

A TEI Project

Interview of Hy Vego

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1. Transcript

1.1. Session One (June 8, 2005)

Note: Gene refers to the book that Hy wrote called "Take the Hy Road".

HY

I enlisted in the Army (in World War II) in New Jersey and was sent to Fort Dix. From there we took a troop train and landed at the Santa Anita Race Track. Prior to our arrival, this area had been an internment camp for the Japanese before they were relocated to Manzanar near Bishop or other camps.. We came in and had basic training there. One of the first weekend passes that I got, my friends wanted to go to Hollywood, to the Hollywood Canteen, the Palladium –you know, the real wild life—but I had happened to see a poster at the dry cleaning store at the camp. Its message was that there was a USO dance at Temple B’nai Israel -- which was the first name of this temple – every Saturday night. I decided I’d rather go to this dance than to Hollywood. The truth of the matter is that within 15 minutes till I got into this dance, I met Mariam Goodstein and 3 years later we were married. So it was really quite an awakening and quite a place. The Temple in itself was unlike the Temple now. It was very small.

GENE

The congregation had moved into this facility in 1940 and you came in 1943. So it was practically the exact same situation that it was when they first moved in.

HY

Yes, it wasn't built up or anything. As I said, the sanctuary was called Temple B'nai Israel. It had a balcony. Where the library is was an L-shaped sanctuary. Wohlman Hall was called Kirschner Auditorium. The room beyond Wohlman , or Kirschner as I keep calling it, we used to call it the Youth Room. That's where the classes were and in Kirschner. When I first met Mariam, I started coming to the dances every Saturday. The dances had a juke box. I still remember the mothers; they were the chaperones. The average age of the girls were about 15 to 17, 18 years old. The mothers were very cooperative. But there was a certain line outside Kirschner that you could not go beyond. The mothers were very strict. The first night I was there I was invited to the Goodstein house. From then on I came every weekend and got to know the family well. I still remember, one of Mariam's uncle, Dave Press, was married there. I held the chuppah for them. So I was part of the family already and to be honest with you, I knew I was going to be there. Once I got to know the family, I figured that I would settle in California. There was no question that I would go back to Elizabeth, New Jersey. I just knew that this was the place for my future life.

GENE

Want to talk about coming back after the war? Where were you stationed, when did you come back and when did you marry?

HY

As I said, I was stationed in Santa Anita. I think I came into Santa Anita maybe beginning of January or late December. We stayed there until about June and we moved up to San Luis Obispo. From there we went to Camp Roberts which was above Paso Robles. I tried to come in every weekend that I could. It was quite a spell. I got off the camp at noontime on Saturday and sometime I'd arrive in Pasadena about 8 or 9 o'clock, only to leave the next day, Sunday, at 6 o'clock. So it was a very short stay but, well, let's put it this way. I was in love and I knew I'd be back.

After I came back from overseas, Mariam and I were married on April 7, 1946. Actually it was a double wedding. Mariam's uncle, Lou Press, was part of the Press family that were one of the founders of the Temple- Rebecca and Isadore Press. So we had a double wedding. Lou Press had met his bride in an officer's club somewhere in India. The wedding took place in B'nai Israel in what is now Knell Chapel. The reception was in Wohlman Hall, or what was then Kirschner. The whole community of Pasadena was invited. I don't think they sent out invitations at all; they just came. It was a typical Jewish source of food. We had corned beef sandwiches that the family made for a few days before and salads and stuff like that.

Unfortunately, there was one incident that occurred at the wedding that I still remember. Someone stole or took or borrowed some liquor that was there. Liquor was hard to get in those days. In '46 you couldn't get good liquor until you bought a lot of liquor that was not so good or well known. So

someone took a part of it. We don't know who took it, but anyway it's an incident we think about now or then.

We don't have too many pictures of the wedding as far as photographs or movies. They didn't have the kind of cameras that they have today. I remember my father-in-law had a friend who said he'd take all the pictures as long as you pay for the film. Well, he was a very poor photographer and we never got anything good out of it. I hate to say it but about 3 months later, after the wedding, we took our wedding pictures. Mariam was pregnant at the time but I assure you everything was on the up and up. The Rabbi who officiated was very longwinded, I know that. I was very impatient. It's nervous enough when you get married but when you have a Rabbi who goes on and on...His name was Cohen. As I understand it, he wasn't a full time Rabbi. The first full time Rabbi was Rabbi Max Vorspan, probably in the early '50's. Rabbi Cohen talked on and on. Imagine, there were 2 weddings at this time so it was very lengthy but it was nice, though. I still think about it.

After we got married, we lived on Walnut St., near Fair Oaks.the Minovitzes. At that time, the Minovitz had a grocery store. Later it became a liquor store. I was told that the grocery store was the Headquarters for everything Jewish: Everything Jewish came through the Minovitz's. People met there, they gossiped and everything else was there. So I got to know Harold and his brother, Donald. I remember Dave Minovitz, one of the nicest guys you would want to meet. Frankly, the story goes that when Truman was running against Dewey in 1948, Dave Minovitz was going to vote for Wallace. Wallace was running at the same time. It took a lot of energy but I finally persuaded Dave that it would be a wasted vote and he did vote for Truman, Danks Gott.

As I mentioned before, I lived on Walnut Street and there was a street – it's no longer a street due to the freeways – it was called Winona Street, where Mariam's grandparents lived and her parents lived there too. It seems that everybody I knew lived on the west side of town. This was the Jewish section. The Orloffs on Raymond, the Bermans the Minovitzes and a few others that I don't remember. The west side was the (Jewish)section. We had to schlep over to the temple which was definitely the other side of town. It was a custom at that time, it's probably the same now, that when you get married at the temple, that they give you a year's free membership, which they gave us. As I said, Rabbi Cohen married us but he had another job, I think he sold insurance. But Rabbi Vorspan came on, probably in the early 50's, and he was the first full time Rabbi that Temple B'nai Israel had. He was quite a gentleman. We really got along, especially the younger group, a lot of the people that I knew, they liked Rabbi Vorspan. Unfortunately he didn't stay too long. I understand that he became Dean of Admissions at the University of Judaism. I still remember he came to my house. I had built a house in northwest Pasadena, probably what we call Altadena Drive now. It

was on Foothill Blvd. He officiated at a mezuzah hanging on the door of my house. We had quite a ceremony and Rabbi Vorspan officiated. I also know we had a little group with Rabbi Vorspan and we discussed the Reconstructionist Movement. And there were a few people that I knew in this group.

But let me go back to one of the earliest groups that I joined and it really paved the way for a lot of friendships and really was a great start for me and for all of us who had just got out of the Army. We started a Jewish War Veterans Post and we met at the temple A lot of people came and we made a lot of friends. People like Leo Krawetz, Gus Golden, Eddie Collins, Julie Feldstein came a little later, Bert Mendelsohn, Bob Gordon. There were quite a few; it was quite a group. In fact I have an interesting story about Jewish War Veterans. We had fellow come in and said he was a Jewish War Veteran. So we accepted him wholeheartedly, We'd love to get all the members as we can. But as we proceeded with some of the meetings, we realized he was a Jewish War Veteran but he fought with the German Army during World War I. Unfortunately we had to tell him that he couldn't belong here because our charter specifically states "Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America".

So the poor fellow had to go. We had another guy who was a veteran before World War II; he chased Pancho Villa back to Mexico. Nice guy; I can't think of his name right now. He moved to Israel shortly afterwards when Israel became a state.

