did you have any friends out here?

Marcia

No. No.

John

What was your---just sort of---initial impression of the congregation, looking around?

Marcia

I don't remember that well, John. I do remember writing my mother once that it was the strangest congregation I had ever seen because there were no doctors or very few and no mink coats and no key board. That just never happened back East, but at that time, the doctors who were Roth, I'm forgetting his first name. Sybil Roth's husband was I believe an ophthalmologist. There was ____ (20:52). There was Ferman (20:57) who was a surgeon, and I don't remember any more. Maybe Shirley would probably know those better than I. There were maybe a half a dozen.

John

You say Shirley, and this is just for the record, Shirley Hoffman.

Marcia

Hoffman, right. Whereas back East you had doctors all over the place. And that was the only impression I remember having, was that there weren't any doctors in the congregation and no mink coats at Yom Kippur.

John

And to say you had no involvement in governance or anything like that...

Marcia

No.

John

High Holiday services---

Marcia

I was 22 at this time.

John

Oh I know. We don't have too many 22 year olds in governance now.

Marcia

Right. Right. No and it would never have dawned on me to get involved--- neither one of us. We didn't have any experience in that. I don't know who ran the shuls that we grew up in, certainly not our families.

John

What was Mickey's background, religiously?

Marcia

Well his father died when he was eight. The family was, well I knew his mother...not observant. There was a kosher-style house, but that was about it. I think she kind of looked down on my observance level, as many Jews did in those days. They were very assimilated. One branch of the family was very socialistic. One of them had been...one of them was related somehow to Begin. There was...they weren't observant. They were New York Jews, which I think you would understand Michael. If you were in New York, you're Jewish. End of discussion.

John

Before we move back to D.C., do you have any questions about this time period, Michael?

Michael

Actually one question I had...did Knell Chapel have a name? Other than...I mean Knell Chapel came in around 1980.

Marcia

Something like that. I don't think it did. I don't remember.

Michael

And a question about the facilities...the area in front of us now Whollman, was that a grassy area? Was that a parking lot? Do you---

Marcia

No memory of that. Parking lot, but I would assume.

John

When you first...your first services at the Temple, were there pews or were there just folding chairs?

Marcia

The first year, I remember it was folding chairs.

John

That must have contributed to your sensing this was not your old style temple. (LAUGHING)

Marcia

Right! Right. Right. Now there may have been pews in the front, and maybe we were in the folding chairs. I don't know. I just know we were in a folding chair.

John

You know I think I've seen a picture. I think we have a picture of maybe the first service at the Temple, in the Galpert sanctuary after it was originally built, and if I remember correctly there might have been like just two or three rows of pews at the very front, and then I think they had folding chairs because they couldn't afford to finish it for a while.

Marcia

I don't. I don't remember that, but as I said before, the synagogue that we had gone to which first of all was called a temple...which was...you know...that already made for a big divide between the shul and the temple...was huge. It was majestic. It was a very tall building. You walked up a large flight of stone steps to get there. There was stained glass windows. There was an organ, and then I came into this place, so physically as well as the service, it was just total difference.

John

The High Holiday services...were they...you said there was a lot of English...were they mostly English?

Marcia

I can't answer that John because I'm left with an impression.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Coming from no English, anything would have been a lot. It was not conducted with the same majesty as the other services had been.

John

Was there a choir?

Marcia

I don't remember a choir. There may have been. I don't remember that.

John

How about Tibor Moses as a cantor? Do you have any recollection of him?

Marcia

Just that he wasn't cantor Sheldon.

Michael

Who conducted the orthodox services?

Marcia

I have no idea. I think the old men just did it themselves, and whether they were really older or not, I don't know. As I said, I was 22. Everybody was old. I don't remember how many of them there were, but there was a definite split in the congregation at that time. Eventually most of them died or moved. We did have a family, Erin Bloom, I remember years later, who was always fighting with the board and was not happy that we were not

stricter, and eventually as many of the others did, they moved. They either moved to West L.A. or to the Valley, and so the orthodox presence disappeared.

John

What was the, sort of the, religious affiliation at the Sierra Madre temple?

Marcia

I don't...I never went there. I didn't know about it when we joined here...they can't...people...we by the way were not associated with the conservative at that time. Right. People didn't really worry about labels. You went to shul, and you liked it or you didn't like it. So I don't remember the definitions. I was trying to remember who was the president when we moved here, and I don't know. It may have been Ackerman, Frank Ackerman or Aaron Moyer...somewhere around those days, but I don't know the chronological order of our presidents.

John

So, moved back to D.C. in '61?

Marcia

Sixty-one.

John

And refresh me...why...why did you do this?

Marcia

Oh JPL had put together a group of about 12 or 14 engineers to go work with NASA on the pre-Apollo programs, and at that...when we came out here...when Mickey came out here in '55, JPL was run by Caltech for Army Ordinance. For the Army...and remember this is McCarthy time. When he got the application for the job, he had to fill out pages of questionnaires about his affiliations, and I remember the pages of organizations that you had to look at and check if you were associated with any of them because they felt that they...so many of them had been infiltrated by the Communists.

Apparently one of the things that the Communists did do was go into ethnic groups, so anything that was hyphenated American was suspect. If you belonged to a Polish-American, Irish-American, Lithuanian-American group--that was suspect. Luckily we didn't belong to anything, but you did have to fill all of that out. There was an intensive FBI investigation. They checked...we were engaged...they checked...they went to Mattapan Square, which I should spell by the way for the transcriber. It's M-A-T-T-A-P-A-N. I may say it with a D, but that's a New England-ism. They went to the merchants in the square to ask about my parents. They went to friends of Mickey's references to ask about them. I was concerned because my father, as I said, had been a...was the secretary of the International Woodcarvers' Union, and of course unions were somewhat suspect, and he got all kinds of mail because of that, but apparently that didn't come up.

John

So you're back in D.C.---

Marcia

We moved back in D.C. We were there til August of '63.

John

Okay. Then you returned out here---

Marcia

We came out here, stayed with my mother-in-law who had remarried at that time and her husband until we could find a place in Pasadena, and we bought the house in Hastings Ranch and moved in in, I believe, October of '63. I had called the...I later called the Temple...before we bought the house, I called the Temple and asked the secretary where the Jewish neighborhood was, and she said there isn't one, and I thought well that's just ridiculous. Everybody knows every area has a Jewish neighborhood. (LAUGHING)

John

Where in Hastings Ranch did you live?

Marcia

We lived at 1,130 Coronet Avenue. There were...in the Hastings houses...one area of it consisted of 1,150 I think it was or 1250 homes...Coronet homes, they were called...and a friend of mine and I later identified 150 Jewish families.

John

Now where you among the first residents there?

Marcia

No. No. Hastings had opened up...

John

Oh this is '63.

Marcia

Right.

John

Okay.

Marcia

On our title there was a covenantal clause that the property couldn't be sold to Jews, probably to Negroes, and you couldn't have horses. The Supreme Court had just outlawed those clauses, but we bought from a Mormon couple who immediately went next door to my Catholic neighbor and warned them that they had sold to Jews. How they knew, I don't know. Whether we looked Jewish, whether our name was Jewish I don't know, but she did warn her, but apparently, we had bought in the ranch figuring that because it was a tract and the only one in Pasadena, we'd be able to evaluate house prices better, and when we found out where the Jews really lived, then we would move, and of course we were there.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

There used to be a deli on Colorado called Food Land that had moved from Washington. It was owned by temple members, Bush---Ed Bush, and I went in there one day for something and started talking to Ed, and he said he lived in the Ranch too, and I said, "Gee I didn't know there were any other Jews," and he started laughing. He said, "Didn't you see the blue and white lights at Christmastime?" At Hanukkah time, which no, I never did, but I thought that was a very strange answer because again coming from my background, you didn't put Christmas decorations if you were Jewish.

John

Well now, I mean Hastings Ranch was famous for its Christmas decorations.

Marcia

Absolutely.

John

How did you deal with all of that?

Marcia

We had an interesting relationship with our neighbors. When we moved on that block, we were the only Jews. We were there October. So one of the neighbors said to me one day that they were going to have a block meeting about the decorations, and she explained about the Christmas decorations, and she said somewhere in your garage you'll find the decoration that the previous people left. So Mickey and I talked it over, and we finally said we would put up any decoration that in our judgment was non-denominational. So it couldn't be a candle because even though we used candles at Hanukkah a red candle in December is not a Hanukkah candle. So we kind of made our own laws, and the neighbors were wonderful...absolutely wonderful. They had decided that year that they were gonna put up a new decoration so we went to the meeting, and they asked us what we would be willing to do, and they decided the Street is Coronet so they made a crown that went around a tree, and you'd have your spotlight on it, and then later when we changed again, we put up toys. So we had a toy soldier in front of our house. Then another Jewish family moved in, Molly and I believe it was Al Marx with their children. They had three older children and a caboose child, who was about the same age as my oldest, and poor Nina had a very difficult time. They would not put up a Christmas decoration because they were Jewish. Well, the Alpers do. Nina would come out eating a ham sandwich, and the kids would say, you can't eat a ham sandwich. The Alpers don't eat ham sandwiches. Nina would come out to play on a Sunday morning, and the neighborhood kids would say, "Why aren't you in Sunday school? The Hebrew---the Alper kids are in Sunday school." Nina finally go her family to put her in Sunday school because of the pressure. I had grown up very uncomfortable about being kosher and being more observant than most of my Jewish friends...until I went, as I mentioned, until I went to Hebrew College or Hebrew High, and there they were more observant. So I was never quite right. What I found fascinating as I watched my children

grow, was their total comfort level with our level of observance because we were certainly the most strict of anyone in our neighborhood. There were some that were stricter in the Temple, but very few of my children's friends were Jewish, let alone observe it, and the kids were totally comfortable.

John

You kept a kosher home all those years.

Marcia

I still do.

John

And back in the '60s then when you returned, how unusual was it---I mean, it sounds like that was pretty unusual even then.

Marcia

Here, I think there were fewer families that kept kosher than there are now.

John

Oh really?

Marcia

It is always the impression among my peers. There were not that many that kept kosher that I knew of.

John

When you rejoined the Temple, I mean was there any question that you would just rejoin PJTC after you returned?

Marcia

No.

John

And did you notice any changes or differences in the Temple in the year-and-a-half or so that you left?

Marcia

No. We wouldn't have been aware of anything.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

We joined it in September of '64 which would have been the first High Holiday since we had been back.

John

Was the same cantor here?

Marcia

No it was Cantor Blumenthal. Salo Blumenthal. And I remember we came up for the High holidays, and then I brought my son to sukkot services. Now back East, even though I didn't go to those services when I was in high school or college, but I knew...I know my mother went with my aunt, and the temples would have a very respectable number of people there on these holidays. So with that image in my mind, I walked in here and couldn't believe it...very, very small turn out. The only children that were there were Ruth Kay's children and the Friedman's children, that I remember.

John

The Friedman's?

Marcia

Helen and Joe.

John

Oh okay.

Marcia

Where we had been kept out as school as youngsters to go those services, nobody would keep their kids out here. I did. Mickey and I did. I would write a letter every year to the principal of the elementary school explaining that my children would be out on the following seven days, that many of the children---Jewish children---in her school would only be out the following three days. Some of them would be out only two days, and some would be out only one. Sincerely, Marsha Alper.

John

Now see I had a question, but I can't remember what it was. When...during the High Holiday services before you left for D.C. and then upon your return, was the social hall opened up for those services back then?

Marcia

I don't remember, John.

John

Do you remember having a sense of there being a lot of people at High Holiday services?

Marcia

Yeah. Always. There were always---in fact there were years when we used to put them up on the stage in the back. We put chairs up there.

John

Yeah. Yeah. And on non-High Holiday services, I mean did you go---

Marcia

I did! I used to take. I took Ian right away to sukkot, and I came in with him. He was three at the time. I came in, took a book, and I was sitting towards the back, and at the end of the service, three little old men---Lou Silver, Phil Friend, and Joe Weisman---and they literally were little, old men...came marching up the aisle, made a bee line, and Mr. Silver said to me, where did a ____ (10:47) learn to doven like that? Because I was a blonde and American. He interestingly enough put me on the ritual committee a few years later, which was unheard of. There were no women on ritual committee.

John

Did you...were you regular attendees at Saturday services back then?

Marcia

No. Not very often. What did happen---I can't give you the years---Gerry Marcus who was married...is married to Marianne Vigo's younger sister, had junior congregation, and that was in the chapel, and you would show up the

first time, he would give you like an index card. You were to take it home and fill it out with your name, and that was how he kept attendance records. You bring the card back, and he could just pull the cards of the kids who were there, and at the end of the school year, in the summer, there would be a pool party for the kids who had gone to services, and I think I still have a little pin that says junior congregation on it that would be given to the kids, and unfortunately that ended when he moved. The Hebrew School, by the way, was in those days was two afternoons a week, I believe, or one afternoon a week, and then it was Sunday school, and the Sunday school was absolutely separate. Did you---have you heard about this before?

John

Yeah.

Marcia

You could go to Sunday school and never go to Hebrew school. It was a totally different track. Hebrew school was probably two afternoons a week, an hour-and-a-half each.

John

And I take it Hebrew school was required if you were gonna have a bar mitzvah, right?

Marcia

I would assume so.

John

But not Sunday---going to Sunday would not qualify?

Marcia

No. No...but Sunday school meant that if you didn't ever want to go to bar mitzvah or you didn't wanna go to Hebrew school, you could go to Sunday school and never go to Hebrew school which was really a carry over from the Sunday schools of the reform movement. Remember they had created the Sunday schools for girls primarily or for people who didn't want to be bar mitzvahed.

John

When did you start your kids at...in the Hebrew school?

Marcia

They started in Sunday school.

John

Just Sunday school?

Marcia

Right. And then later, they would go into Hebrew school.

John

And...and what time period was this?

Marcia

The difference---it's very much the same as it is now except that now it's an integrated curriculum, and then it wasn't. I think the kids start earlier here. I was...I had a very difficult time because as I told you, I went---and Mickey

and I both went---five days a week, ten hours a week, for six years, and this idea that you could go for four years for three hours a week...

John

Did you ever talk to anybody in the administration about this or

Marcia

We did.

John

Or did you just sort of accept it?

Marcia

No we didn't accept it. We were very, very unhappy about it, and at that time the school was being run by Betty Fishman...Betty, I hope you've interviewed her.

Michael

Not yet.