In 1948 as you well know, Israel became a state. And before that, we had lots of rallies. I remember a nice old gentleman, his name was Mr. Schurr. Actually he was a junkman, nowadays we'd call him a recycler. Anyway we took him to the Hollywood Bowl. They had a tremendous, tremendous rally for Israel. As I mentioned before this was before it became a state. And this man was so happy that he literally cried that in his lifetime, there was a state.

Anyway the Jewish War Veteran Post was very active, particularly the Jewish War Veterans Women's Auxillary We did a lot of good things. We visited ex-servicemen in various hospitals; we played Bingo with them.

We brought entertainment to them. There was a group, it's still in existence, not the same people, of course, a barbershop quartet known as The Crown City Four. They were so good. At our behest they visited various sanitariums and hospitals where the veterans were convalescing. It was great until, of course, like anything else, nothing lasts forever, and the Veterans organizations throughout the country including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, all those organizations suffered, the membership decreased. Although I might say that the Jewish War Veterans was the oldest veteran organization in the country, way ahead of the American Legion. It was formed almost right after the Civil War.

I mentioned before (about) Rabbi Vorspan—as I said he didn't stay too long—and, in my mind, it was quite a loss because I knew we had a great rabbi there, but fortunately, Rabbi Galpert came and as time went on we realized he, too, was a great rabbi and a great friend. In fact, personally, I called him "Rabs" - he liked to be called that but it's very personal. He was a great guy. I remember Cantor Blumenthal very well. They were really nice people. But somehow with Cantor Blumenthal there was some discontent with some reason or other, which I can't think of. I know I was at a Board of Directors meeting one time, where we had to make a decision on him and vote yes or no to keep him. The Board voted for not keeping him. He was at the meeting and he pleaded, actually pleaded for his job. It was one of the saddest moments of at the temple with regards to politics.

As the Jewish War Veterans waned and, as I mentioned, all the war veterans organizations, we got a group together, the same group as the veterans and we formed a City of Hope Chapter which we called the Lifesavers Chapter. We did a lot of good things for the City of Hope and raised a lot of money and a lot of it came from our annual dinner dance, which usually was the last Saturday of July. Everything was donated to us except the meat. We had a big, big raffle and that's where we got most of our money. We didn't charge too much, we could have done better but we all had a great time. The City of Hope was one of our biggest assets and that was a group that did very well. We also had a lot of people from out-of-town, from Alhambra, from Arcadia that belonged to the City of Hope Lifesavers Chapter.

You folks remember coupons that you get in the newspaper today, that was legal at this time. You know \$.10 for this if you bring it into the grocery store or \$.15 off or this or that. We accumulated a lot of that. We would give them to a local liquor store and we would buy liquor and we would sell it in cases to people. We made a lot of money. In fact, there were 2 or 3 years, I remember, when they had the annual City of Hope Banquet in LA or someplace or some hotel, the Lifesavers Chapter was one of the big money raisers, where we sat in front because we raised more money than a lot of other people. But eventually we couldn't do this anymore because it was a little shady, I guess, but it was legal at the time.

The temple was very active. We did a lot of things, this group. I wish we could bring some of it back. I still remember the great shows we put on, the Sisterhood shows; they were allI want to tell you, one of the greatest, in my mind, shows that we ever put on in the temple and the show was at the Marshall Junior High School because we couldn't do it at our temple; there wasn't enough room for them. We had a first class orchestra, Manny Harmon, who was very famous, and one of our members, I can't think of her name, Perlow, I think it was, who knew him and he came with his orchestra. We had 1 rehearsal and then the show. It was just a one-night stand. The show was called the Mutiny.

We had songs we parodied songs from "Oklahoma" and every musical comedy we could think of. This particular show we got from some other temple, somewhere. But later on, after this show, the Sisterhood put on a lot of shows and they were originals. I mean the book was original, but the music was from all the shows and we just put our own words to it. There were some great shows. I still remember one show, it was called "Farshimelte Fairy Tales." It concerned Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. It seemed that when the dwarfs came home and found Snow White lying there, thinking that she had passed away, they needed to go out and get three more men to say Kaddish for her. And it tells the story of them going out and meeting the Old Woman in the Shoe and Jack and the Beanstalk and all these characters. It was very, very funny.

We had lots of other shows that we enjoyed putting on. It was a delight. One of the shows, it was something about an astronaut that comes from space or somewhere and he lands in New York in say, the early '20's or something like that or even later than that. I happened to be in one of the acts along with Marilyn Fingerhut. We took the part of Nelson Eddy and she was the heroine or whatever and I found her in the woods and I still can remember some of the words. In fact I still have a picture of it.

One of the most memorable times that I can think of and it shows what kind of community we have. It was the Yom Kippur War and just a few days after it, Israel was really up against the wall. I think my brother-in-law, Sam Taylor, was on the Social Action Committee and somehow or other we got a lot of people, we got the congregation together for a meeting to do something. What can we do? we wanted to raise some money for Israel. I remember it very vividly. I tried to start the proceedings and I couldn't get anywhere, I just couldn't get any response. And if there was, it was very small. And then my friend, Mickey Alper, stood up and said to everybody, "Follow me, do what I'm going to do. This is important. This is a matter of life and death. and so-on and so forth" I'm going to pledge \$1000 and I'd like my friends and all to follow me." You know \$1000 in 1973 to all of us, we were still working, trying to raise our kids, sending kids to college, I mean it was a lot of money, and people looked at one another. I know I looked at Mariam. We didn't even say a word. We knew we had to give and we did and we gave a lot.

I mentioned Leo Krawetz before. I think Leo was selling shoes or he was selling carpets, I don't know, but he pledged \$1000 and the next day he went to his credit union and borrowed \$1000. This is the kind of community we had. And we did raise a lot of money that day.

You know, I want to let you know that my granddaughter, Leah, just graduated from the confirmation class in June, 2005. And she is the 5th generation of my family in this temple. Rebecca and Isidore Press were early founders; my in-laws, Rachel and Charles Goodstein, were married at the temple which at that time was on Hudson Street. Mariam and I were married

here in 1946; my 4 daughters were Bat Mitzvahed here and the 4 of them were all married here. We've had anniversaries and baby naming and everything. This temple is my second home.

I should mention that one of the most important facets of a Jewish community, in fact one of the first things when a community is started, whether it's in Pasadena or Australia or anyplace where you start a Jewish cemetery, you have to build a cemetery or find a cemetery. That's very important and it was no different here in Pasadena. When we first started we went to the oldest Jewish cemetery in California, the Home of Peace, and for years and years we used the cemetery and finally a new cemetery came into being, which is called Mt. Sinai in Glendale. We used that for quite a spell. Bought a lot of plots. We used to buy plots, usually 40 or 50 plots. We used to bargain with them to give us good terms and very little interest.

There came a time, however, that they just didn't want to sell plots to temples because they worried about running out of space. Basically, they wanted to go into the retail business. When Marshall Katz was President of the temple, he attended meetings at the Federation level and they discussed building a cemetery for the San Gabriel Valley. Well, to build a cemetery is very, very expensive – there's no way that one temple, I don't know how many could build it. So what we did was have meetings with Rose Hills which is a very, very large cemetery and they were happy to build a cemetery for us. I know Rabbi Galpert and particularly Rabbi Gordon from the Alhambra Temple, Temple Beth Torah, and Rabbi Perry (Netter) from Arcadia Temple – and they were very helpful in making sure that the cemetery was built according to Jewish law. So we have cemetery plots; we call the place Covenant Lawn. It's a cemetery consisting of about 600-700 plots. We've had access to maybe 2 or 3 thousand but the temples of the San Gabriel Valley could not afford to go that far so we stopped probably at 600 plots. We do have some plots at the Home of Peace, which some kind member of our temple donated to us from his benevolent society. So we have plots at the Home of Peace and we have plots at Covenant Lawn and we have an agreement with Sinai whereas if we recommend people buy plots there, they would reimburse us and give us some kind of remuneration of sorts; call it a commission but they don't call it that.