Marcia

You've got to because she knows all of this, but what I remember---I think because of our dislike for the religious school, we started going to board meetings. People did, at that time, go to board meetings. The board, by the way, was 42 people. If they thought you had money, you were on the board. Attendance was not required.

John

Attendance at the board?

Marcia

Right.

John

Okay.

Marcia

But you were a board member. We learned that very early. So we started going to board meetings, and I remember one of the very first that we went to. We had just joined, and I believe it was Dan Libel who was the treasurer or the financial secretary at that time. He got up to make a report that we had taken in 27 new members. Now at that time there was a building fund, and you had to pay \$500 over four years. I don't remember what dues was. It may have been \$125. I'm not sure. Yeah, I think it was \$125. He stood up, and he said that we had 27 new members of whom---and he mentioned a small number---had agreed to pay the building fund, and I was so offended by that. I remember standing up that we had just joined, and no one had told us the building fund was optional, and if it's not optional, why are people not paying it? And I guess, you got suckers, and we're it. (LAUGHING) And we just always have paid. The reason I remember the dues being \$125, because the building fund basically doubled your dues to \$250, and at the end of that time---oh that's right---the end of that time, Bob Hoffman asked us if we would continue our dues at that level, that they were hoping to burn the mortgage.

John

You mean at the end of your building fund commitment...

Marcia

Four years, right...So that would have been around '68 I assume. They wanted to burn the mortgage, and we agreed.

John

And was that a significant...a large amount of money to pay at that time?

Marcia

Oh! I don't know, John, you know in some ways in those early years, we were probably richer than we would ever be in our lives because we---well at least until Ian was born---we were both making good salaries and had no obligations.

John

What was Mickey's position when he returned? Did he just return to the same position he had been in before?

Marcia

He had moved up, and I'd have to go look it up to find out the actually dates and stuff, and titles. He had become a section manager at one point, and I don't remember what he went into when he came back. I don't remember. This was post explorer already.

John

Okay. Was he a regular attendee at services?

Marcia

No.

John

Did you go by yourself, sometimes?

Marcia

On the holidays like sukkot, Simchat Torah, Pesach, yes I would go by myself except when we started...when I started going on sukkot, Lou Silver and his wife would put on a kiddish the first day of sukkot, and I of course knew nothing about any of that kind of thing. Back East, you went to shul; you went home, and I remember being very impressed with it, and after a couple of years, Ruth Kay and I decided that we would do the second day of kiddish lunch. I can't tell you when we started. I don't remember, but somewhere in '67, '69. I don't know, and we've done it every year since. Now the men, Steve and Mickey, would take off from work, and they would be here with us and help us set it all up, and Steve would bring the liquor, and we put that on and still do. Although when Mr. Silver moved to Leisure World, Ruth and I promoted ourselves to first day and took over that, and that's the one we still do.

John

Sort of jumping around here, but what kind of a pulpit rabbi was Rabbi Galpert back then?

Marcia

That's a very difficult question to answer. I didn't really know what a pulpit rabbi should be, never having really participated in a congregation. His sermons were absolutely mind boggling. They were just phenomenal, and one of my girls, when he died, said that what she was going to miss the most was that she'd always remembered sitting there thinking I don't understand these, but when I grow up, I will, and she said now I'll never have that opportunity. Rabbi Galpert was an absolutely brilliant man with a puckish sense of humor, encyclopedic knowledge of music, of opera, of football and baseball statistics. I remember one year when the World Series was being played on either---it must have been Yom Kippur---he came out and gave us the score. He was not from what you would call the most observant branch of the group. He was a wonderful teacher, but he was not a hands-on rabbi the way Rabbi Graeder is or the way Rabbi Collin was.

John

Did you feel particularly close to him, Rabbi Galpert?

Marcia

In the early years, no, not til later. At some point, I don't remember when, the men began to play poker on Sunday nights, and that later evolved into what is still known as the Monday night minion because coincidentally there were ten men...Rabbi Galpert, Bob Hoffman, Steve Kay, Birdsteel, Mickey Alper, Josh Pace, Abe Cheslow, Gene Fingerhut...missing two. Say Levine, who later moved away, and I can't remember the tenth, and that's when we became much more of a friend with Rabbi Galpert.

John

And how about the sequence of rabb---of cantors? The last one I think you mentioned was---

Marcia

Was Salo Blumenthal. I don't remember him particular. When I began coming in to these holiday services with my son, there were three old ladies. One was Ray Applebaum who I believe is Bruce Applebaum's grandmother. One was Mrs. Blumenthal, and one possibly---I don't remember her as well--was Mrs. Silver, and these three little ladies would be always sitting there, and they absolutely fell in love with Ian and he with them. One day, I remember saying let's go it's time to go to shul, and he was out in the courtyard. We had xenia bushes. He was picking off all the blossoms, and he said, "I have to take flowers to my ladies." Because they would slip him lifesavers or candies. Because there were no children or very few children. As I said, the Kay girls were there, the Friedman children, and my children, I don't remember any more being there. So I don't remember cantor Blumenthal particularly vocally nor do I remember when he left or why he left, and then cantor Breene and he had such a beautiful voice and really was the old style of cantor. He had grown up being a In other words child cantor, but he was part-time, and that was really all that he did was come in and cantor. The other thing that was very different---

John

In other words he didn't help the bar mitzvah kids or any of that kind of stuff?

Marcia

I don't believe so. He may have had something to do with the b'nai mitzvah kids. I...oh I'm sure he did, but the kids didn't do what they do now. Remember in the old days, a boy was bar mitzvahed. He did his aliyah. He did his haftarah. He did his speech. Period. So that doesn't take as much time as what Judy has to do now in teaching our kids. The other problem I always felt was that cantor Breene didn't want to give up the bimah at a bar mitzvah. You've got two hundred people there. Do you really wanna turn it over to a 13-year-old? No! This is your time to shine! So there was a resistance there. The kids did begin to do more. I wanted my daughter to read her torah portion. Now this would be Robin, and she would have been bat mitzvahed in '76 probably.

John

One of the early ones.

Marcia

Seventy-three. '75, '76...She said she'd do it if I would have an aliyah, and I had never had an aliyah and really didn't particularly want one, but if that was the bargain, I had an aliyah, and Robin read the torah, just her portion. Somewhere around '73, a family named Kittiver, moved here from Anaheim. Anaheim's temple at that time was a very large and a very successful temple. Beth Em at Anaheim. They wrote a letter to the ritual committee asking for girls to be allowed to be bat mitzvahed on Saturday as they were doing in Anaheim, and ritual committee I remember used to meet in Rabbi Galpert's office, and the men agreed to allow that. So that by the time that Robin came along two or three years later, we had already begun the transition pretty completely from Friday night bat mitzvah to Saturday.

John

Was there any resistance? Were you on the ritual committee at that time?

Marcia

Oh I was on the ritual committee forever from when Mr. Silver put me on in the late '60s.

John

And---

Marcia

I don't remember there being any resistance particularly.

John

When did they start doing the Friday night bat mitzvahs for girls?

Marcia

I...I don't know. Are you going to be interviewing Mariam's sisters at all, Mariam Vigo's sisters? They're not members. They don't live here, but they grew up here. I just thought of them. Marlene Marcus and Nadine Lane live

down near the San Diego area. I think they may have been---they were twins Marlene and Nadine---I think they may have been the first bat mitzvahs, but I'm not sure. I can give you their...Marlene's email address if you want.

Michael

Good. Yeah. Yeah.

Marcia

I had never thought of them before.

Michael

The names---I don't recall the names coming up other than perhaps somebody saying that they were the first, but that doesn't ring a bell with me, and I know they are not on the list of the people to be interviewed.

Marcia

No it never occurred to me until just now.

Michael

But that would be very interesting.

John

Yeah. Yeah. So anyway cantor Breene had rather more limited duties.

Marcia

Right. Absolutely.

John

And how long was he here?

Marcia

I can't answer that because I don't remember when he started. I was...I believe I was temple president when we had to ask him to leave.

John

Because of his voice?

Marcia

Because of his voice.

John

And---

Marcia

Yeah I was either temple president, or I was ritual VP. I don't remember which, and then---

John

Personally I don't think you were temple president because I was here, and cantor Breene was never here when I was around.

Marcia

Okay. Then I must have been ritual VP.

John

Cantor Julian was always there.

Marcia

I was ritual VP when we hired David Julian, so yeah, probably that was it.

John

So David Julian followed Breene?

Marcia

Right.

John

And was...he was part time too, wasn't he?

Marcia

He was part-time. He was a computer programmer I believe down in Orange County, and he expanded it quite a bit. One of his strengths was his willingness to share the bimah with the kids, and he began enlarging their roles.

John

So he was in part responsible for the change?

Marcia

Absolutely. Major, major change which was why he was so adored by the B'nai Mitzvah parents.

John

Yeah. Yeah. He was also a very fine singer I remember.

Marcia

Yes he was, and he did an excellent job when Rabbi Galpert died in '88. Ira Loenthal was president, and he made the decision that we weren't going to look for a Rabbi right away, that that was a recipe for disaster.

John

Ira Loenthal made that decision?

Marcia

Right with the board's agreement, because when you've had a Rabbi for 36 years---a very loved rabbi---no one could have made it walking in the next day, and that was probably a very good idea, to do it that way. Cantor Julian stepped in and did, really, an excellent job for us, holding both positions...fulfilling the both positions. I will grant him that. I'm not one of his biggest supporters but---

John

We'll get back to Cantor Julian's situation later.

Marcia

We were talking earlier, I wanted to go back...to the board meetings and the religious school. I can remember being at an early board meeting when Betty Fishman and Sybil Roth made the presentation to the board asking that we increase our number of hours of the religious school to six hours a week, and there was a lot of opposition to that, but they finally did win.

John

Not including Sunday school?

Marcia

No that would include Sunday school.

John

Oh okay.

Marcia

And I'm not sure if that's when they integrated the program or not, but it may have been that at some point they said you cannot go beyond fourth grade, I think it was in Sunday school. Remember Sunday school had gone all the way up to confirmation probably. Now you had...you either dropped out completely, or you went into the integrated school which included Hebrew school.

John

And do you know what motivated them to make this change?

Marcia

I think it was the trend at the time in educational circles, but Betty could answer that. I assume you are talking to her.

Michael

Yeah. Yeah. She's on the list.

Marcia

Yeah.

John

Okay. Then of course after Cantor Julian came Janette Beaber? For a year?

Marcia

Right. For a year. I had forgotten about that. Then I don't remember if we had anyone else in there...

John

Yeah. I think that's right. Okay well let's...let's...

Marcia

Let me tell you one thing about Judy. Interestingly Mickey was on the committee that hired her, and I remember him saying that when they were trying to define the criteria for her...for the next cantor...the singing ability was secondary. How things had changed from Cantor Breene's day...was secondary to her willingness to---or to the Cantor's willingness to teach the children, to involve them to do the b'nai mitzvah work. We had...Cantor Julian was hired at a higher salary than we wanted to pay. The only way we could get around that or deal with that was to take the money we had budgeted for youth director, and he agreed to do both jobs. Well he never did. The youth director, he never did anything with. He was also supposed to be a classroom teacher, and that would justify some extra...some of his extra salary, and that was not successful.

John

Well some things never change.

Marcia

But interesting though that when we hired Judy, the singing was not the prime...the voice was not the prime qualification. By now the shift had come so completely that it was more important to us to have a Cantor who would work with the children, work with the congregation...all of the things that Judy does so well were more important.

John

When you first came back from D.C. and for you know, a number of years after that, did women play much role in services?

Marcia

No. No. Not at all. I'm trying to think when, if they ever did.

John

Well they certainly do now.

Marcia

They do. There was an interesting situation with torah reading. We had, for a long time in the '80s---I'm not sure when it started---we had basically two torah readers, Sam Roth and Mr. Nadar. Mr. Nadar was from Persia. I always felt I should take out my prayer rug and bow to Mecca because he sounded like...he was Arabic, his use of the voice was just so Arabic. Rabbi Galpert told me that he was letter perfect and that he practically knew the torah by heart. He was almost blind. What I was always impressed with, when I began reading torah, was that Mr. Nadar was so very wonderful to me and never, never made me feel that he was uncomfortable with me. Sam Roth was Polish-born, lived in Israel, came to America. He was easier to understand when he read than even Mr. Nadar or some of the other old men, but we were really relying on just the two of them. So periodically at a ritual meeting, somebody would say we need to do something about the torah readers, and I would say, "Well..." and somebody would say we really have to start training new people, and I would say "Well I'd be interested in learning," and the subject would be changed. I don't know if this was deliberate. I don't think I'm paranoid, but it just never happened, and then finally in '87, the Fall of '86 it would have been, Cantor Julian said he would teach a torah reading class, and it would meet at I think 8 o'clock on a Saturday morning in Wholman before services. Six or seven people signed up. Of those people, only three of us really lasted after the first week or two, and they were Lou Solloway, Larry Shear and I. One of them is a cohein. One of them is a levi. I'm Israel. So cantor Julian picked the torah portion in February ____ (7:40) where the ten commandments are, and we were each...we had to start learning the trope. I don't know whether it's because I had seven years of piano lessons and a lot of Hebrew, but I never had any trouble with learning the trope, and I certainly didn't have any trouble with the Hebrew. Larry could learn the trope and knew the Hebrew and couldn't put them together, and my husband couldn't understand how anybody could put them together. It's a totally different mindset I discovered. You could learn that that little squiggle means da-rum (SINGING), and you can read the word ____ (8:23), but to read the ____ (8:25), see the squiggle and go ____ (8:27), Mickey couldn't understand how you did it, and poor Larry couldn't understand, couldn't grasp it. Lou Solloway did better, but he was traveling a lot and just didn't have a lot of time. So I learned my portion, and then I said to cantor Julian, what do I do now, and he said keep going.

So when we actually got up there that day, the cochain---I can't remember is Larry Shear a cochain or a levi?

John

I think he's a cochain.

Marcia

Okay then Larry would have gotten up, did his berakhah, read his portion and then Lou would have gotten up, the levi, read his berakhah, read the portion. I got up, read the berakhah and read all the rest of it, but no one had told me that when the ten commandments are read the congregation stands, and I was totally focused on this torah scroll, and all of the sudden the whole congregation stands up on their feet, and I'm thinking, "What did I do!?! (LAUGHTER) Sam Winegrad used to really love to tease me because I knew absolutely nothing about a torah service except what I had picked up here. Whether you cover the scroll, whether you don't, and he'd say, "Why don't you know that?" and I'd say, "Because Sam, I'm a girl. They didn't teach girls things like that." Well when he went to Hebrew school, and I'd say, "But the girls who went to Hebrew school with you didn't learn that." So all the ins and outs, the mechanics of a torah service I learned here, watching it.

John

Were you the first woman---

Marcia

Yes.

John

To read the torah at PJTC?

Marcia

Yes. February 1987.

John

Boy that doesn't seem that long ago does it?

Michael

I know. I know. Twenty years.

Marcia

Yeah. That I'm very proud of, but to me, it was a justification in many ways of all my years of Hebrew school which I wasn't using, and...and it really comes fairly easily...relatively...I mean not that you don't break your teeth sometimes and go crazy with some of the portions with the Hebrew or with the trope but relatively easily, and I just love doing it.

John

And now, I think most of our torah readers are women, aren't they?

Marcia

Isn't that interesting? And sad, yes. Yes.

John

Do you have any thoughts on why that might be?

Marcia

Well first the women, as the doors began to open, the women just leaped into the breach. So many women felt left out, felt angry, felt hurt, felt discriminated against. I never had. As I say, I just always had to take things the way they are in many ways, so if the boys were taken out to learn jiddish and we weren't allowed to learn it, so we weren't. It didn't bother me that I couldn't be bat mitzvahed. It didn't occur to me to be bat mitzvahed. I think some of the synagogues maybe were starting it when I was coming along, but it really wasn't part of my life. I didn't know anyone who was bat mitzvahed, and the fact that boys were---well it was just the way it was, but lots of women my age really resented that. Maybe I didn't mind it so much because I was getting the education, and a lot of women weren't allowed to do that. In my mother's home, she had three brothers. A tutor was brought in. They lived in a small town. A tutor was brought in to teach the boys to train them for bar mitzvah. As long as they were learning, my mother who was the next in line, was allowed to learn, but when her youngest brother became bar mitzvahed the classes ended, and she really resented that. So that was I think why many women, once the opportunity came, grabbed it.

John

Did you notice any, I don't know, resistance or resentment among men in the congregation to this change?

Marcia

Sam Weiss---Sam Roth. Excuse me. Sam Roth resented me very much. I don't really think this was so much religious as it was the fact that people really liked him better as a reader because he was more intelligible, compared to a Persian accent. Well I read Hebrew with a Boston accent, and it's much easier to follow me than it is to follow a Polish Israeli, and so people would ask to have me read at a bar mitzvah which is why we later, on the ritual committee, made the rule that you may not request a reader. It has to go through the ritual VP, I believe. So Sam was very angry about that. Morton Fuchs was gabbai. A friend came over to me once and asked if I would read at his daughter's bat mitzvah the week after I was already scheduled to read. I went up to Morton and asked him, and Morton said he didn't have a problem. I don't remember if I spoke to cantor Julian or not. I possibly did. He came in to shul one Friday night, and at the end Cantor Julian said you're not going to be allowed to read for the Reuben bar mitzvah, bat mitvah. Apparently Sam had written a letter to Ira Louenthal complaining that I should be allowed to read. No I'm not sure that was when he wrote the letter, but he did make a big stink about this, and I was told I couldn't read, and I said no way. I have already done the work for this. You don't wait for the last minute and tell me no, and I said to Morton Fuchs, "I asked you about this if it was alright. Why didn't you say no?" He said, "It wasn't up to me to say no." Morton didn't like feuds. He didn't like arguments.

John

Did he have any problem with you reading?

Marcia

I don't think so...not overtly. What I noticed with Morton was interesting. Mr. Nadar as he got older would often be ill, and I would get a phone call Monday, Sunday---Can you read Saturday? Well in those days we read half of a portion where now we read a third. When we were interviewing Rabbis for Rabbi Collin, Mickey was the chair of the committee, and we got a phone call one night. He was out of town, and it was from one of the Rabbi candidates, and I said, "Well my husband isn't here, but can I help you?" And he had some questions, and one of them was do we follow the Babylonian or the Jerusalem system of reading the torah. Well I didn't have any idea which one was which or that there were two systems, so I said we follow the Pasadena-ian. (LAUGHTER) Because I knew that one of them was a third, which is what we do now, and one of them was the whole portion, and we weren't doing either. We were doing 50%. Rabbi Collin when he came said, "Where did you get this?"

John

Yeah never heard of it until now.

Marcia

It was the only thing I knew so I didn't know it was unusual. Apparently United Synagogue had a committee that organized the structure of the triennial cycle and divided it into ____ (17:07) and so Rabbi Collin said all the work has been done. Let's join the rest of the world, but we were doing 50%. Winegrad, Sam Winegrad, was often the one who would meet with Morton before the service and decide was there anyone---how many aliyahs did they need? Was there anyone extra that needed it? If you walked in after they had decided and said you had a ____ (17:39) or somebody was ill in your family and you wanted an aliyah, no problem! Sam would on the spot readjust the portions that were to be read which is why I never bothered to learn by aliyah the way Ruth does for instance. I learned the whole portion, and the gabbai standing next to me puts his hand on my arm when it's time to stop.

John

Interesting, And rabbi Galpert wasn't really involved in this at all?

Marcia

No. Not in the mechanics of it.

John

Yeah. Yeah.

Marcia

No. Morton had taken over gabbai from Lou Silver when Lou moved. I can't tell you when that was.

John

Okay, now let's see you---

Marcia

Sam was the only overt opposition I got.

John

You got on to the ritual too. Was that your first involvement in temple governance, was on the ritual committee?

Marcia

Right.

John

And this was a couple of years after you returned. Mid '60s. Is that about right?

Marcia

Probably late '60s.

John

Late '60s.

Marcia

Now somewhere along that time, it became apparently very difficult to find a temple president. They had recirculated themselves a number of times, recycled themselves. So the same people, Dave Goldman, Lou Silver, had all been president a number of times, and I guess nobody wanted it, and they could look ahead and see there was no one in the pipeline.

John

Let's come back to that.

Marcia

Okay.

John

Okay. I wanna talk about ritual committee and your involvement on the ritual committee over the years.

Marcia

Okay.

John

When you first were asked, were you the only woman on the ritual committee?

Marcia

Yes.

John

Were there any other women in temple governance at all at that time?

Marcia

I don't know. I really don't know.

John

Do you remember who was on that early ritual committee?

Marcia

Little old men. Lou Silver, Phil Friend, Joe Weisman, Marshall Katz. I don't know who else. Sam Winegrad probably. No. No. He may have been on at some point, but I don't remember him on it. Marshall Katz may remember better than I. I don't.

John

And you've been on that committee pretty much continuously since then?

Marcia

I dropped out for a few years, but when...I think it was when Rabbi Collin came, I got back on it. I usually was in a very uncomfortable position. I am more observant than most members of the ritual committee and more liberal than most members of the ritual committee. For instance, last year, in a discussion about the camping trip and how kosher it had to be, there was a very large attendance at the meeting, and I think it was Mark who was chair, decided to go around and ask everyone in sequence what their opinion was. Eighty percent of them started off by saying, "Well I don't keep kosher but..." and they were going for the more strict, and it finally came to me, and I said, "I'm a contrarian. I keep kosher, and I disagree with all of you." I'm personally observant, but I really always believed that we have to be as inclusive as we can. I was shocked when I got here by the carelessness of kashrut for instance. The kitchen has probably never been strictly kosher, but I began to love the inclusiveness that, for instance, allowed people to bake for Friday night ____ (22:09), and Rabbi Galpert felt very strongly that that brought people together, and that there was a warmth in being at the ____ (22:18) and a warmth in people coming together to produce it, and that's why I always fight to allow the baked goods on Friday night, which is really ridiculous if you're going to try to be consistent, but I don't see any real advantage to being consistent. I get very upset when people say, "Well we have to do that. United Synagogue says." Well as I said before, we weren't members of United Synagogue when we joined. Why send money away? I believe it was the men who reorganized the Temple who got us back, got us into United Synagogue, but we have never followed them hook, line and sinker. For instance, I don't know what their rules are now, but for many years, if my husband were not Jewish, his name would not be allowed to be in the directory, nor would we be allowed to be a member of the Temple, and I remember a woman from the Valley whose daughter lived in the Valley, telling me that her daughter had married a non-Jew, and I said well how do you feel that he can't be a member of your congregation. Well, she knew when she married him that that was the rule. This to me is so counter intuitive and counterproductive, to keep people out. To my knowledge, this congregation has always accepted intermarriage and integrated them as well as we could. So I really adopted that position which I think probably, Mickey and I were more reconstructionists than conservative, so I have never had any use for the line "We have to do it because United Synagogue says." We also don't follow the Friday night baking law. That's strictly not allowed in a...in a follow-the-road...follow the rules...United Synagogue---

John

And the origin of that was Rabbi Galpert's desire to ---

Marcia

I don't know if that was the origin.

John

Oh.

Marcia

It may have been here before. I don't know. Remember this was a reconstructionist synagogue for a while. I don't know when it started. I just know that he was very, very much encouraging it to continue, and in fact all of my circle of friends in the Temple come from those years of working in the kitchen, working in Sisterhood. The men were working on the board, and that's where---most...I don't know about the younger people, but in my generation, nobody ever admitted they went to the Temple for religious reasons. If you asked people why they joined, it was always for social reasons, to make friends or for the children, pediatric Judaism.

John

How have services changed over the years since you started?

Marcia

They became much more traditional, particularly under Rabbi Collin, much more Hebrew and I think a much more traditional service. It's hard for me objectively to describe what the early services were like because it was so different that I just, you know, couldn't---

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Couldn't really evaluate it, but I have had the feeling that it has gotten more traditional.

John

And what do you think has driven that change? Do you have any---

Marcia

Well, Rabbi Collin definitely and the fact that as the younger people move up in age, we're getting a more Hebraically educated congregation. Remember my mother's generation and to some extent mine, the women were not educated at all, and what had worked in Europe where the girls learned from their mothers, broke down in America. So...and where the father was home as a farmer or milkman or whatever, a tailor, whatever he did, the father was heavily involved in educating the boys! Think about Fiddler. All of that broke down in America, and so you were left with the Jewish raising of the children to the women who knew nothing. They knew Ma did it that way, and very, very often when the grandmother died, kashrut went out the window. We kept two sets of dishes so my grandmother would eat here, and that went out, and people almost prided themselves for many years in the fact that they didn't keep kosher. This was kind of a source of how American you really were and how modern you were, that you had given all of that up. There was also a lot of all this antagonism. When we were married, early

married, it was not at all uncommon for people to try and prove my hypocrisy because I ate meat out. Well, you say you're kosher. Why do you eat meat out? And I really think that unconsciously there was a need to justify them not keeping anything by showing how inconsistent I was, but since I never pretended to be orthodox it never bothered me that I made my own rules.

John

Why did you choose to be kosher and to be more observant?

Marcia

Actually I didn't choose. I didn't think about it. I guess because I had always...this was the world as I knew it, and it never dawned on me that I had a decision to make, and before we were married, Mickey who is a much heavier thinker than I said, "I think we ought to keep kosher." And first, I was shocked that it even came up, and then I wanted to know why, and he said, "I think you'll be happier." But I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't brought that up. I probably would have done it because I didn't think that there was an alternative, but because my family never made being Jewish so restrictive that there was a reason to rebel, to me it was very easy to bring that attitude into my own home. I mentioned a couple of times that many of the kids in Hebrew High and Hebrew College were much stricter than I. By the time we got to college, it was not uncommon after a date, to go out to Howard Johnson's for hamburgers. I was getting a hamburger with a coke. Some of them were getting a cheeseburger with a milkshake, including my orthodox rabbi's son. I mean, they had to break through. They had to rebel.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

I didn't have to rebel. I'm not gonna rebel against a cheeseburger versus a hamburger. That's not rebellion!

John

Did you sort of sense the pendulum swinging back the other way now?

Marcia

Going more strict?

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Absolutely. Absolutely. I see it at the Temple a lot.

John

Do you see it on ritual committee over the years?

Marcia

You know ritual committee was weird. As I say, ritual committee's attitude was well I don't do it, but the Temple should, and when we were interviewing for Rabbi Collin I was ritual VP, and it really bothered me that

we had an absolutely traditionalist committee where I was the most liberal member. I mean this was ridiculous! So I made a concerted effort to pack the committee, and I failed because I would go up to someone and say, "I would love to put you on the ritual committee," and they would say, "Oh but I don't really know anything, and we don't keep anything," and I'd say, "Good you represent 90% of the community, will you please join us?" No. People don't want to put themselves in uncomfortable positions and especially when you're dealing with as educated a community as we have, they're not used to going into positions where they don't have the knowledge. So it's very difficult to get anybody non-observant on the committee or non-observant trained, even if they don't follow it now. So you tended to have a very traditional committee.

John

Well it's noon. I think this is probably a good place to stop for the day. Is this alright with you?

Marcia

It's okay with me. I'm just laughing because I...we're gonna get through some day. I'm having a wonderful time. You guys may have something else to do on Sunday.

Michael

Oh no! I am certainly enjoying this. This is---

John

Yeah.

Michael

I mean so much information is coming out. I mean it's just...you're doing a fabulous job.

Marcia

Oh thank you. This Temple has always been very special to both of us because we came here.

1.3. Session Three (April 13, 2008)

Michael

Okay.

Marcia

Other than that most of it is fairly easy.

John

Are we on?

Michael

Yeah.

Marcia

Oh. Sorry.

Michael

Okay.

Marcia

Other than that most of it is fairly easy.

John

Are we on?

Michael

Yeah.

Marcia

Oh. Sorry.

John

Won't talk...Alright. It's April 13, 2008. I'm John Carlton, and I'm here with Michael Several to continue the interview of Marcia Alper. Alright Marcia, the last session, we talked quite a bit about your involvement in ritual matters, on the ritual committee and the conduct of services and ultimately your beginning to read Torah along with the other folks, and I just want to follow up on that a little bit and ask this question. You weren't a regular attendee at Saturday services and then you became a regular Torah reader. How did you---the fact that you weren't a regular attendee, did that affect your reception as a Torah reader?

Marcia

It did. There were, in the '80s, primarily two Torah readers, Sam Roth and Mr. Nadar, who was Persian. Both of them were aging, Mr. Nader especially. He was very receptive, very, very sweet to me. Mr. Roth was not. He was very unhappy with me and with the fact that I was not a regular attendee. He was also upset with me for the fact that I, at the beginning, could only read once a month because it was taking me that long, and he said, "If you're a regular you gotta be every three weeks," and he put up a few obstacles, but after a while it simmered down.