The reason that I speak about the cemetery, I happen to be chairman. I think I've been Chairman Emeritus but an emeritus that doesn't stop working. I think I've been at it 20 years already and as long as I can-- although now I have Ken Gerst who's my co-chairman so we continue with it. It's a very vital part of our temple. At this present time if we sold all the plots, we'd have an inventory of over \$100,000. It comes in quite handy for our General Fund.

One of the main jobs that the temple undertook after World War II (was when) we had refugees or Holocaust survivors come to Pasadena. We had people, including myself, who tried to find places for them. I still remember

shlepping up a couple of floors of stairways with the Freeman family, that is Helen and Joe Freeman, and there were other people that were the same way, that we put up and made sure that they had a place to live. And most of them, in fact almost all of them that the temple took care of, became good citizens and didn't have to rely on the temple for their substance. That's one of the things that makes the community great, by doing these things and that's one of the things I'm proud of. I'm one of those people with empathy to help a lot so that was a good thing.

When Sam Weisz was president, that's when I first became a member of the Board of Directors. It was a very, very unruly Board. Right now I don't know how many members we have on the Board, but it's a very workable force. But at that time, maybe 25, 30 people maybe, it was really quite uncontrollable. It was very unruly and very abusive, I think, to some of the Presidents particularly with Sam Weisz, who was such a gentle man and I couldn't understand why he took all this from people. But that's the way it was there. And then, of course, under Joe Ehrenreich and his committee, with Gene Fingerhut, Bob Hoffman, Mickey Alper and Steve Kaye – maybe there's a few more I'm not mentioning, but they undertook to write a new constitution and a constitution that paved the way for good government and easy government where things can work out without the hassle and turmoil that was previous with the other Board and here it is, I don't know how many years later-, I think it was in '68 when they did this - here it is, over 30 years, coming on 40 years that we've operated under this constitution and it's been very, very good. The temple runs very properly; we know where we're going. Everyone has a job to do and does it. It's quite a difference from when I first came in on the Board of Directors. It's remarkable and I'm very proud of the committee that undertook this project. I want to talk to you about the new building. I mentioned before that when I first came to Pasadena in the beginning of '43 or the end of '42, the buildings consisted of what is known now as Knell Chapel, Wohlman Hall and the room next to Wohlman Hall. That was it. But in 1958, we had a building fund that came to fruition and we built the temple that stands now, really, except that we we didn't have the school which was built by one of the presidents, Max Stone. Its name is called the Louis B. Silver Religious School. Now it houses the Chaim Weizman Day School. That wasn't there in 1958, I believe. It was quite a difference; quite a lot of room.

I remember one of the early High Holiday services. As usual, as you well know, when it comes Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, we have a heat wave. We didn't have any air conditioning but they brought in trucks that blew in air into what is now the social hall and the sanctuary itself. And if I recall, I still think that on one of the holidays we had, the floors were not even in. We had dirt floors. So we've come a long ways, especially with this new, I believe it was in '96, that we redid the sanctuary; we did a lot of stuff,

almost \$3 million dollars worth but it's quite a difference. And it's quite a beautiful edifice that we have right now.

With all this, the temple did have an athletic program in their own sense. I remember first coming here. We played softball, basketball. We had a group from B'nai Brith, called B'nai Brith Young Men, that was sort of a graduation for those people who had belonged to B'nai Brith and AZA. This was the next upper step. We played all over, different B'nai Brith teams, and then later on, the temple had its own team. We belonged to leagues. We played in various parks in the Pasadena area- Brookside Park, Jefferson Park. We had some pretty good players, like Gene Fingerhut was a pitcher; sometimes he played first base. He was a great hitter. I think he would rather have been a ball player than a college professor, but Jewish mothers don't go for that. I remember Eddie Collins played and Steve Sencer and I remember Alan Whitman played. Oh, there's a lot I can't think of now. Abe Cheslow played. Anyway, we had a great time playing and reliving our youth. I think they're still playing baseball now. I'm not sure, you'd have to ask Josh Pais; he's the perennial ball player.

I want to mention a couple of rabbis that I knew pretty well. Rabbi Kollin came in after Rabbi Galpert. I had a warm friendship with him, not as warm as I had with Rabbi Galpert. Rabbi Galpert was a person of unforgettable (qualities); a person you would like to meet and talk to - He was highly intellectual; translates Hebrew into English; some of the great Hebrew writers he translated into English. A great music lover, Mozart and all the classical composers.

He could hum these tunes. But he was a human being and some of his faults, he didn't visit people that were sick or so as much as he could have or should have. I don't know, I'm not going to go into that - like some other rabbis do that. But that wasn't his forte. He was just a guy you could get along with and discuss things with, especially sports. I mean he was fanatical. He could give you statistics that I never knew existed about baseball, football or any sport. He was a rabid fan. He belonged to our group. We had a group which was called the Monday night football minyan. And Rabbi was part of it. He was very knowledgeable and sometimes during these games that we watched at each other's home, we discussed everything except football. Sometimes we didn't even know who was playing. He was very sports minded . And so his loss was a great loss to all of us. It happened very suddenly. I still think I saw him maybe a day or so before he went into the hospital. I thought it was just an elective surgery. But something went wrong. I don't know what it is. It was quite a loss. The whole community felt it. You don't have somebody here for 36 years and not feel the pain.

Let me tell you a little about Rabbi Grater, Joshua Grater. I like to call him just Rabbi Joshua. He's old enough to be my grandson-- very dedicated, very compassionate. I can tell you about him first hand and I probably know

him as well as anybody in the community. Twice he spent time at my house - when he first auditioned here and then when he came with his wife, Francie, when he came to be the official rabbi of our temple. (41:44 47:15 missing)

Speaking about Rabbi Grater- as I said, he came to my house twice. A funny incident, though. The second time he came here. He came from the East Coast to take over the helm here. He came with his twins and his wife, Francie. I think they left the children at her parents' house in Orange County. and he came to our house and, as I said, they had a rough trip from New York. They occupied one of our bedrooms. The next morning, Mariam and I were waiting for them to get up and have breakfast and then walk over to the temple. It was getting late, and late. Mariam and I were looking at our watches, saying "the Rabbi's gotta get up pretty soon." So I knocked at the door of the bedroom. And I heard some noise and I said, "Rabbi, it's time to get up. We gotta get moving here; I gotta get you to the shul on time". So anyway they did come and we had a nice breakfast and we walked to the shul.

Since then he's been a good friend and actually he's been a great asset to the temple. Last year I understand that we picked up a lot of members. People like his style. He's got a great sense of humour . And he's an activist. He likes to see the world in a better shape. Right now he's with the Darfur situation in the Sudan and he's trying to rally the temple and all the other churches in the area to do something about it. We just had a great meeting it recently and it was a success; we raised a lot of money.