John

Now was ritual committee your first involvement in the governance or the running of the Temple?

Marcia

I think, officially, I think so. When we came---I don't know if we've mentioned this before---the board meetings were usually very well attended by non-board members, and so we would...we began...we were very concerned about the religious school which was really pretty bad, and I think it was three hours a week or two hours a week and then Sunday morning. The Sunday school was a separate track, so you could go all the way through Sunday school and never go through Hebrew school which is what most of the girls did, and I think I mentioned this last time that Betty Fishman and Sybil Roth were instrumentally increasing the number of hours of the Hebrew school and merging the two Hebrew school and Sunday school into the way we have it now, just the one religious school

John

When was that, approximately?

Marcia

Probably late '60s. I'm guessing. Betty would know that better. One of the first board meetings we went to I remember, she and Sybil Roth presented this proposal. There was some consternation in the congregation that you had to now go to Hebrew school. You couldn't just do Sunday school, which really is the reformed model of being able to go just to Sunday school, and there were people who really didn't like that idea that you know, couldn't just continue Sunday school.

John

And what was the rationale for combining the two if it had been done differently all those years?

Marcia

The fact that you had a large population that really came two hours a week on Sunday morning were not very well educated, knew no Hebrew, and that was just not...that was not the model of conservative synagogues.

John

And well, let's talk about that. When you came, PJTC was a conservative synagogue?

Marcia

It always was listed.

John

Officially?

Marcia

Yes. We were not affiliated with the United Synagogue.

John

Was there...at this time that the school was integrated...did...was there an increase in awareness of conservative practice?

Marcia

No. I don't think so. We've been fighting for instance, as long as I've been here, over the issue of how kosher should the kitchen be, and as you know that's never really been quite resolved.

John

Right. So---

Marcia

It's never been a very observant congregation.

John

Well I guess my question is, were Betty Fishman and Mrs. Roth pushing this on their own, or was there a ground swell of support---

Marcia

That I can't answer.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Because we were too new.

John

Yeah. So you started attending board meetings as a result of this religious school issue?

Marcia

Partly yes. Yes. At the time the board was 42 members. If they thought you had any money, you were put on the board. Attendance was not required. There was an executive committee, and one of the meetings that I really remember very well, the board was discussing whether to extend to Rabbi Galpert another contract, and the door opened, and Dave Goldman came in and said, "Oh you don't have to talk about that. The executive committee just signed a lifetime contract." And we were rather appalled at this group of super powers behind the scenes.

John

And about when was this, do you remember?

Marcia

It had to be pre-'68.

John

Pre-'68. Okay, and---

Marcia

And we had joined again in '64 so somewhere in there.

John

Who was on the executive committee at that time? Do you remember?

Marcia

I have no idea because I didn't know the people. I just knew Dave Goldman.

John

Okay. So you and Mickey attended the open board meetings, I take it.

Marcia

Right, we did several times.

John

Not on a regular basis.

Marcia

I don't remember, probably not.

John

Where were the board meetings held back then?

Marcia

Probably in Whollman. I remember a long table with the board members sitting there, and then other people sitting in rows, facing the table.

John

You mean the non-board members?

Marcia

Right. Right. I know that Dan Libel was treasurer at the time. I don't know any other people that I remember...

John

And do you remember during this pre-'68 period any of the presidents?

Marcia

No.

John

Okay and what was the...the interplay at these board meetings that you remember? Were people active?

Marcia

People from the non-board members could speak. I think I mentioned that we had been so appalled when shortly after we joined we went to a board meeting where Dan Libel mentioned that there was a \$500 building fund and that of the 27 new members that year, I think five or six were paying it, and I remember standing up and saying---and nobody told me it was optional---how do you do this? We did pay it. I believe dues at a time were \$125. So if you paid the building fund, your dues were \$250. By the time that pledge was paid over, I think dues had gone up to \$200 or \$250, somewhere along that line.

John

What was Dave Goldman's position at the Temple at that time?

Marcia

Well his family, as you probably know, had helped start the congregation. His mother was a founding member of Sisterhood. From what I can gather, a lot...a small group of men rotated the presidency, Lou Silver, Dave Goldman. I don't know who else.

John

Frank Ackerman?

Marcia

He was gone by that time. He had been president, of course, but he was on the...the schism that formed Arcadia was...took place around '61-'62. We were in D.C., and someone told us about it.

John

What did they tell you about that?

Marcia

That there had been a big fight in the congregation and that people had left, that Mr. Silver had acted as peacemaker. You know, don't fight. Play nice, children. And tried to put it all together, but Ackerman took a group and formed Arcadia from the...our members plus the people in the Sierra Madre shul and the Almonte shul. They sold their property and built Arcadia.

John

And what was the basis of the dispute?

Marcia

It was over Rabbi Galpert---whether to keep him or not.

John

I see.

Marcia

But we were not at all involved in that. We had gone from living in Hollywood to D.C. and came back in October '63. It was all over.

John

So you came back. You and Mickey began occasionally to attend these board meetings...

Marcia

Right and then I joined Sisterhood in '64.

John

And how did you get involved in Sisterhood and why?

Marcia

Because we wanted to meet people. Most---I don't know about this generation---but most of my generation joined the Temple for social reasons as well as the Hebrew school for the children, but most of us turned to the Temple as a way to find community. So I joined Sisterhood, and I am not sure if that year or the following year, I became active. I think that year I worked on a Hanukkah dinner.

John

You mean active in Sisterhood?

Marcia

Sisterhood right. It was only men on the board so that wasn't an issue.

John

Really?

Marcia

Didn't occur to any of us---to me---to challenge that.

John

Yeah. (LAUGHING) And who was heading up Sisterhood back then? Do you remember?

Marcia

I think it was Margaret Farvstein followed by Marilyn Fingerhut.

John

And was it...in terms of its role in the Temple, was it pretty much the same then as it is now?

Marcia

What was really different was that there was a monthly meeting, a luncheon meeting. The women would cook the lunch in the kitchen, and we would have some kind of a program. A speaker, or whatever. And once a year we would have a fashion show that Ilona Fuchs would put on with her students from PCC, modeling the clothes they had made in her class. We would have all kinds of programs, and we would get probably about 60 people on an average to attend the luncheon, but that was where the friendships were formed.

John

Yeah and were most women in the Temple members of Sisterhood too?

Marcia

I don't know.

John

As far as you know.

Marcia

I have no way of knowing because I don't know what the membership was in the Temple.

John

Yeah. So would you say that back then Sisterhood had more of a social component to it than it does now.

Marcia

To some extent, yes, because of the luncheons.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

We...we...I have always felt we hit the social demographic cultural problems in this Valley 20 years before the other Valley does---the idea of women going back to work, which really hurt Sisterhood badly because they were busy. They couldn't come to luncheons. The luncheon attendance went down and eventually stopped, and also one of the big differences that I found right away when I became active in Women's League was that Pasadena, as long as I have been here, as always accepted non-Jews as members. United Synagogue said a non-Jew cannot be a member of the Temple, cannot be listed in the directory, and we've never---as I say in my years here---never followed that, and when I would say something about this at Women's League, who were mostly Valley and West Side, it was not well received.

John

Do you remember there being many non-Jews in the Temple back in the '60s?

Marcia

Yes. Yes. Many...the Tufelds...Carol Tufeld, for instance, was not Jewish. She wouldn't convert til her parents died, but the children were being raised Jewish, and they were bar mitzvahed. She became Sisterhood president after I did, and by the time the women became active in the Temple, she reached executive vice-president of the Temple.

John

And she was a non-Jew?

Marcia

She was a non-Jew who said Kaddish every Friday when her father died, and ultimately ____ (14:40) so these children were bar mitzvahed. I don't know if they went through conversions. I was not...I was not involved enough to know that.

John

So you joined Sisterhood and after a year or so you became more active. What did you do?

Marcia

I became program vice-president. Longevity is not a requirement in Sisterhood for office. So probably my second year I became program vice-president and began to attend Women's League conferences.

John

Okay, and...and then you've remained involved in Sisterhood in some capacity ever since.

Marcia

Pretty much ever since.

John

Yeah. When did Mickey become involved in the governance of the Temple?

Marcia

I don't know if he served on any committees before '68. I don't remember that, but somewhere, probably around '67 the men running the Temple began to run out of people to be president, and Mr. Silver felt that it had to go to the younger generation. Somehow---I have no idea how---he had met Joe Erinreich, and Joe I believe was a professor at SC. I'm not sure of that, but he asked---Lou Silver asked Joe if he would put together a committee to see if they could solve the problem of leadership. I don't think he had any idea of what the results were gonna be. What he got I don't think was what he expected. There was a group chaired by Joe, Mickey, Bob Hoffman, oh dear...I think Larry Kittiver. I can check this. I have some documents upstairs. If you have a copy of the Philosophy statement the names are all there.

John

Alright.

Marcia

There were about six. I was not at all involved in any of that, but apparently somewhere along the line they decided that the entire structure had to be changed. So they did. They came up with basically what we have now. They skinned the board down to, I believe, nine members. Later, it was later expanded to eleven, and they created an executive committee and the board with the executive committee being given the job of running day-to-day activities, all policy staying on the board.

John

The executive committee being the administrative council.

Marcia

In '75 I think it was I chaired the committee to modernize or update the constitution, and because there were changes that had been made, and one of the things that I suggested that we change the name to administrative council because it really wasn't an executive committee. It didn't have executive power, and that was something that was very important to all of us who had lived through that episode with the executive committee taking care of something the board felt was their right. So we...they...the powers

were carefully separated, and it just occurred to me that the term "executive committee" was not a very good one. It really is an administrative council, and over the years, the power of the admin has kind of waxed and waned. Some presidents give it more power and some less, but functionally policy remains with the board.

John

Now was there a constitution or written---

Marcia

I believe there was a constitution

John

Document of some sort before 1968?

Marcia

I believe there was. There were by-laws. I don't have them.

John

I had never seen that. 1968 in terms of documentation seems to be...

Marcia

While the jet engineers evolved, they document---(LAUGHING). I wonder if Blanchard, David Blanchard, would have any of that.

John

I have to ask him soon.

Marcia

Or Dan Libel. I mean their families go way back in the Temple. Unfortunately one of the weaknesses of the Temple, then and now, is maintaining records.

Michael

Yeah.

Marcia

They just don't really exist.

Michael

Yeah.

John

So the '68 constitution was more formal in terms of the separation of powers and authority.

Marcia

Absolutely. It was voted on, and at that time the presidents came into...the administration came in to office in January. One of the changes they made was to start the administrative year July 1. So the agreement was made among the men that Joe Erinreich would be president for 18 months from, I guess, Jan of '68 to the end of June '69. Then Mickey became president for two years, followed by Bob for one year.

John

Bob Hoffman?

Marcia

Bob Hoffman. Sorry. Mickey and Bob, and this was kind of all agreed ahead of time among themselves, Mickey and Bob served as executive VP's for Joe.

Bob served as one of the executive VP's for Mickey, and then I think Mickey did the same for Bob. They wanted to get the top leadership of that committee that understood what they were trying to do to be in office, both president and executive VP, to get the thing going, and then they felt they could step back. Joe, to my knowledge, never really did much else after that, nor before.

John

Now was this new constitution seen as some sort of a revolution in the way the Temple was run?

Marcia

Absolutely.

John

Was there opposition to it? How was it received when they came back with this unexpected proposal?

Marcia

I remember only a couple of things. During all of this time, there were---at the board meetings in various places there had been arguments, discussions between this older group and the young turks, and we were not looked kindly upon by the older people. Dave Goldman---I think I mentioned this---used to call me the Philadelphia lawyer. Max Stone would call Mickey and Gene the ____ (22:11), not a compliment, meaning you've got book knowledge, and you've got these degrees, but I know ____ (22:17). I know street smarts. So yes, there were...there was some friction there.

John

Sounds like a cultural change as well as a governance change.

Marcia

It was. At that time, the Temple had a large influx of engineers and I guess scientists, and so you had to change from the business community to the...to the professional community but particularly heavily weighted to the engineers. Joe of course was business. Mickey and Bob were both engineers. Gene was a history professor, but none of them...there never was much money. There was a comfortable level in the congregation but never the big money that a lot of other temples had which generally doesn't come from the salaried people. It comes from the lawyers, doctors...the Temple, I think I mentioned before, the Temple had very few doctors. It's my understanding that St. Luke and Huntington with very few exceptions did not have Jews on as, on their staffs or having admission rights. Although there was one surgeon, Ferman, Dr. Ferman I think worked out of Huntington, but generally not---I don't know why there were no people from City Hope at that time in our congregation. They came later.

John

So the new constitution is instituted. Mickey is president, I guess until '71, and...

Marcia

Well Joe was first...

John

Joe was first then followed by...

Marcia

Then Mickey, and then Bob for a year, and then I don't remember how it went.

John

And the new constitution is built all around a committee involvement---

Marcia

Right. What they wanted to do, which has worked marginally well, was to set a path to leadership, so you would be put onto a committee. They felt that that was...the committee level was where you found out what people were like, whether they followed through, whether they were good leaders, what their personalities, leadership skills etcetera...then you would move up to the vice president then the executive VP. They never wanted to have an automatic stepping stone to the presidency. Many temples, the executive VP automatically moves up, and we've caused a lot of hurt by sometimes passing over executive VP's who expected to have been made president but were felt not to have the qualities they were looking for. This was in later years, but that was supposed to be the path to leadership. They also wanted to divide the work so that nobody would be over burdened by dividing it all up. We tend to be very structure heavy, but it was deliberately done to divide work and divide power. So the Temple was divided in half, administrative and program. Your committees would be coordinated by a vice president who also served on the administrative council. Three vice presidents would be coordinated by the executive VP, and then both reported to the president. It doesn't work that way. What seems to happen most often is that the board seems to become the entry point, very often for people.

John

Over the years.

Marcia

Over the years.

John

Yeah, have there been different times when you felt that everything was working the way it was intended from the committee level all the way up?

Marcia

Oh I don't know. I don't know if I'd wanna make that judgment.

John

Okay. Yeah.

Marcia

I know that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people to both serve on committees and work up. One of the other advantages to people working up is you get a more knowledgeable board. It's not good for the health of

the Temple if you have board members who come in once a month and then go home and really don't know what the Temple is. I worry that a lot of the philosophy governing the Temple or about the Temple governance gets lost over the years. That bothers me. One of the other things that bothers me--- this has always been a lay-led congregation, as long as I'm here. Rabbi Galpert partly by personality and partly by philosophy really encouraged that. As a reconstructionist philosophically he felt that the congregation should have a lot of say. I remember once as ritual VP asking him a question, and he said, "I won't answer that. The committee has to decide that." So---

John

Within the ritual area.

Marcia

Yeah but again if you read Mordekai Kaplan's work on creating reconstructionism, it was to be done by committee decisions. The community was to decide on pretty much everything.

John

So during the '70s did you get involved in Temple governance very much or at all? When did you become involved in that? Beyond Sisterhood and ritual...

Marcia

I really have no idea when Mr. Silver asked me to serve on the ritual committee. I'm guessing it was late '60s, and it was...when I look back on it, it just amazes me that he did this, coming from his background. He hadn't changed, by the way, I'm gonna interrupt myself. The other change was that our generation was all American born, and many of the older generation was European-born, and for Mr. Silver to put a woman on the ritual committee of all committees was really an amazing step, and then I---after a couple of years I became ritual VP, but I never had any animosity from any of the men until I began reading Torah, and then Mr. Roth was not happy.

John

So when you became ritual VP were you the only female officer?

Marcia

Again because I don't know the years. I'm not sure. Somewhere along the line, Carol Tufeld was involved. As I said she worked up to I believe executive VP of administration. So she may have been there. I don't know anyone else. The men kind of...the men on the ritual committee kind of I don't know how to say this...they kind of chuckled at the vice presidency. They really didn't care. You wanna be vice president, be vice president. They didn't wanna be bothered. They were gonna run, you know, their fiefdom. At that time on Saturdays, there was a small kiddish after services, and the men would kick in money for it. The money was held in a cigar box by Sam Winegrad who was a CPA. He had an office across the street in what is now that pharmacy health food place?

John

Oh yeah.

Marcia

That was Siebert Weissman's building, and Sam had an office there, and one of my first jobs as ritual VP, the men decided that they wanted to get control of that money back from Ro---from Winegrad, and so I was told to go do it. (LAUGHING) And I went across the street to Sam's office and said that I would like to have the money, take it back, and years later I said to him, "Why weren't you angry at me?" Because I figured he really would be, and he said "Oh I knew they set you up for it!" (LAUGHING) But periodically at ritual committee in the '80s there would be discussions about the fact that we were running low on Torah readers, and we were in a precarious position because of the age of both of the men, and I would say, "I'd like to learn to read Torah," and they would change the subject. I don't know if any of them consciously did this. I mean it took awhile before I became aware of the fact that the same situation was happening. Then in '87, the Fall of '87, Cantor Julian offered to teach a class in Torah reading, and he put a notice in the Flame. We were to show up an hour before services on Saturday morning, Lou Salloway, Larry Shear, a few others and I signed up, but it quickly became only the three of us, and we learned to ____ (2:21). Cantor picked a parschach for us in February, the portion of Jethro where you read the ten commandments, and I can never remember if Larry Shear is a Kohein or a Levi, but whatever he was, Lou Salloway was the other. So they took between them the Levi and Kohein aliyah, read their portions, but I had found it very easy to learn that stuff, so Cantor Julian just said, well, keep going to the end of the portion or as far as you can, and that's when I discovered that that's where the ten commandments were. So I finished the portion. So they had Kohein, Levi and then me, and when I read, I tend to get totally focused on the Torah and the melody and all the rest and not pay much attention to what else is going on. I was not aware that when the ten commandments are read you have to stand, and I really didn't notice Rabbi Galpert if he said anything or just motioned with his hands, but I'm reading, and I look up, and all of a sudden the whole congregation stands up, and I'm thinking, "What did I do?!" and then Larry and Lou both dropped out right away, and I just kept going, and periodically as that was February '88 that I read the first time, periodically as Mr. Nadar became older and iller, Morton would call and ask if I could pick up the slack for Saturday, that Mr. Nadar wasn't going to be able to do it, and I remember once on Friday morning, Mr. Morton called and said Mr. Nadar had just called that he was ill, and I stayed home from work and just did as much as I could and then took the book into the Temple and Xeroxed the part that had the vowels and the ____ (4:31) marks, cut it, and when the Torah was opened, I slipped my little gyp sheet---we used to call them---and I read what I had learned, and then

I would just kind of throw my eye over...I don't think Rabbi Grater would like that---didn't have a problem.

John

So from ritual VP what other positions did you have on the board before you became president?

Marcia

I did ritual several times. I was membership. I was executive VP program. I'm trying to think what else. I don't know.

John

You were Sisterhood president at some point, right?

Marcia

Right. I have to check the dates. I think it was '71 to '73. My first year I think was under...when Bob Hoffman was president.

John

Were dues the same then as they are now? Because they're not very much now in Sisterhood.

Marcia

Oh I don't know what they were.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Well they're \$35 now, but no it wasn't much.

John

And over time, obviously at some time, women started becoming members of the board---

Marcia

Right.

John

And occupying more of the positions in the governance. How did...when did that happen? Do you recall? Over what period?

Marcia

It had to have been in the '80s, and I really am not particularly aware of it or of who else took on jobs. I just wasn't paying attention to that as such.

John

Now when did you become president?

Marcia

I think it was '90 and then '91.

John

And---

Marcia

I followed Gary Nothman.

John

Okay.

Marcia

And I suspect they were running out of candidates. I enjoyed it. I really did. I think when you've been active in an organization for many years, it's kind of fun to get a chance to do it your way, and I really wanted to re-invigorate the committee structure and involve as many people as we could. We've often been accused at the Temple of having cliques, but in fact---and I've served on a number of nominating committees and shared them---people are always looking for new faces. I don't know if the congregation realizes how hard most nominating committees work to bring in new people. I happened to meet Clark Lindstone once one Sunday morning in the parking lot and discovered that he was the treasurer, I believe, of Lamps Plus, and I went over to whoever was nominating chair and said, you know, "Get him." I gave nominating your name and Nancy's name, people, Ben Browdy, people that had taken my class in the '80s that I thought would be worthwhile to draw in, and I would pass the names to the nominating committee, and one man, Maury Applebaum, who I think is Bruce Applebaum's cousin, made an interesting remark. He had become involved in the board a little bit, very upset, very angry because it was a clique, and the clique was running the Temple, and after about a year or two on the board, he said one day, "You know, I was wrong. It's not that it's a clique. It's not that you're trying to keep outsiders in; it's just that you've all worked together for so long, you share common experiences, common vocabulary, and that appears to an outsider as a clique," but he said, "You're really very willing to bring new people in." So that was good.

John

Yeah. Yeah. And---

Marcia

There was one other thing I started to tell you before. Because the Temple has always been lay-led, I worry that conscious tradition might not be passed down. In most congregations the rabbi leads by fiat. I was once doing a class, and I made the comment that in most temples, when the rabbi says jump, and I started to say "The congregants say how high," and Simon Burrows interrupted and said, we form a committee---(LAUGHING)---which is probably very true, but in fact, the rabbis have a lot less power here than usual, and we've had to explain this to Rabbi Collin and to Rabbi Grater, but very often you get people who either from their own lack of knowledge or from their own previous experience feel the rabbi---we've gotta ask the rabbi...he decides.

John

You mean people on the board...

Marcia

And congregants, right.

John

So you were the first female president at the Temple.

Marcia

Right.

John

By the time it happened, was it seen as a big deal? Did you---

Marcia

Yeah, it was seen as a big deal. Yeah.

John

And---

Marcia

Had a lot of first...first woman on ritual...first woman ritual vice president...first Torah reader...first president.

John

And in the president position did you encounter any opposition, any hostility?

Marcia

I don't remember any of that.

John

Okay.

Marcia

The only opposition that I can think of happened when I was ritual vice president, and I remember joking at the time that well, we go back for a minute. There was a custom here on Kol Nidre that the Torahs would be held by often a father and sons, the idea being they would make a generous contribution for this honor. At some point, it was decided that it really wasn't bringing in that much money anyway, so let's do it a different way, and we began trying to honor groups. We'd honor the presidents of all, you know, Sisterhood, Temple, young couples' club, B'nai Brith, any affiliates. There'd been all kinds of things, honoring people through the generations. So when that was done the first year of my presidency, we were honoring all the presidents, one of whom of course was Sisterhood, and the Sisterhood president was holding the Torah during Kol Nidre, and I said I was the first ritual VP that had to worry about possibly getting lipstick on the white Torah towers because when you're holding it that close to your mouth, but that evening when Kol Nidre was over, two men came up to me and just tore me apart for allowing a woman to hold the Torah, and that was probably the year that ritual had also voted in or it was right after that, that they voted to give the women the aliyahs. I'll come back to that, but these men came up to me just furious because by involving women---first of all one of the men had sons, and he had been waiting for his youngest son to be bar mitzvahed so that they could then have that honor, and I had taken it away from him. By allowing women to have aliyahs, we now were diluting the specialness of men to form a minion for shiva, and he said, you know, "Lou Silver always knew if he needed a minion, he could call my house, and my sons and I would fill out the minion." Well now that specialness was gone because women could fill out the women. Those are the only two overt...the other

man was also upset, but the second man came back to me a year later, and I guess I was ritual again and said, "I really objected last year, but I've been thinking about it. I don't come to shul. I don't serve on the board. I don't work for the Temple. If you people who do feel this is the way to go, I have no right to object." The other man did not. (LAUGHING)

John

Well I wanna talk a little..well, let's wrap this up. You and Mickey---you've moved up. You were both presidents. You were both in the formal sort of hierarchy of the Temple, and you've both had many different positions over the years. You just stayed involved.

Marcia

This became our family. Remember when we moved to Pasadena or to California, our family consisted of Mickey's mother, a cousin whom we adored---of his---a cousin of mine whom I never see. That was it, and I remember looking around at the bar mitzvah---I think it was the bat mitzvah actually of one of my girls and saying there's 196 people here of whom blood relatives were the three, my mother-in-law's husband and his two children and four grandchildren. That was it for family. Everyone else, predominantly everyone else, was from the Temple.

John

So the Temple, would it be accurate to say, was the sort of center of your social lives?

Marcia

Absolutely.

John

And was that true from an early day, from the '60s?

Marcia

Well we used to juggle both the JPL group and the Temple group, and then bar mitzvahs could be a very destructive year, as you've probably found out. You become so focused. You have to go to...in those days, we would go to every Friday night and Saturday morning. So for a year, you were totally focused on weekends on the Temple bar mitzvahs and of course for the four kids. So we began to gradually drop out of the JPL group.

John

Now in the '60s and '70s I guess and into the '80s, there was a---what was the social world at the Temple like? I mean were there social activities at the Temple---

Marcia

Absolutely.

John

More so than now?

Marcia

Yes. Growing up it was very customary to have a Yom Kippur night dance, and that was held true here also. So Sisterhood or the Temple would run a

Yom Kippur night dance. Yeah. I think that probably goes back to the idea that---without thinking consciously of it---but back in biblical times after Yom Kippur when you had been forgiven of your sins by the high priest and gone through that whole ____ (16:13) service, the evening would be like the paseo for all the young people, and that's when engagements were announced. That's why they tell you on Yom Kippur afternoon after the bible reading they can tell you who you can sleep with, and so the idea for young people to meet on the holidays or in the afternoon and then the evening you kind of get this mardi gras release with the dance. So it was very, very common back East and then out here. We kept that going for a number of years. We would have New Year's Eve parties if it was on a weekend. What else...a lot of... it was very much a social center for most of us.

John

Was the pool used?

Marcia

Oh yes! The pool was incredibly valuable. I remember one year, in the '60s...I don't remember if I had a position in either Sisterhood...or maybe, maybe I was Sisterhood membership, I don't know. I know that the Temple secretary would call me and say that a family just moved in, and they have young children, and I would call and say "Tuesday nights we have a barbecue. Why don't you come Tuesday afternoon to the pool with your children. You know, I'll look for you, and bring your supper, and we'll have supper together." And it was a wonderful way for new families to come in and be immediately welcomed and greeted in an informal setting. Then Friday nights we started doing barbecues also.

John

Every Friday?

Marcia

Yeah. Every Friday, and Gene Fingerhut started what we used to call the diving service. You would come for the afternoon. The women would come with the children in the afternoon for swimming. The men would join us after work. We would either bring meat to cook on the grill or somehow or other we'd bring our suppers. The Temple would provide ____ (18:33) and wine. Cantor would make kiddish, and after supper we would go into Whollman---into Knell for services, the idea being...and you didn't have to dress...get dressed up...whatever you had been wearing with some exceptions, was okay. So it was an informal Friday night service, was the idea, and he called them the diving services. Cantor Julian got very upset because we only had one barbecue, and most of the meat coming in was not kosher. So we then had two barbecues, but people would come in with Kentucky Fried Chicken. There were just no questions asked. As I say Cantor tried to get a little bit stricter, but that was a wonderful way to bring in families, make people feel welcome.

John

And what happened to that?

Marcia

The women went back to work. People built their own pools. I think those two factors.

John

So gradually, I guess what, in the late '70s, '80s maybe did the...did it fade out?

Marcia

I would say the '80s probably. Now we would have a birthday party there every year for my August child, but lots of things happened at the pool. We had swimming lessons. They had a lifeguard, and you'd pay him for swimming lessons for the kids. That's where all my kids learned how to swim.

John

Was there a summer camp held at the school or something like it?

Marcia

I believe there was a day camp.

John

And what about---

Marcia

That's Steve Sensor I think.

John

Okay. Social activities for young people, dances, things like that...were those held at the Temple?

Marcia

Occasionally. We never, I don't think ever, were really very good at youth activities. Various people would come in, take the chairmanship and really try. We did have a B'nai Brith group that one of my girls joined. I don't remember an AZA. USY we never could get off the ground. Steve Sensor was youth director for a while, and he...he did...he would do various activities, one of which was to take the kids camping in the desert over Pesach, you know and try and meld the two. A number of us started camping, various camping trips that I think Judy Callahan later picked up and camped. Mickey and I had camped at...did camp every summer, and we camped cross-country twice, so...and we started taking the kids to ____ (21:34) for pumpkins, and one year we did this with a group of people, and we went...I think we did that more than one year, and then we decided to go to ____ (21:45) on Christmas week figuring there's nothing else to do. It won't be busy. Didn't realize that we would absolutely freeze our bunnies off (LAUGHING)...so, and one year we had Thanksgiving in ____ (22:02) at Wheeler Gorge. There were 14 children...no 14 adults and 27 children, something like that.