Looking into the future and maybe listening to this tape and looking at it the way I look at it, right now, in the year 2005 and this community right now is 83 years old. It's very resilient and it's gone through some difficult and good times, but it still prevails. I think if I had to make a wish and a prediction, I think it'll go on for a long, long time. There's something built in. These hallowed halls brings back many memories. I think it'll go on as long as man wants to do good and take care of our Jewish people. There's a need for a temple and the temple has provided that need. I hope my family continues to be a member here and to make it (50:30 -55:37 missing.)

1.2. Session Two (August 25, 2006)

MICHAEL

This is Michael Several. I'm with Hy Vego. It is Friday, August 25th, 2006. This is the second interview. It's a follow-up interview with Hy in connection with the Eugene Fingerhut Memorial Historical Project of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center. I would like to focus on a couple of things that were not covered in the first interview. One is the____(1:15) of Max Vorspan

with the Temple. I believe you told me at one point that he was probably the first full-time rabbi of the Temple, to your knowledge.

HY

No. He wasn't the... They had a rabbi that married me, that married my wife and I in 1946, Rabbi Cohen.

MICHAEL

Oh. I see.

HY

I took the safe route. I really don't know whether he was full time or not.

MICHAEL

Oh.

HY

That's how much I knew.

MICHAEL

Oh.

HY

I knew as long as he was legitimate and that he had a ____ (1:52) then you know, the marriage was legal.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But no, anyway.

MICHAEL

Oh okay. What...were you involved in the hiring of Rabbi Vorspan?

HY

No. No, that was a different group of people. Not my generation.

MICHAEL

It wasn't.

HY

It was the generation that preceded us like...my...my father-in-law's generation. They were the children of the founders.

MICHAEL

Oh. Yeah.

HY

You probably remember them. No, we were just...we were...we came later. We came with the... We formed the new constitution I think in the late '50s or something...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

...with Aaron Hoffman, Mickey Alpert were our generation, but no, we... It was still the old timers that got in the service, and they even had days where anybody could be president. (LAUGHING) In those years, as long as you had a few dollars...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

You know. The cousins that we mentioned before---used to play the fiddle---and they were mostly old timers.

MICHAEL

Did you remember anything about the process though of hiring Vorspan in that were there other people who were brought in say for a Friday night service? Was there any kind of input of the congregation? I mean, the reason I'm asking this is based on the one experience I had in the hiring of Rabbi Grater where they had two candidates, and you know, they made presentations.

HY

I...couldn't...It was a...Easy. I mean, he was accepted almost, and we became good friends because he ____ (4:03) even after he left for the University of Judaism yet we got a kind word for our family, and he...he came right into the community, and everybody---you know, it was something new. There was a...There was an air of, maybe of, activism. I mean, while the other Rabbi ____ (4:24). I don't remember too much of Rabbi Cohen. He may be right. He may have been just a part-time rabbi, because we only had a very small Shul. I mean the what is now the Knell Chapel. That was the only building---that building that included... There was a library, and there was a Wohlman Hall which was called Kirschner Auditorium at that time and a little...and another one beyond Kirsch...beyond Wohlman, there was another room that was used by the school.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

That was the whole Temple!

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, there was no... I mean the Temple blossomed around, I think, it was the late '50s. We had a big ah...but we were just a small chapel.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And, but he---he---In fact, I still remember Rabbi Vorspan when I built a new house in 1952, and it was the very first time that anybody had a ceremony for putting a mezuzah on the door. We had people come to my house, and the Rabbi put the mezuzah, and it was a ceremony.

MICHAEL

Oh really? Yeah. Yeah.

HY

That's the kind of things he was really...he and his wife were...they were young, and they were our generation. Maybe a little, no, they were a little older, but not that much older.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So we felt that at ease with them.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And, what else can I say?

MICHAEL

What, um... Do you recall any changes? I mean, he has said that he was influenced by Mordecai Kaplan who had this idea of, you know, of the Jewish (MICHAEL AND HY OVERLAP)

HY

Honestly, he formulated a reconstruction. What was his name again? Steinberg, was it? Or somebody, a founder of reconstructionism. I can't think of his name, but we had a textbook, a book that we were following. We had...we met at various people's homes and discussed the reconstructionism. I remember. I remember that, and...

MICHAEL

Did any of this discussion change the Temple in any way in terms of---did it start doing things that it did not do before?

HY

Well, what it does, I'll tell you the Temple there was activism people.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But it's just...just not good. The...the...the fact that we had these meetings with the...it blossomed into other things. People make friends, and before we knew it we had a, you know, we had a ____ (7:07) share of friendship. I mean, when I first came, and I I started with the B'nai Brith Young Men. I was too old for AZA (MICHAEL LAUGHING), and I never was in AZA. Back where I come from AZA, B'nai Brith wasn't a big...It was big in many, many countries and in many, many cities of countries throughout the world, but for my town it just wasn't...not...that... So, we started this B'nai Brith Young Men, and it was mostly a sports organization. I mean, I don't even recall a meeting. We played softball. We played basketball, and I still remember my wife sitting there, watching us play. She was pregnant. I mean, the other boys were even a little younger than I am. There was Danny Libel and the Minovitzes, and I can't think of anything. The Minovitzes and Danny they didn't play. The Minovitzes played but not Danny. So that was that, and we

organized the Jewish war veteran post in the Temple, and that's where I--- you know, I was a---I came from back east, so...

MICHAEL

Yeah

HY

So all I knew was my wife's family in the beginning. So, we thought of the post, and I made many, many friends---lifetime friends.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, as I look right now I don't know how many of them are left. There may be... I may be the only one left. They're all gone, but it was a great social thing, and the wives had the Ladies Auxiliary, and...

MICHAEL

What, with the war veterans or with the Temple?

HY

It was...It was... We met at the Temple. We had our meetings there. We did a lot of social work in going to the hospitals and entertaining veterans. There was a... Right out the... There was a sanitarium. It was called Lavina Hut. If you go up Lincoln Boulevard, past Altadena Road. It used to be called Foothill. There were veterans there suffering from tuberculosis or something like that. We used to...would play bingo with them, and we would bring entertainment there, and we had...we had a group that was so very good to us and to them. It was called the Crown City Four Barbershop Quartet. So, they went all over, beck and call. It was very nice.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And then, you know, we went to the major hospitals in L.A. Veterans Hospital on ____ (9:49) Boulevard. Then, there's I think there's a Wadsworth Hospital too. I remember there's one in the valley, and we did a lot of stuff. We ran...we ran the fundraising for...for like rummage sales and things like that, yard sales...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

We also, well you know thank God, we also had a fund to...you know, when veterans came into town. I was in charge of that. You know, people would come, but you know they were...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

They were down and out...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I would make sure they were fed and clothed and had a meal or two, and things like that, and that...and then that grew up into the veterans' movement. How do you explain the euphoria, you know, after the war people joined, and ____ (10:45), but maybe the Jewish War Veterans is no different than the American Legion or Veterans of the Foreign Wars. We just anticipated. We just didn't have the... Remember there was a ____ (10:59) song called ____ (11:03). Remember that song? And we were filled with that Yankee ____ (11:08) but that's what we were filled with it. We... we had a great, great camaraderie, and then the same group that formed the City of Hope called the Lifesavers Chapter, and we raised thousands of dollars. Thousands.

MICHAEL

So, the War Veterans, that formed before Vorspan came, and it was independent of the...

HY

Before what?

MICHAEL

Vorspan came to the...

HY

Oh yeah.

MICHAEL

And then...

HY

No, wait, no! It was before Vorspan...

MICHAEL

Yeah right

HY

And it was like...

MICHAEL

It has a life independent of...