John

So periodically efforts were made to get the kids involved...

Marcia

But those were our---our...

John

Your personal things.

Marcia

Yeah personal...that was not from...specifically from the Temple. Steve Sensor's work was from the Temple. He was hired as the youth director.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Cantor Julian was also supposed to be youth director. He wanted a higher salary than Cantor Breene, and the only way we could afford it was to combine the cantorial job, which was part time, with youth director and teaching in the school...the Hebrew school. The latter two never worked...

John

Really?

Marcia

And were eventually dropped.

John

Yeah. The administrative...running of the Temple...was there an executive director of sorts at the Temple back in the '60s?

Marcia

I believe there was. I think Herb Ginsberg was his name. Shirley ____ (23:21) would know that better than I. I don't have any memory of being involved or noticing what he was doing. My kids were very little, and the '60s was when they were all born. When Max Stone was present, he brought in a woman that would work for him named Aleta Louie, and she became I guess an administrative assistant, executive secretary, whatever you wanna call her. Basically, she ran the Temple, which was why I suggested at a board meeting recently that rather than look for an executive director---I said executive secretary. I should have said administrative assistant. It might have given a little more clout because they generally work for less money. They're not credentialed. But if you get the right person, you can get the job done.

John

And then how long was she involved in that two years?

Marcia

Yes, for several years.

John

Yeah. And then in the '90s another effort was made to get an executive secretary.

Marcia

Yes when I was president, we hired Marciall Rosen who I think did a fair job. He ran into several PR problems with people, tackless remarks.

John

What led though to hiring him as an executive director at that point? Do you remember?

Marcia

No. No I really don't.

John

And do you---

Marcia

I think because we were seeing that as the women went back to work through the '70s, '80's, the volunteer group pool was shrinking.

John

And so Marciall was there less than a year, wasn't he? Or maybe a year.

Marcia

I think a year...a year or two, and then he was followed by Allan Corn who I don't remember being impressed with at all. One of the problems that I think Rabbi Collin had and that Marciall Rosen had was---they were having ideas that had been successful in the '70s and '80s but were no longer successful. I don't know if you were here when Rabbi Collin came, but he started things like a pizza night on Monday night. Pizza ____ (20:56). Come and have pizza and discuss the portion of the week. Come after Saturday services, and I forgot what else we were doing on... A lot of ideas that may have been have been successful earlier but were no longer successful because the generation, really, has changed. And I think that was partly the problem with Marciall Rosen. He did wine tasting before Passover. Got different dealers to bring in kosher wine, and promote the kosher wine and of course, we would get a kickback from the wine sale.

John

Yeah I remember that. I remember that.

Marcia

We would get a kickback from the wine sale. It was to be part educational, part fun. It was not terribly successful, and I don't remember what else he did.

John

What I mostly remember is that he made people...some people angry.

Marcia

Yes. As I said he had some PR problems.

John

Yeah but it was probably...probably given time would have been effective.

Marcia

I was told. I was not involved, but I was told that the idea was to give him another year on probation, but instead he was fired.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

And I think he had been already put on probation before so...

John

And then we moved into the rebuilding program and...

Marcia

That was going on the same time I think.

John

Yeah. It overwhelmed any further discussion of executive director.

Marcia

Of executive director, right.

John

Of executive director yeah.

Marcia

I started to mention earlier the girls' bat mitzvah. I believe Marciall Cats was ritual vice president when a family named Kinniver joined the Temple. No. I had said Larry was on the 1968 reorganization, but I think I'm wrong. They moved here from Anaheim which at that time had a very large active conservative congregation, and they wrote a letter asking us to start Saturday morning bat mitzvahs because as they had experienced in Anaheim. Now up until that time, the girls were bat mitzvahed Friday night. I believe Marian Vigo's younger twin sisters were the first bat mitzvahs in our congregation. The idea originally was, not necessarily here but generally, you could allow a girl to do it on Friday night and read the haftorah because it didn't matter who was going to be read the next day by a man. So you weren't shattering a lot of really strict rules b doing it on a Friday night. So the girls were to have their bat mitzvahs on Friday night, and there'd be a very gallant onig. When the Kinnover's wrote that letter the ritual committee voted and agreed to allow bat mitzvahs on Saturday, and that was really pretty unusual in this area. Although I think nationally that their had been

John

You mentioned a little while ago the classes that you were teaching, and those were avenues for identifying people who might get involved in the Temple.

Marcia

I had started in the '70s. Every once in a while being asked to do various classes on traditions, and I really loved it. In the end of '83 I stopped working and was looking for something to do, and someone told me about a class that was called the "Holiday Workshop class." It had been created by a woman at Steven Weiss and was so successful that the executive direc--- educational director Stephen Weiss convinced the Bureau of Jewish Education to sponsor these all over L.A. basin, and at one point they were taught at 14 locations. You had to use her material and her methodology, and you would go to Steven Weiss once a week, observe a class, come back and teach it, and I did that form ...I don't know...I seem to think it was like 7 or 8 years in the '80s, and really loved it.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

But after a while two things happened. I started to get dried out, and partly the other reason was Rabbi Collin had come and had started his Intro to Judaism class, and one of the things that was my reward in teaching was what I call the aha! moments. When somebody comes in in March and says I've been in class since September. I finally had the courage to do Friday night Shabbat, and I loved it, and you know you just...you float, but now Rabbi Collin was getting those aha moments with his class. By the time I got them, they were tired. That was a 17-week course, very, very long. The novelty was wearing off. They wouldn't read anything. If I recommended anything they had been reading last year, they weren't going to, and attendance dropped off precipitously around this time of the Spring time of the year, and I finally thought I'm not getting rewarded emotionally. It's a lot of work! It's, what, 2½-hour classes, I think, 17 weeks, and I just stopped.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

It was enough. We need to do something like that again. Rabbi Grater tried it this year, but by doing it on a weeknight I think he made a mistake. The young families can't come out anymore on weeknights.

Michael

Yeah.

John

Yeah well I can say from my own personal experience with Rabbi Grater's class that it's just very hard, yeah, week after week after week to make that time available. You know?

Marcia

We had talked after Bagel breakfast this year on intermarriage. We talked about my doing two Sunday morning sessions on Shabbat, which didn't happen because we couldn't find calendar time, but the problem is one of the greatest things that that year-long class had from the students point of view was it gave them time to grow into things. So you could wait til March to light the first Friday night candle. If you do two weeks, you don't have that growth.

John

What kind of other adult education has the Temple put on over the years? I mean there've been Bagel Breakfasts since...since when?

Marcia

Oh I don't know.

John

Since forever, as far as you know?

Marcia

Not forever but for a very long time. Rabbi Galpert used to teach Wednesday night class, and he was a wonderful, wonderful teacher.

John

In what? Wednesday night class in what?

Marcia

I don't remember it being on any one single issue. ____ (3:45)

Michael

Would it be secular issues? Music?

Marcia

Could be. Could be. Could be. We—after Rabbi Galpert died in that inter-regimen period when Ira Lowenthal, the president, said we're not going to look for a year...which was a very, very smart decision because anybody coming in immediately after Rabbi Galpert would have been a disaster for him. It gave the congregation time to mourn and to become ready for a new person, and David Julian did a very good job as acting both cantor and rabbi. I'm sorry. What did you ask? I got myself sidetracked.

Michael

About---

John

Just adult education in general over the years...you mentioned Rabbi Galpert's classes on Wednesdays, Bagel Breakfast being held occasionally...

Marcia

Oh I know what I was going to say. When the High Holidays came around after Rabbi Galpert's death, we hired a rabbi named Rabbi Tuttenhauer from...lives in Israel, had come to America and was American, but what I really remember him saying at the time---this would be '89 or '90---was that American Jewish society had changed. While our parents and to some extent my generation had come to Temple for music and wanted the cantor and the choir and formal musical composition, now you can go to the music center. You don't look to the Temple for that. While our parents and we were content to go to the Temple for learned lectures, we could go to Caltech and get better, and he really was the first one that...that in my memory began to see the generational change in what people looked for, and I had noticed my kids did not like our services. They always felt that it was a performance, and it was too passive, and of course you see that Rabbi Grater has changed our services to a more involved, less formal music, everything that Rabbi Tuttenhauer was seeing at that time.

Michael

Oh I see Okay.

Marcia

There were, and I don't know if I mentioned this, the Sunday night programs that the Helpurns used to conduct. I believe I mentioned them. Four or five times a year, they would bring in big names like Melvin Belle and Jerry

Lewis. That would be the late '50s, possibly early '60s, and you might wanna talk to him about it.

John

Yeah. Yeah, and then their sponsorship was key to that? Or---

Marcia

Oh yes, as far as I understand it.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

The other thing that Sisterhood used to do---they would run dances, but we also began to do our plays. It had started somewhere around '64-'65. The Barths had been very active in the Temple, she as Sisterhood president, he as Temple president. They were moving to New York, and at a Sisterhood luncheon, Shirley Cohen wrote a small skit with parodies of music as a farewell to the Barths. Somebody took that idea and decided we needed to expand on that. Marilyn Fingerhut and Fran Collins were the main, yeah, main scriptwriters as I remember it. The music was taken. The lyrics were written by Shirley Cohen, Marilyn and me, primarily, and we had a wonderful time. Spent umpty-nine hours getting it ready, and they were very well received. The problem is our humor was ____ (8:20), New York Jewish. One of the plays was the idea of a spaceman hurtled back in time and landing 1930's Brooklyn. Another one was kind of a music man, and I remember something about the librarian, and one of them, Marilyn had heard a joke and decided to base the play on the joke. I won't tell you the joke, but there were Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Snow White they think has died. The seven dwarfs need a minion so they go out into the woods looking for three Jews, and you can take it from there, and they were just...they were wonderful...We would have a bar, table decorations, I remember. Women would bring in hors d'oeuvres and stuff to eat, and we would have the play, and they were great, but the last time we did it, you could already see that the humor had changed and the knowledge of Yiddish. I don't speak Yiddish, but I know a lot of the words, and the younger people didn't know that much even. So that idea of ____ (9:49) humor, of New York tenement humor was gone.

John

Yeah. About when did they come to an end?

Marcia

Later. Much later than that. Probably mid-70s. I don't know.

John

Yeah. Yeah.

Marcia

Marilyn would be a better...unfortunately what we didn't do, we never wrote down who wrote the lyrics of each song. So unless somebody can remember that they wrote that song, that's lost.

John

The scripts around anywhere?

Marcia

Marilyn I believe has most of them. I have some.

John

Okay.

Marcia

I remember writing the lyrics of a song for ____ (10:38) based on a pinafore, I think, polished of the yentl so carefully that one, while I was driving a carpool.

John

Let's just talk about the facilities a little bit. You weren't...you were gone at the time they built the pool, weren't you?

Marcia

Oh yeah I was here. I believe.

John

I thought you were sort of...that was the time period when you were back, but if not do you...were you involved in that at all?

Marcia

I only ever remember the pool being here, but then again that's all part of the reconstructionist idea that you belong, and you sent that fascinating article about the Pasadena Jewish community. The idea was this was a community, and everything was to be located in this one center. So you would go here for services and for the pool and for the gym and for B'nai Brith and Hadassah, and all of your activities would be in one place. So we have never had a Jewish community center for instance to compete with. It was all here.

John

Yeah and of course the pool is no longer with us.

Marcia

No.

John

And what happened? People stopped using it because they got their own pools?

Marcia

Our kids grew up, and just the attendance just started falling off. We used to charge pool membership in the summer. I think, I would say, \$40 for the summer. Then we had the individual. If you came in just once in a while, then you paid individually. Then the question came up, could you swim on Shabbat? And Mr. Silver allowed us how you could, but then the question was how would people pay who were not pool members, so you had to pay on Friday to swim on Saturday. I don't know how well that worked.

John

Were---you were at the Temple when the wing that is now ____ (12:49) was built.

Marcia

Right. Max Stone built that. He was a builder. Max had come up here from Beverly Hills. I don't know why and noticed that there were no apartments that he wanted to move in to. He had done very well, and he was looking for a very affluent style apartment, and there weren't any. So he went to Orange Grove, down Millionaires' Row, and he bought a house, and the non-Jews were not happy. He tore it down, and he built an apartment house. He was the first Jew to do that, and he built a luxury apartment house. There was a lot of anti-Semitism in Pasadena. I don't think anyone was burning crosses, but a lot of subtler kind. They didn't like the fact that...(COUGHS) excuse me...one of their mansions had been taken down, replaced by apartments, and all that by a Jew, and of course that was the trend, and now you see that there are very few of the mansions left, and what he built was beautiful. He built very lovely ones.

John

Where is it? Can you remember?

Marcia

There were a number of them. The only one I remember is on the corner of Orange Grove and Waverly, because he would talk about the ____ (14:14) apartments. (LAUGHING), but somebody asked him what the penthouse cost. He says, "If you gotta ask, you can't afford."

John

Why did he build, and why did the Temple build that wing? What was it for? The ____ (14:30) wing?

Marcia

We needed more room for classrooms, and so that was the idea. It was a school building right from the beginning.

John

For the Hebrew school? And Whollman Hall extended down a ways, right? Where the...where the classrooms are...

Marcia

You know I really don't remember it, but apparently it did.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

Past the bathroom area.

John

Right.

Marcia

I don't have any memory of that.

John

Do you have any other recollection of the whole process of deciding yeah, we wanna build this? How did they get financed? Anything like that? You had no involvement?

Marcia

No involvement of that at all. I know that Mr. Silver used to talk about the money that people were donating, but when Mickey and Bob basically took over, they spent a lot of time in the bookkeeper's office looking for records but could find no records of large donations. So whether people really gave the money that Mr. Silver thought they did and there just were no records kept or whether they in fact weren't giving much, we don't know. One thing that really influenced us for many years pretty much until Sandy Hartford became involved, Mr. Silver wanted...everybody should be able to afford...even young families with the children...everybody should come. So if you wanted to raise the price from \$5 to \$10 for anything, Mr. Silver didn't like that which is wonderful in a way, but you needed the balance. It was never, in my experience until recently, a temple where people gave large amounts of money because you didn't have the big commercial people that you had in the other temples, except for Max Snell perhaps, but there was a large middle level. One of the things that I have always admired, to my knowledge has been here as long as I have, is that you could join if you didn't have the money. That was never an issue although people will tell you they had been turned away because they didn't have the money, but usually that's not true. My sister was turned away from a temple in the Valley and told to find one she could afford.

John

Oh really?

Marcia

I don't know that that happened here, and I've always been very proud of that.

John

Because of our special dues...

Marcia

Right. But one of the...one family when we... The dues were raised I think \$250, and one of our congregants, a store owner, wrote a letter with a check for \$125, or whatever it had been, I think it was \$125, and said, "I don't use the Temple very much at all," and basically this is what it's worth, and Mickey sent the check back, and Lou Silver was furious at him. You don't send money back! And Mickey said if I take that, every one of his friends will do the same thing, and we've gotta stop it. It's not an issue of who could afford it, and he coined the phrase that you may have heard that the Temple is open to those who can't but not to those won't afford it. There was also a B'nai Brith group of men who met on Tuesday nights in Whollman, Kirshner then. They would play poker, and the way it was described to me, boast about how little money they were paying on their dues. So there was a

whole---almost a culture---of not paying the Temple that Mickey and Bob were determined they were gonna stop, and unless you couldn't afford it, and there were people turned away at Yom Kippur, who had been sent letters. You know, tell us if there is a problem, we'll work with you. Never responded, show up on Yom Kippur, and there have been people turned away. Very painful.

John

How did the rebuilding of Galpert Sanctuary get going? Were you involved in there? You were involved in that early part of that right?

Marcia

There had actually been previous attempt probably around 1970. I remember Mickey and Bob being involved in that, and I remember Sisterhood paid to have architectural drawings drawn up.

John

Around 1970---around that time?

Marcia

Around that time. I don't know if they were ever drawn up, but we had offered to pay for them, and there was a congregational meeting where they presented their idea. It...the whole thing fell apart over athletic facilities or some ridiculous so...and just died there.

John

Why did they want to engage in something like that in 1970? It wasn't all that old at that time.

Marcia

I don't know what prompted it. I know that when Mickey was president, a congregant offered to pay to have the gym turned into a beautiful social hall, and Mickey said if you accept that money I quit the Temple because he felt that it would throw out the gym and that that was used for so many other things than a beautiful social hall, that it would really change the tenor of the Temple. Why they wanted or what they were planning, I really don't remember, but it died and then came back I guess in the '80s. It would have had to because we built in the '90s right?

John

Right yeah. And what...get going?

Marcia

I should remember that. It was pretty obvious that the structure was in terrible condition. I used to joke that on Yom Kippur when the presidents are all sitting up on the bimah, that someday the whole thing was just going to seep through all of our chairs because as you walked across the bimah it felt spongy. They found later that one of the pillars was being held up by the ceiling. It was all termites and rotten. The electricity was a disaster, very old and terrible so it was pretty obvious that we really needed to modernize. I don't know who was president when they got Harvey Knell and Mickey Segal to agree to chair the fundraising. Nor do I remember how it came about that

they felt they needed to bring in professional fundraisers, and they hired Jane Fantell who I think some of them knew from Federation, was a professional fundraiser, and she and her partner worked with volunteers, training them how to ask for money. I don't know. And she did come in to the board and tried to help us...she would do board trainings. The only result that I remember is we now have refreshments at board meetings.

John

That came from the---

Marcia

That came from that. I don't remember any of the others. They were very expensive, but Harvey and Mickey felt that they needed them. I guess they were doing the record keeping too. I really don't know. They felt that they couldn't do the job without them and that we needed the professional help. What I was sorry about was that after the initial dividing of who the potential big givers were etcetera, that there was no attempt after that to upgrade that list as new members came in. We just lived with the standard building fund fee which is on your dues when you come in, and that assessment was bitterly fought by many people.

John

Let's see. PJTC's involvement in the larger community...you've been in...you've mentioned you're involved with Women's League...

Marcia

I have been for, I don't know, forty years or something, but I never felt I was successful in connecting us to the...to the wider Women's Jewish group. We would occasionally would bring some of their people in to be speakers at a Torah fund or an installation but not much else. This is the first year ever that we have three people on the board at Women's League, and this is a regional, Pacific Southwest Region, with your wife Nancy and with Karen Brown as graphics, Nancy as membership, and I'm on the Torah Fund committee. I'm vice chair. That, we just never had. We have successfully brought our women to the regional conferences, but that's been about it. As far as local, Rabbi Galpert was not terribly interested in our being involved locally and didn't really cultivate that. Rabbi Collin did. He was very active and I think probably still is with the interfaith community in Pasadena and was president of the board of rabbis and began to really get us involved in the outside Jewish and non-Jewish world which Rabbi Grater is following up on.

John

So before Rabbi Collin, was it...was it your sense that PJTC was really sort of isolated from the larger Los Angeles Jewish community?

Marcia

They didn't know we were here.

John

And is it---

Marcia

I can't tell you the number of conferences I've gone to in Women's League and have people say there are Jews in Pasadena...

John

Yeah and do you think it was just a matter of geography, a matter of perception of Pasadena?

Marcia

All of the above. Pasadena was not originally terribly hospitable to Jews. I don't think there was active anti-Semitism that I'm aware of although I think I mentioned that the title to our original house in Hastings Ranch had a covenant that excluded Jews. It had already been nullified by the Supreme Court, but it was there, but the idea of the men...trying to go back in my memory...the original people in the community, it is my understanding, really felt this was kind of their refuge. The rabbi should make nice when necessary, you know with the other community, the outside community, and they would take care of religion and God and the Temple. So they weren't looking for an activist rabbi at that time. We were part of Jewish Federation for many years, and I don't know---fifteen years ago or so that we broke off and formed our own federation.

John

Well did we actually break off, or were we shown the door?

Marcia

I was not involved. It was my understanding we broke off.

John

Okay.

Marcia

Because we felt we weren't getting the services. We certainly weren't getting much attention, but the idea in most people's minds was that Pasadena was...was wasp and wasps who ran the Rose Bowl and the parade didn't really know much about it...about Jews out here. What I think has changed...I kinda get amused by this...was the advent of or the recreation of the old town. Then the Valley and West L.A. began to come here for the restaurants, and they discovered the playhouse, but most I think it's the restaurants, and they discovered the freeways do go in two directions, but that's been relatively recent.

John

With your involvement with Women's League...do you think that there's a cultural difference between PJTC...Jews at PJTC and Jews in the Valley?

Marcia

I do. As I mentioned before I think we're twenty years ahead of any problems, problems in intermarriage particularly, and our way of dealing with them has always been different. The other thing---if you really want to blend into the larger demographics, you don't move to Sherman Oaks or Fairfax. You move to the San Gabriel Valley where you can disappear or

emerge when you feel like it. So you were attracting a group of uninterested people, heavily intermarried people who knew that they couldn't be welcomed at the big temples in either the Valley or West L.A. could come out here and either ignore temple or just send the kids to religious school, or in our case, they could be members. I got into a lot of trouble once by talking at a Women's League conference about our Friday night dive-in services and how much I felt they contributed to bringing new families in and integrating them and making the congregation very warm and accepting, and I made the mistake of saying...somebody asked about the food, and I said everybody brings...you know, whether it's hamburgers from home or Kentucky Colonel, and oh! Yes I was taken aside and verbally spanked for that one! How could you do this? That's ____ (30:39). Well of course it was ____ (30:42), but that never really was an issue here. People did their own thing, and that was the...we've always kind of looked at the greater good concept rather than the details, and Cantor Julian tightened it up a little bit.

John

And you sensed maybe there's a change in culture at the AJCC over the years, in particular in recent years?

Marcia

Absolutely. Nobody in my generation has any idea what spirituality means. I'm not sure if the younger people know what it means either, but they use it! And that's what they're looking for. There are more, I believe, more people keeping kosher now than in my generation. I do think it's different. We did, and I think I mentioned, we did have a group of orthodox when I first moved here, and I remember the High Holiday services where the orthodox were in Knell, and the rest of us were in Galpert, but gradually orthodox people moved away. There weren't enough here to keep them...no...no kosher butcher in all the time that I've been here.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

And a Jewish deli only for a few of those years, which is, I don't mind driving for meat but for a pastrami sandwich? (LAUGHING) But I do think that there is a change now. People are, I think, taking religion more seriously all over the world...all over America, and we see that here. When I came here, and I called the Temple and asked if there were a Jewish pre-school, the secretary laughed.

John

Really?

Marcia

I knew enough not to ask for day school, but I thought there would be a Jewish pre-school.

John

Now when did B'nai Simkah (32:51) open? In 1980 or something.

Michael

My kids went there, and I think it had just opened. My youngest one was born in 1981, so because she entered when she was three or four, and---

Marcia

That'd be right.

Michael

So---

Marcia

So early '80s...that'd be...

John

About the same time Sam Weissman opened.

Marcia

Probably. I was not involved with that. Allan Whitman, David Blanchard are the people I think of.

John

Burst of activity in the early to mid-80s.

Marcia

Well remember we had cross-town bussing, and that was a heavy stimulus for all private schools...

Michael

When was that? When was that?

John

That went in in '69 with the Pasadena...

Marcia

Okay, I was gonna say my son was going into the fourth grade, I believe, so that would be around 8 or 9, yeah, and there was a tremendous amount of white flight, and the schools didn't really know how to handle it which is, I think, tragic because it should have worked. We're a small, geographically small city. How far were you driving for heaven's sakes? Eight miles? It wasn't my kids getting up at six in the morning to go to school, but they didn't handle it well. They let the standards go way down, and so people began looking for alternatives, so ____ (34:28) and the pre-school came along.

John

Aside from Women's League are there any other Jewish organizations that you've belonged to over the years?

Marcia

I don't think so. I belonged but not active...

John

Yeah.

Marcia

To Hadassah

John

Okay. Non-Jewish organizations---did you belong or participate in any of those?

Marcia

In the early years sure. Oh there was one other thing I should mention. I don't know if you've heard of the City of Hope group. There was a lifesavers chapter back in the '60s. I don't know who started it, but Shirley Hoffman's brother, Les Berman and his wife Rose were very active in that, and that was another entry point into the social life of the Temple. Although not everybody was a Temple member, most of us were, but you would go to a...something from the City of Hope...they divided us into circles so when you joined the group you'd be assigned, and the circles took turns putting on functions, you know a dinner or a bridge party night or whatever, and the money raised of course all went to City of Hope, and that was...that was big! And then we'd have a dinner in July, I think, at the Temple. That was our big fundraiser.

Michael

Interesting.

Marcia

Dinner dance, yeah.

John

Yeah, and...I mean, was there a JPL contingent at the Temple?

Marcia

Oh yes. Not so much engineers, I discovered, but scientists. You know, you had the Phil Callahans, the Steve Edbergs, JPL gosh, I'm blanking, but there were a lot. Herb Phillips, Loni Lane...large, large group. Not very much from Caltech, usually could count that in one hand. There were some---oh I can't remember their names. Some very major scientists from Caltech that occasionally...that might join...I can't remember the names. Rabbi Galpert was friendly with several of them, but we had the Coopermans...who was the one who just died? Dianne Ebstein...he was a nationally renowned geophysicist, and they were always active, but Gulkus (3:28)---I'm not sure if he's JPL or Caltech but not a lot from...you know, even when there were Jewish presidents at Caltech, we didn't see them. If they went anywhere, they went to Glendale for reform.

John

Yeah. Any other sort of contingents of PJTC members that you can think of?

Marcia

Not off hand.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

A lot of us, Jan and I particularly were very involved in the '60s in the political arena here...not running but I used to run what I call my underground when I lived in the Ranch. The Ranch was known for being

republican, but I discovered there were a lot of quiet democrats, and there were a lot of very bitterly fought elections in the '60s---school board and city council. Pasadena was heavily segregated at the time. Ed Schuckman had been principal of Lincoln, I believe, and often talked at the Temple on the school issues. There was a question of whether you could just throw money at the Black schools and bring you know, separate but equal, but then there was the Coleman report that said that that didn't work, that you had to have equal socioeconomics, and that's what started the bussing, and later he recanted. I guess his opinion, I have no idea, but some of us bought into that. I couldn't go out to do much because I had lots of little kids. So I would call the headquarters for the bond issue or the candidate and say I can do work in the house, and I remember somebody driving up bringing boxes of mail to be folded and stuffed, and then I would send...subdivide and subcontract to Jan Pays, to Jackie Sensor. I don't know who else. I had a whole---my neighbor...I had a whole little underground working, and then in the morning somebody from the campaign would come and pick them up and take them back. We did a lot of that. We were very active in the PTA, very active in a lot of the elections. The Cortinez, Ray Cortinez, who just took over as second in command of the L.A. unified school district was our superintendent here for a number of years, and we knew all the superintendents because we would attend the coffees. We would get to know the candidates. I remember once one of my girls was in high school, and her teacher came in the room and said, "I just thought some of you might like to know that Pasadena High has scheduled Back-to-School night for the first night of Passover, and just in case you're interested there's a pay phone down the hall," and I got a call at work from my daughter, and I immediately called the superintendent's office, gave my name, asked to speak to Ray Cortinez. He got on the phone and said, "Okay Marsha what did I do now...what did we do?" And I told him, and he said, "Don't worry. It's taken care of." We, Jan and I particularly, had that kind of a relationship by staying active in the school issues. Jan of course has continued.

John

Were there any regular efforts to bring any political speakers to the Temple?

Marcia

Yes. Very very frequently. The bussing issue divided the Temple badly. There was a social action committee that was liberal and wrote a letter to the Star News I think in favor of bussing, signed it very carefully "The Social Action Committee of Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center" and the uproar is the reason we didn't have a social action committee for probably twenty years after that. It really...the Temple was very badly split. We had business people who owned businesses on the other side of town who were very much opposed to bussing. We had every day garden variety people who were opposed to bussing. So it was very, very difficult.

John

Is it your sense that PJTC is predominantly democratic and liberal? Is there a mix there? Has it changed over time?

Marcia

It has changed over time. I think we always assumed it was democratic and liberal until that issue came up, and now I don't know. We've got libertarians. We've got republicans. I would say still predominantly democratic, but I don't know if that's true, but we very often would have speakers down perhaps legal, voters' speakers, candidates speakers before elections.

John

And was that normally arranged by a social action committee? Or somebody in charge of speakers or somebody just might happen to have a---

Marcia

Probably...

John

A contact.

Marcia

Either social action or adult ed I would think would be the two groups that would...maybe B'nai Brith...would do that.