HY

Independent of Vorspan. It was...I don't even know if it was the Veteran Movement...

MICHAEL

Now, the B'nai Brith Lodge---did they meet at the Temple?

HY

Oh yeah. The B'nai Brith Lodge was a...I'm sure B'nai Brith met probably up about 50 years.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But it's not like it used to be. It was quite a lodge then. They had a lot of things going for them, but socially they liked to play cards a lot.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

That's what the reputation they got. They liked to play cards, but they did good too, you know. So we...right now, they're just a handful.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I don't think there's---

MICHAEL

A minion.

HY

But we have people that work, and maybe a hundred, two hundred people, but they pay their dues and all so

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So we just uh...we just...there's maybe eight or ten of us, and we just wait for the B'nai Brith girls and the AZA and the ____ (12:36)

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. Basically.

HY

And all efforts go to the youth, and we provide the scholarships for them to go on conventions and things like that. So that's what we do there now.

MICHAEL

After Rabbi Vorspan came were there other groups that developed at the Temple? Any social groups?

HY

Yeah there was a social groups. Whether they came from...before Rabbi Vorspan or after. It was called the Wednesday Night or such it was called. I'm not sure, but it was a day of the week, and they...they raised a lot of money, and they...they were, I would say, you know I'm not trying be a ..., they were better off than we were. We were just kids out of the Army, and we were trying to raise a family, and these were more established people--- established merchants of the community. So they, they had a... they raised money for the Temple.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So they were. You know, everybody has a place, you know. So we were the poor cousins, but uh... They did a lot of good, and...

MICHAEL

Did... Were there any changes in education, the education of the kids or, I guess, mainly boys or bar mitzvahs?

HY

Oh I'd say things got a little better. I mean, my kids were... There were no women bat mitzvahs. My two sister-in-laws certainly would've got them. Yeah, they were twins. They were the first girls that were bat mitzvahed in the Temple here.

MICHAEL

Really?

HY

Yes.

MICHAEL

What year was this?

HY

This is... Let's see. They were born in 1937. Since I know that they were ten years, they were ten years younger than my wife. My wife was born in 1927. The girls were born in 1937. So, it would be 1950 when they were bat mitzvahed---a year before this, when this picture was taken. So, you had stuff like that. You didn't have those things before.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And, you know, my wife was the...when I first met her, she was only 16-17,

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And she was teaching Sunday school at the Temple.

MICHAEL

Well, was it...at the Sunday school---

HY

This was during the War.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Yes.

MICHAEL

Now, during the... Now... Before 1950, since girls were not bat mitzvahed, did they go to Sunday school?

HY

Oh yeah. There was some of that---they had confirmation class...

MICHAEL

Oh.

HY

Oh yeah, they were girls there. This is probably one of her... I think this was probably... This was probably her confirmation class. (KNOCKING)

MICHAEL

I see. Yeah. Okay.

HY

So, you know there was confirmation class. There was, you know how it goes. The kids had a, you know they were a very close-knit group before I came in there was not too many Jews in this town, and we were still--- couldn't buy property in San Marino or Orange Grove or places...or we couldn't---I pointed out to my grandson even a couple of days ago. We were playing golf at the Altadena Country Club...

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And now it's a public course, but the buildings in those, in the '30s you know, no Jews could belong to the Altadena Country Club.

MICHAEL

Really?

HY

And the uncle here that...he married, the one who was the son of the president of ____ (16:27), they married at the Altadena Country Club. That's okay, oh but you can't belong.

MICHAEL

(LAUGHING)

HY

But you know...

MICHAEL

It's a lot like the California Club. They took the president of CalTech as a member...

HY

Howard Brown

MICHAEL

Right. Right.

HY

In those days, I mean, they were a very close community, they stuck together.

MICHAEL

Rabbi Vorspan was at the Temple for about four years...

HY

Was that... when did he come in?

MICHAEL

I'm not really... it was either 1948 or 1949, and I... Probably 1948, I guess.

HY

Forty-eight is already two years since I was out of the army. So we...by that time we had formed the, I was probably with the B'nai Brith Young Men, and we formed the Pasadena Jewish War Veterans group by that time.

MICHAEL

Yeah. That was in 1949, the Temple changed its name from B'nai Israel to Pasadena Jewish Center.

HY

Yeah. I always wondered why, but I never realized it can't be for tax purposes. Why would they do it, but on the other hand---people...Not too many temples do that. They'd have a Hebrew name,

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And maybe people wanted to say, hey Pasadena's not a hick town, and they want people to know there was a temple in this town. People used to think, Pasadena---what'd you guys mean, you got a temple here? We have a thriving community,

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But I think maybe that may have been one of the reasons. We wanted to be known as the Pasadena Jewish Temple.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Rather than B'nai Israel. B'nai Israel could be in Eureka, California.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but you don't recall any of the discussion---

HY

Oh, there must have been discussion.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

There must have been discussion. I...I...We're going back...We're going down the '50s...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

We used to... I remember in those days, when we conducted our own United Jewish Welfare Fund appeal. I mean, we...we collected. We collected the money, and we dispensed it, and then when we were asked to join the Jewish Federation in L.A.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And we had big discussions. Big discussions. A lot of meetings. We had a fellow by the name of Lou Silver who was the head of the ____ (19:08).

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Great man and all, but he was so... He was really against it.

MICHAEL

Really?

HY

Really, but he was magnanimous. I mean, whenever the...whenever...he didn't fight it. Whatever the majority wanted, that was it. So, I mean, there was a big discussion going on. Many, many meetings. You know, it's like we're giving strangers our money, and we were afraid that not enough money would be coming back to our schools because that ____ (1942).

MICHAEL

Yeah. What the, I mean, dealing with that issue of becoming part of the general Federation, I gather you were involved in some of that discussion and meetings and so on.

HY

Yeah, I was... I went to some meetings. I mean, I wasn't the, you know, I mentioned to you on the phone that at the beginning I was starting a business.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean it was starting from September to the...to the first of the year, you could...you can forget about me. My kids didn't even know who I was. I would work sixty, seventy hours a week. You know, we were young, and we didn't have money, and we...we didn't have the machinery that I ended up with, you know, after being in business a while, we had machines that didn't do much more. Instead we did a lot of work by hand. So we had to work harder, and so...

MICHAEL

What prompted the association of the PJTC to the Federation? I mean, what ultimately, what was the argument for it?

HY

You know, I don't know, but I'm gonna guess.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I'm gonna say it was tough, I mean, to raise money. I remember going... I would be waking people up on Sunday. They went to sleep late at night. I

didn't make telephone calls. I mean, I was...I had a clientele without having to call it that. Maybe ten or fifteen people that I collected from.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And I always collected from people that I gave... I never collected from people that gave more than I did, not that I had money to give, but I mean it was war. I mean, \$50, \$100 dollars--- I mean, that's a lot of money! And that was a lot of money in those days.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And so I never made it a point. I mean, I can't give \$50 and try to get \$100 from somebody else, so I'd always collect it from within my means, and it was getting uncomfortable at times. You know, its... some people didn't wanna give you know... and of course the State of Israel came into being in 1948, so, I think they just would rather have some professional---

MICHAEL

Oh.

HY

That's...that's my feeling.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

I mean, and they promised. I'm sure they promised Edward we're not gonna let your school down, and of course that money came to you too. So it's not just giving it to the Federation, and Pasadena was now left off the hook. So, you know, they gave us back half or so. I think that was, if anything, that's my guess.