John

What about, now you just mentioned bussing was an issue that had a big divisive impact on the Temple, but what about other sort of world events that might have impacted the Temple, and I'm thinking of course about you know the wars in the Middle East and---

Marcia

That's where my mind went right away. In '67 people were frightened that Israel might not survive, and people were coming out of the wood work that we didn't even know were Jews and non-Jews coming to the Temple to give money for Israel. In '73 I don't know who organized it. It may have been Hi Vigo. Called a rally at the Temple in support of Israel to raise money, and I don't know...did I tell you about this before? We had just moved into the house. We had no furniture. This room was empty, and we had decided that we would you know, save up some money to get a dining room set. The war happened. We went to that event having planned to give \$500. We were sitting towards the back. Hi got up. I don't know of anyone else who did, and was making the pitch and nothing was happening, and Mickey finally got up and said, "I gotta do something," and he went to the front. He went up on the bimah and talked about money. How much money you spend in Vegas. How much money a pack of cigarettes costs over a year. That kind of talk, and at one point he said he would give a thousand dollars if anyone would match it, and there is in an event like that a tipping point. If nobody says anything, the whole thing dies, and one person---I don't know who---says I'll match it...oh no! and nothing happened, and Mickey went up to \$1500 if

someone would match \$1000. You know, I'm falling under the seats because what happened to our \$500 and our dining room set? Somebody said "I'll match you \$1000," and from then on we raised \$73,000 that night which in '73 was a lot of money and in Pasadena was unheard of. We just didn't...people didn't give that kind of money. We used to have bond dinners, and I remember coming up here from Hollywood to attend a bond dinner. They would pick somebody and honor them, and that was a device to raise money for bonds. I'm not sure exactly when that stopped, probably mid-80's. It just wasn't getting enough...it wasn't really raising enough money to make it worthwhile. We would have dinners later at the Huntington, and I remember the one at the Temple. Temple was never terribly supportive of Israel in general.

John

In an official way or just your sense among the congregants? On a personal level.

Marcia

I think that personal was the only place it happened. The Temple itself as I think of it was not terribly active zionistically.

John

And why do you think that was?

Marcia

Going back to the original people in the '20s, I think that generation was too busy making a living, and that attitude carried them through. I think I mentioned that, my family was, I didn't care much about Israel. I didn't hear much about the holocaust. In the '40s you were trying to get through, recover from the '30s, and some people didn't recover very well...not a very outward-looking world, and I think that attitude stayed here in Pasadena. Maybe others know more about that than I do. I just have never felt that there was a lot of activity to support Israel.

John

Yeah. Yeah. This is a complete change of subject. Was Mickey a member of the B'nai Brith chapter?

Marcia

When Bob Hoffman was going to be installed as president of B'nai Brith, he asked Mickey to be the installing officer, and Mickey agreed and then discovered that he couldn't unless he was a member. So he joined, and when I became Temple president, I was informed that it was a tradition---I don't know if it is still followed---that the Temple president was a member of B'nai Brith which had at that point had begun to allow women. There used to be a B'nai Brith Women's and a B'nai Brith Men's. The Women's group when I came here were all old women, probably 40's and 50's even, and then I think that gradually died out, and the men remained, and eventually they integrated. So I did join B'nai Brith when I became Temple president for several years, eventually letting go.

John

Now the Temple's always had a pretty strong Sisterhood.

Marcia

Yeah.

John

But...and I know that right now there's an effort being made to create sort of a men's club or whatever you wanna call it.

Marcia

Right.

John

Was there ever anything like that, aside from maybe B'nai Brith, in the past?

Marcia

There may have been in the '50s. I don't know, but I've always felt that there wasn't one that I'm aware of, when we joined in the '60s, and I've always felt that the board became the men's club. You know, Mickey, Bob Hoffman, Gene Fingerhut, Steve Kay. This entire group. Cheslow Les, but somewhat, all were active on the Temple board so they wouldn't have been interested in the men's club even if it had been here.

John

So would it be fair to say that in those days, a lot of the people who ran the Temple were also a social group?

Marcia

Yes but the Temple came first, and it was that...that's where we met, and that's where the friendships were formed...absolutely it was through the Temple. I think we've needed a men's club for a long time now. Gary Northman tried to form one. I don't know, late, probably early '90s, late '80s, but he had a fixed agenda in his mind of what he wanted it to be. He wanted it to be like Sisterhood, which is what most men's club...many men's clubs are...sort of a fundraising arm of the Temple. The men who showed up really wanted a men's discussion, social, convivial Sunday morning thing, and it broke. It just never went anywhere. Rather than just trying to let it grow itself and gradually work it in, it never went. So I'm hoping that this time it will.

John

I think that pretty much completes all the subjects that I have.

Michael

I just have a few...the lifetime contract with Rabbi Galpert, so after that---some time between 1964 and 1968, there was never...

Marcia

1988...88 he died.

Michael

Right. For twenty years there were no further renegotiations of contract?

Marcia

Unless there were financial that I'm not aware of, I don't remember. He was here for...I think we celebrated his 36th year.

Michael

Yeah.

John

He came I think in '52.

Michael

'52 right. So he...wow...

Marcia

That's one reason when we do go looking for a rabbi, we're a very desirable congregation nationally because we've got a record of 36 years, 14 I think for Collin who retired from it, no firings, and it's southern California. So we're very, very desirable.

Michael

And with weather like today...

Marcia

Right.

Michael

Who can complain? When the pool opened, was there a lifeguard?

Marcia

I have no idea. I don't know when it opened.

Michael

Well say in 1960 when you were...in the 1960's when it was such a focal point.

Marcia

Yes there was always a lifeguard.

Michael

Okay.

Marcia

A paid lifeguard.

Michael

Anita Luwig. Was she chinese?

Marcia

No. Not Lui. I don't have any idea how she spelled it.

Michael

Oh oh...okay. Okay.

Marcia

No she was a tall, attractive woman as I remember it, but no she was Jewish.

John

And that was her married name, do you know?

Marcia

I have no idea.

Michael

Let's see. Rabbi Galpert's sermons, did he ever talk about some of the political issues affecting the United States at the time. I mean this was the 1960's, the war in Vietnam, the desegregation issues.

Marcia

I wish Gene Fingerhut were here because he could answer that. You know I don't really remember. I don't have a good memory for verbal lectures. I don't know. I don't remember him taking a political stand.

John

How did the war in Vietnam---did that have an impact on the congregation--obviously it did have an impact, but I mean was it as divisive as it was in the general society?

Marcia

Not that I'm aware of, but then again, I was birthing babies in the '60s so... (LAUGHING)

John

Yeah.

Michael

One of the...the congregation or the synagogue had, you know there was the religious aspect and the social aspect and the education. You've listed many of the social and educational elements, the pool, Ilona Fuch's fashion show, basketball...there were performances. I don't know, can you think of just kind of a list, you know without maybe even---

Marcia

Of what?

Michael

Of kind of social activities that were taking place at the synagogue that maybe you haven't mentioned. Of course, I guess I would have to show you what you have already mentioned (CHUCKLING)

Marcia

Well periodically there would be classes, maybe an exercise class, maybe an Israeli dance class that we had. I can't think off hand of anything else.

John

Who would organize those? Would it just be an interested congregant?

Marcia

Quite often I've always felt that things happen at the Temple when someone has an itch who was also willing to scratch it. So yeah you might have somebody who was interested in Israeli dancing going to some committee and saying can we? Otherwise, other times it would be the committee itself that would do it. Have you found an old Flames by the way?

Michael

I found old Flames...in fact...

John

Sound like a song.

Michael

Yeah I know. I have an old flame, but it's you know, I can't say we have say all the Flames from 1945 to the present---

Marcia

Well I was just thinking that's one way...I have some by the way.

John

Right.

Michael

Oh you do.

John

By the way there was also the other publication, the Bulletin right? Not the Bulletin. What was it called? The little...the other insert...there was the Flame---

Marcia

Oh and then there was a bulletin.

John

Yeah. Yeah, which tended to be more of a calendar than a Flame.

Marcia

Right. Exactly and that was what it was designed for.

John

For a long time.

Marcia

And they were out every two weeks, and then I think they finally gave up the Bulletin. I have some Flames from my presidency, and I will happily give them to you after I...maybe I'll just make copies of my articles and then give them to you.

John

It might make sense. You know, we're still on tape...to maybe pull out a...put out a call to the congregation to get all the old Flames that they might have and that they don't...

Marcia

And yearbooks.

Michael

Yeah. Yes.

John

And the yearbooks, because I know many people put their yearbooks in a drawer and they're nice. Ours have been thumbed down to rags. There's nothing much left.

Marcia

Oh and I think I didn't keep one that I wish I had that came out in 2001 or 2002 that had things about Mickey in them. I don't think I kept that because I tend to throw them out, or I recycle them. I put them upstairs so I have an old one up there and a newer one down here. I don't think I have that copy.

Michael

Well I have no more.

John

Just a general question---

Michael

Oh sure.

John

And I don't know whether you even have a response to it, but over the many, many years that you were involved in governance at PJTC did you ever get a sense that involvement in running the Temple sort of was a self-limiting or a limiting process...was there a particular group of congregants who tended to get involved in running the Temple, or was it your sense that no, pretty much the whole spectrum of the congregation was participating at some level?

Marcia

Except for ritual, I would say the whole spectrum. I do find some very interesting differences. I remember when we hired Marshall Rosen, and I was president. He would sit next to me, and...but I would keep a list which he later took over, as every hand went up. A discussion would start. Hands would go up, and I would write down the names of the hands---people whose hands went up in order so you didn't have to sit there with your hand up, and I would call on you in order. Marshall took that over. You don't have that kind of thing now.

John

You mean the formality of it?

Marcia

No the involvement of it.

John

At the...at the board meetings...

Marcia

Right. There's hardly ever lots of discussion. I mean these...you'd have a list of ten people who had opinions on that subject and back and forth and changes and arguments and discussions. I don't see that happening. Very little discussion, very little arguing, very often an issue is raised, a little bit of discussion, voted on. That's it. Now that is a really, really major difference I think.

John

Would it be fair to say that it is your impression that maybe there were stronger opinions about things expressed at board meetings in the past than there are now.

Marcia

Just as I said.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

People were passionate on some issues.

John

Right.

Michael

Yeah.

Marcia

Whether we were more involved because we had less outside life, I don't know what the reasons were, but whether it's because we were more involved in our own committee areas and we knew the Temple better, I don't know, but I do definitely notice that board members are less informed and less involved...

John

Now.

Marcia

Now. The ritual, as I think I mentioned before, always tended to have, to lean towards the traditional, and it's very difficult to get non-traditional people to serve on it, so you often had a very skewed non-representational committee. I think now it's the biggest committee I've ever seen and probably the closest to being balanced.

John

Over the many years you've attended board meetings, have they gotten longer? Shorter?

Marcia

Shorter. Mine used to last 3 hours...2 to 3 hours. I'd go...well one of the things that I did which I adopted from Gene, I made up a calendar for the...there are six vice presidents, and on a rotating basis every vice president would have to report, either one or two every meeting, and that calendar was given to them so a vice president knew if their report was coming up. They needed to check with their committees to find out what was going on. They needed to be aware in case there were questions. So that's very time consuming. We did a lot of reporting which takes up a lot of time, but keeps...if everybody stays awake, it keeps people informed of what's going on. Starting, oh 2 or 3 years after my presidency, the reporting was cut down. Stu was trying to bring some of that back, and the meetings were cut down an hour, an hour and a half.

John

Now I know that you've had...you had a copy of, I think, the motions...of all the motions that the board had passed for a particular period of time.

Marcia

I still have...right.

John

Who compiled that? Did you?

Marcia

I did __(28:31), and I don't remember why I started it, but I know that when I did start it, Edie Taylor I discovered had put together a motions book

when she was board secretary under Gene. So I got her notes, and I put those in. I have...I'd have to check, but I think it's '75 to '78 with a gap to '85. No one seems to have any of those minutes, and then from '85 to current, and I try once a year to put them on CD's and give them to the two executive vice presidents, the president and Bruce.

John

And this is something that you've done all these years on your own? And it's not...there's no formal process at the Temple to make sure that motions are preserved or these records are maintained.

Marcia

I think Bruce, for several years---but I don't know if he's still doing it---did have a notebook where he put the minutes for each year. That was in the workroom. I don't know if there's any other records other than that, and when I die I don't know if anyone is going to bother taking over the motions, but it does come in handy.

John

Remember a few years ago you started working on trying to find a place to keep archives and stuff like that, and that was never able to be finalized was it?

Marcia

No. No it didn't. I wanted..., we called it the archive ____ we called it ASK. Mostly what we did was clean out stuff. I did want to try to reorganize the workroom which is so unusable. I have...don't have that visual type of skills and say well this is what it should be. I just know that's bad. I also have always wanted a policy notebook and felt that that should be done by the Temple secretary, board secretary. Very often presidents would set policies, you know voting presidents. So I never had access to a lot of them, and I think Nancy said she's going to try, but right now if you have a question about the maintenance fund, I have a copy of the original policy, and I know Phil Callahan does, but there's an awful lot of policies that I don't have any idea who has if anyone does. We really need to have that done. The other thing I started doing, I took some notes that Gary Noffman had, and I expanded on it and made a table on excel spreadsheet of---I would get the information from the Temple secretary at the end of the fiscal year of how many members we have in each category. How many honoraries...how many special dues...how many first, second, etcetera...how many singles and families...and I have those going back probably to 1990. Unfortunately I had a problem with the computer last year, and knowing that it was getting shaky I'm pretty good about backing up onto a CD, and I did back up, but I used to cut my previous CD's up so that nobody could ever use them. When my computer was repaired I discovered I had lost some of the data from the Temple. I went back to the CD and discovered it had been corrupted even when I made it, and because I didn't keep previous ones, some of that was lost. I did ask several presidents. I used to try and give out hard copies at

the beginning of every governance year. Sandy Hartford gave me one that went up to 2004, and she was the only one who even knew what I was talking about. So I don't have 5 and 6, and I do have 7. I also used to keep--I don't anymore---but I used to get the numbers for outstanding monies. How much money at the end of our fiscal year is uncollected from the religious school, from dues...I don't remember what else, and I would bring that in and report it in July to no great acclaim or interest and then finally stopped because I think the last few treasurers were using the computer better.

John

Yeah.

Marcia

But I'd go in and say, "We've got \$40,000 in outstanding monies from the religious school. What's being done about this or in dues or whatever..." and they'd all kind of pat me on the head and change the subject.

John

Is that it?

Michael

You know I think so, and we'll work on...there's such gaps in the documents. You know, it's...but interestingly as I'm going through the...

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