MICHAEL

Yeah. When Rabbi Vorspan was here, uh came, the State of Israel was established.

HY

Yeah with a lot of issues.

MICHAEL

What Zionist activity do you recall---you know, prior to the establishment of Israel and after it was established? I mean do you recall any activities, events, fundraising?

HY

Well, you know, in the early days right after the War, the independence of State was 1948. There was a lot of ... in the Temple itself. I mean, meetings, you know, to events. So the United Nations would vote for ____ (23:31), and I remember my wife and I taking in an old man whose name was Mr. Schuler. He was a junk man. Today, they are recyclers. He had a horse and

wagon and went out collecting junk, and we took him to Hollywood Boulevard. He nearly cried. I mean, he was so happy that he could go with us, and there could be a state in his lifetime.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

So, there was probably rallies in the Temple too you know people ____ (24:00), but then after the War, after the independence, nothing happened. The next war was in 1950-something. It was ____ (24:10), but the biggest one to me to my mind, I mean I'm drifting away from...

MICHAEL

No, that's okay.

HY

But it was the Yom Kippur War. That's when we were really on our backs. I mean, you know, and I remember we had a meeting at the Temple, and I stood up. I've been known to have microphonitis. I mean, I never met a mic I didn't like. I couldn't get anywheres. I couldn't. I couldn't get the people to... and you know Mickey Alpert.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

Mickey came by and he knew I was floundering. He went up there, and he said look all my friends out there. I'm gonna give \$1000. I want you to match it, and we did. People ... I never gave that kind of money in my life. I mean, I looked at my wife, and we didn't say a word. We knew we had to give, and there was a ____ (25:21) Leo Kravitz, he worked as...he worked in sales or ____ (25:27) No I think he worked in sales. He never gave. Never.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Anyway, he just gave his dues to the Temple, and that's it, and he went the next day to the credit union. It was good.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

It was good. It was a great feeling.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

I remember that day. It's all about the ____ (26:00) I know you're trying to get to Vorspan. They were a good couple.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

You know they were a couple that, you know, I think when I was growing up, and he was like a rabbi, I was in awe. I mean, they walked on water. You know, Rabbi Vorspan was just the opposite.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

He was down to earth! And he had a good sense of humor, and I still remember we had socials, and there was a game, and you know, even with his wife, you know, you know, you get an apple, and you hold it, and you try to give it to him. I mean, it was crazy, but this was the kind of fun we had with them. They were a good couple, and they were just...a good feeling to be with them, you know. They were human beings, and you know, Rabbi Galpert, you know I like him, but Rabbi Cohen was very, very different, aloof, and ambivalent, but he could talk too, Rabbi Cohen. I mean, you know, I mean, he officiated our wedding and also my, you know, we had a double wedding.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

He really spoke a lot. I mean, cantor-long. I mean too long. I mean, and my wife, my poor wife, she was told that you can't eat until after you're married. I mean you had to fast that day. She was fasting, and I mean, she was...I mean, by the time we got to our hotel that night, she was so hungry. She was so hungry that...

MICHAEL

(LAUGHTER) You don't have to go any further.

HY

(UNINTELLIGIBLE SPEECH 27:42)

HY

And then later on there was Rabbi Galpert, who was another good...you know, and with Rabbi Galpert I could talk a lot.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Because we were very...you know, he wasn't just my rabbi, he was my friend.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, we would...We went with him through the good times and the bad times. We had tragedies. There was a tragedy in the family.

MICHAEL

In terms of, were you involved in any way with the hiring of Rabbi Galpert?

HY

No, no, I never. The only thing I really involved in, even though I held almost every position in the Temple except the...except the presidency, and I just didn't want it. It's not that I was... I'm not trying to say that, but people didn't go for that job. You had a really good...

MICHAEL

(LAUGHTER)

HY

They took what it reluctantly.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

I remember Dave Goldman. Dave Goldman was a...his family was a founder of the Temple, and they would vote him maybe five or six times. He's a lawyer, and you know Dave Goldman, you know, was an icon in Pasadena. I mean, our lodge is named after him.

MICHAEL

Uhuh.

HY

You knew sure about Dave Goldman. He was murdered. He and his wife were murdered in their home.

MICHAEL

Oh really?

HY

By people that did their air conditioning work, and they came home one night, and they were there, these two people, and they killed them.

MICHAEL

Wow.

HY

Murdered them.

HY

So, but Dave, I remember he asked me one time if I wanted to be...to do more work at the Temple, and I said no. I says, but Dave said I remember you telling to me that you wanted to be president of B'nai Brith, and I said no not me. I can't. I just wouldn't be very good, but as I said, I held a lot of posts, and a lot of meetings, I mean day and night. As the business got better I had more time.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

But we're talking about the Rabbi Vorspan era. It was a good short ____ (30:00), but it was uplifting I think.

MICHAEL

Yeah. In terms, I mean, you mentioned these meetings, discussing reconstructionism. Did this...what was it...did it result in any changes in the Temple that you recall? Or was it just kind of a gathering---

HY

No, it laid the seeds I think. We were a growing community, and people were coming in. I mean, especially we had a...the climate changed as far as the type of people who came in here, and the Temple was founded by entrepreneurs, people who owned businesses, this and that, but now it was coming with professionals, people from JPL, which was really a big ____ (30:50), and so we changed. The complex changed. So it was growing. The seed was planted, and we can just....and that seed grew to a point where we, in the late '50s we had this big building formed. We built the new building, and later we built the ____ (31:21) School which was right next to the Knell Chapel there.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

We were moving!

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

It was...It was... That's what happened! You don't...you don't see it, but it was growing because we were getting to be a very active community.

MICHAEL

You know, one thing, this is kind of a little break on this. Was there...there was an organ (AUDIO CUT) organ in the Knell Chapel.

HY

That was what we had in the Knell Chapel.

MICHAEL

I mean was it a little small organ then? I mean... I think of the cathedral, you know, with the pipe thing.

HY

The Knell Chapel, or the...well, we call it Knell. It was B'nai Israel, that was the temple. It was an L-shaped synagogue in a sense. You know where the library is?

MICHAEL

Yes.

HY

Well, that was part of the Shul.

MICHAEL

Okay.

HY

Then we had a balcony in there, and actually it hasn't changed much except for the balcony being eliminated and the library being cut off. In other words it's now just a plain rectangular building.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

In those days it was an L-shape. Definitely because Mrs. Hansler, she was an accompanist. She wasn't Jewish, but she was a well-beloved figure in that played, so...

MICHAEL

Where was the organ located?

HY

Come to think of it, you're really making me think... where would that organ be?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

See now, in the main sanctuary in what we have now there was room.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

There was room, but I think she was there, and I think there had to be something there.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

Maybe it was a piano.

MICHAEL

Well, I seem to think a lot of people have mentioned about an organ there and Mrs., what's-her-name?

HY

There could be an organ. You know where the rabbi sits now in the Knell Chapel?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

It could be on the side there.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. Maybe that. It could have been there. When was the organ removed? I mean, stopped being used as part of the service?

HY

Well, I always remember an organ. You know I came from an Orthodox Shul in back East. We didn't have the kind of...so I always in the main Shul, and you got me thinking, but I know we were married, we had a piano

accompaniment or a...because we had a woman soloist, a member of the Temple that sang the...Because...You know that song? Because God made me wanna cherish... That was our song. Today kids have rock music or whatever...but you know, my wife is very traditional and we could have picked a lot of other songs. Well, anyway, it was either a piano or an organ.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Does...how do you feel coming from an orthodox service to a service which has an organ?

HY

You know, my...my...wife...I come from a, you sure had to be orthodox to have bar mitzvahs. You know I was bar mitzvahed here two years ago, my second bar mitzvah, but it was from Elizabeth, New Jersey---that's where we had an orthodox shul. My parents were... My father was very well... I always knew my father was quite a scholar even though he was a garment worker.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

He read a lot. He was a free thinker, more or less. I mean, you know, he was a socialist. The shul was part of life, but it wasn't a big thing you know. It was like that's the way...that's the way it is.

MICHAEL

Right. Right.

HY

The women sit upstairs and us downstairs, and that's the way it is. No women, you know. That's how it is. You know you went to shul. We went to Hebrew school because we had to go. We had to get bar mitzvahed, and then for a year afterwards, we... I lived across the street from the president of the shul, and he would come and wake me up and take me to shul. I'd put on ____ (36:49) because it was hard to get a minion. I mean, you know, during the depression, the people that normally would go to shul had to work.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So, you know, he dragged me to shul, but you know the shul wasn't a big thing.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

It was just a place we had to go. It was part of being Jewish and that's it. If we could avoid it we would.

MICHAEL

Having an organ as part of the service, I ask that because ____ (37:30).

HY

Were you bar mitzvahed?

MICHAEL

No, I was not bar mitzvahed. When my wife and I had gone to the Glendale Temple a couple of times, and they have an organ there.

HY

You know I went to temple service. My kids joined there. I didn't want the reforms,

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And my son-in-law became president there, and so I joined it, and I still ____ (38:02) the two temples. Every Jew should go to two temples, and I really enjoyed...you know, there was a rabbi, one of the rabbis..

MICHAEL

Myers?

HY

Yeah, Carol Myers, and even today she's part of my family, and we were just invited to her kid's bar mitzvah...

MICHAEL

Oh really?

HY

Yeah, and I remember she was single when I got there.

MICHAEL

Yeah

HY

And she met a fellow.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Levsky. Ralph Levsky.

MICHAEL

Right. Well, he used to work in a law firm where I was the paralegal.

HY

He was? Well...He says all the time that he was something. I can't even...____(38:4) but he was on a committee to...to...to...for her salary, or something like that. Or maybe he was on a committee, you know, the salary had to be revised, and that's when they met and got married.

MICHAEL

I mean going over there personally and hearing the organ. I think, God, this is very ____.

HY

That's right. We were kids, and we were all maybe 13, 14, 15. We would go to a reform shul where where pretty girls and this and that. Mostly girls, and that's how we...I mean, they had an organ there, I remember so...

MICHAEL

When you came what was the role of women in B'nai Israel? I guess the sisterhood.

HY

I hate to say it but they were not in the governing body.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

They were just an auxiliary. They were...they were the sisterhood. That was the biggest thing they had. They would even find any room, and maybe there would be a secretary or something like that, but they were very... They were not like today. I mean, the women, we have women presidents and this and that.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

But they wouldn't....

MICHAEL

Well, they taught Sunday school.

HY

They taught Sunday school, and they were...and they were like my...my marriage, my wife's grandparents...when these twins born,

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

They had a...it was a tough birth. I mean, they had pneumonia and everything. It was really touch and go for a while.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And my grandmother and my...I mean, my wife's grandmother Rebecca Press she said that if they survived, she's gonna...every year she'd give something to the Temple.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

And that's how ____ (41:08) started where they... That's a big business. Now they make fifteen twenty thousand a year. In those days it was nothing, but it was something, and that was the big thing. Then there was...the women just were well they were subservient. They weren't...they weren't in the ruling body at all. Without them you couldn't have a Temple. They made sure that there was money sometimes they'd pay the bills and everything else, but...even today they're very strong.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

That's why you could never have a brotherhood here. They're so strong and entrenched.

MICHAEL

Yeah

HY

Which is just as well. I mean, what do you need another one for? You know, a lot of temples have a brotherhood. Mount Sinai has a big brotherhood. A big brotherhood, but the women were...were...I mean, they were a very poor part of the temple...

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

But without them, forget about it.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

They raised money and this and that, but they weren't in the ruling body.

MICHAEL

But what the...

HY

The first woman president was Marsha Alpert, I think.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

There were women...but even before her, there were women on the board and this and that, so it was not...my first time, I remember there was a board of directors...a very unruly board, maybe thirty forty people. I mean, it was really...you couldn't... But now we have just... there's no women on the board. Not that I remember.

MICHAEL

What prompted the bat mitzvah of the twins? Why did they? Was there any opposition?

HY

It may have been that the conservative movement started it. I'm sure that they gotta be sanctioned by the conservatives. I mean, things change.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

There may have been a big, maybe a convention at one time, and they voted on the women that could be bar mitzvahed, and that's the way it worked. But we were working up to it from the day...probably from the time that Max Vorspan came into being. It was...He started the revolution.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

To modernize.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Not that he had much to do, but you know, he was with the University of Judaism.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But I understand Max he was...he started a lot of that activism.

MICHAEL

When the...it's my understanding that for some time girls were bat mitzvahed on Friday night.

HY

Yes. That's when my kids were all...Friday night was the...the... all my girls were bat mitzvahed on Friday, but now it's...my granddaughters were bat mitzvahed on Saturday.

MICHAEL

So what was the Friday night bat mitzvah day? They did read the Torah?

HY

Well, good question. You know... question about the Torah... that's gee...I have four girls, and now I don't remember exactly. You know, on Saturday morning...you got seven, seven or eight ____ (44:45).

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And read in portions. Now what we can do...of course in reform temple it's on

MICHAEL

Friday night.

HY

There were only two or three leaders, and they don't read like like what we do. They like give you a reader's digest version of the pasha. They don't go through the whole pasha like we do at the...at Pasadena.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Well, that's a good question. I mean, how many readers did we have? Because...there's different types of bat mitzvahs. In orthodox for women they do something on a weekday. They do something. I mean, for her. I mean it's not like they're left out, but they're never on Saturday.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

____ (45:32) and there's a bar mitzvah coming up now. The young fellow's got autism, and he's doing very well considering it's a...you know.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

And they're going to start on 5:30 on a Saturday, and it's not going to be long at all. I mean this will be a short service.

MICHAEL

Right.

HY

He can do so much.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But he's doing very well.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

From what I've heard.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

So, well on Friday, you know that they...I can check into it.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

My girls would remember, but you know...it's ...

MICHAEL

Because I mean it seems as though what do I know about history, the temple and maybe Judaism in general is that...

HY

Are we recording now?

MICHAEL

Yes.

HY

Oh.

MICHAEL

Is that there was an evolution of the participation of the...an evolution of the ritual that girls did.

HY

That happens, I mean, it's not the same as when I first came here. I mean, even probably...I don't know if the Orthodox have changed, but I'm sure they have changed somewhat.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But we have changed a lot from the conservative movement, and the reformed movement has opened to a very different...I mean there's always something happening. It's not rigid.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So like even in the reforms I mean with services on a Saturday. They...it's up for the individual family...the individual kid whose being bar mitzvah'd what he wants or she wants to do. She can read from the Torah. You know, my grandchildren, I have---all of them---I have eight. Six of them, all had bar mitzvahs on a Saturday and they read from the Torah and did everything, but some kids just don't do anything. So that's the way it works.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, it depends upon the family. It depends upon the kid.

MICHAEL

Right.

HY

You know, its...I mean... Its...

MICHAEL

Do you recall when girls started being bar mitzvah'd on Saturday?

HY

My sister-in-law's was...so it would have been 19...on a Friday...and then my kids started on Friday. My daughter was born in '47. So ten years later, she...she...my daughter was ... so she would be 1960 she was bar mitzvah'd. So in 1960, it was almost ten years after...my daughter was ten years after my sister-in-laws were bar mitzvah'd in 1960, so it...almost I guess after my girls...then...19...1960 my first one was bar mitzvah'd so may be in the '70s or so

MICHAEL

Okay.

HY

Being on Saturday.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Maybe '70s maybe '80s.

MICHAEL

What was there...has there been any opposition to any of...

HY

Well, for that matter...

MICHAEL

You know for any changes, the bar mitzvahs as well as the women's role in the synagogue... I mean there's been no theological issues raised. You know, this is not women's roles...

HY

Well, you always had somebody...somebody who might not agree with the thinking, but I don't think there was organized...organized resistance to... This temple has been...except for one instance...you've got probably the Ackerman area...era...where they wanted to get rid of Rabbi Galpert. That must be...you must know that.

MICHAEL

There's... Yeah.

HY

They... I really don't know why they did or not, but I wasn't active. I don't know why I wasn't. But maybe it was like a coup...almost like a coup. People like Shirley Hoffman and even Sue Alpert would probably. Sue would know, if you want...that was an important...

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

Uprising you might say, and Sue would know...

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

Because Morrie must have told her, I mean. So Sue Alpert would know. But the other revolution was when we decided that the board and everything else was too cumbersome. They couldn't navigate, couldn't work, and then people like Joe Adenwright, Mickey Alpert, Bob Hoffman, Judge Pace maybe, Steve Kaye...you remember them?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Steve Kaye and Gene Fingerhut...they met at my house many times to...to...to...forge a constitution, and everything was good, and now it's worked because we have...we have order.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

We have committees, and people know what they're supposed to do, and we know that you assume this job you did it because the next time, I mean

eventually... every year or two years, we had to figure out who we were going to have for president..

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, but now everything is in order. It's very cut and dried really. Maybe it's dull but it's in good faith.

MICHAEL

Well, so you were involved in that project.

HY

Yeah I was involved in that somewhat in some ways. I was involved in some of that.

MICHAEL

And there was...

HY

New constitution, yeah.

MICHAEL

And do you recall the process of that? I mean do you recall did they have some...

HY

You mean how it came about?

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. I mean how long did it take?

HY

Well, we knew...it took time, but we knew we had to do something. We weren't getting anywhere with the...with the running a temple. It wasn't ...it wasn't getting us anywhere. It was too cumbersome.

MICHAEL

What year was this?

HY

Well, you know...it's easily...it's easily...figured out. Just find out the presidency of Joe Amwright. He was elected first president of the new organization.

MICHAEL

Okay.

HY

And then the people that were active in that committee like myself, no I wasn't that active, but then you can ask the people like Bob Hoffman, Steve Kaye, George Pace. Those are the ones that truly...yeah. They followed each other then people started moving up, and then we knew...

MICHAEL

I gather though some say it was too large.

HY

Oh it was cumbersome. It was like to go to a board meeting, there was so many members. They were shouting at each other, and it was so...I remember that Sam Weiss... you know who Sam Weiss was? He was actually the father-in-law of Mickey Seigel.

MICHAEL

Oh. Okay.

HY

Mickey started to work for him, and then Mickey hit the big time...entertainment, and he left...It was in his presidency that I got...I remember one meeting where one guy just kept picking on him. I mean, here's the poor guy and some guy---there's always a trouble maker. You know troublemakers they like to be heard and you know...I stood up and remember saying leave him alone. I mean, the boy's trying to do the best job he can. If you don't like it, you take over. So anyway, but we realized that. It was cumbersome. You can't have thirty, forty members or something like that on a board. You gotta cut it down, and you have to allocate jobs for each one of them, what they're supposed to do.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

That's what we did. We advised president appropriate...what about management...what about plans...what about this and that...

MICHAEL

So the board before that...

HY

It was nothing.

MICHAEL

Just people

HY

Nothing.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

They gave you a vice president. So what. You didn't know what you were doing. I mean...

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

I mean, it was the president that really had the show. Not that he wanted to, but he was forced to. So that was...nowadays anyway, when I think about it...it was really a good...we have... people kept notes. Like, you take notes. People get notes on hiring a rabbi.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

We knew what mistakes we made before.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah.

HY

On how...Mickey used to travel a lot to Washington. He works at JPL, and when we needed a rabbi or a cantor or something like that, he would stop in New York, and save his money....he had a lot of notes. Had the right questions to ask.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

HY

So it's a much better, very good run organization now.

MICHAEL

Did you recall if you used the constitution of any other temple or other constitutions of other temples as a kind of model?

HY

I'm sure we did. I don't know, but I'm sure we did. Maybe...maybe...

MICHAEL

Was there any opposition in the congregation to the new...

HY

Very little. Very little. I think they accepted it. Not to my knowledge. You know, the only opposition I ever had to anything was the...was what I mentioned...was going to the Jewish Federation...that was hard-earned...that was hard-earned money going to a strange place and not knowing if you were gonna get it back, but other than that everything went well. I would say that without pushing a button, maybe Rabbi Vorspan was maybe one of the catalysts to

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

There's a new world opening up. Again, even though he didn't stay long with us, but he opened up that door.

MICHAEL

Did you know other non-affiliated Jews? Jews that were not affiliated with the temple?

HY

Yeah. Yeah. One of my best friends. Those who were not affiliated were usually married to...intermarried.

MICHAEL

Oh okay.

HY

I had a good friend. I think he contributed to Jewish causes, but he was a plumber. He made a good living. Married to an Irish girl, and she was...she

was the president of the Jewish auxiliary of the Jewish war veterans. I mean, he was a veteran...I mean we didn't make any difference, but there weren't a lot of non-affiliated Jews that I knew. They mostly were affiliated Jews. I mean, I don't see how you could stay in this town and not be affiliated.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Well, I don't think the...even up to now there are a lot of faculty, say from CalTech.

HY

Yeah. Faculty. CalTech is not a good ground for...and we have good people there. We have Ann Cooperman, and we have...

MICHAEL

What's his name...Paul...Allan was it?

HY

We even have the president of the CalTech that came down here. I mean Baltimore, he never came down here. Ike came here but not this guy. Howard Brown never came here to my knowledge.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

But it would have been a good you know we got this kid...I can't think of his name. He's a graduate student. He reads from the Torah all the time here. There's another girl that comes, very good.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

HY

I can't think of his name, and you know JPL we don't have. We have a lot, but there're not hiring anymore. We don't get the new people anymore. Every year we usually get a new crop of people that they hire, and so they're not coming in anymore. Their payroll...their workforce has decreased.

MICHAEL

Was there any reason that you recall for the ones that were not affiliated---well, maybe other than intermarriage---I mean was there some issues about maybe the Temple not being conservative enough or maybe too liberal or was there...

HY

Well you know...what always got me...after a kid was bar mitzvahed they would stay til the bar mitzvah then they would leave, and the reason could be financial, or could be...leave after kids were bar mitzvahed... You know that's one reason why people leave I think. Once the kid was bar mitzvahed, and that's...that's not right...but it happens.

MICHAEL

Did the Temple attract any, maybe they were not affiliated, but did they come to High Holiday services? I mean maybe they weren't members of the temple, but you know...

HY

They sometimes they come. Usually they come for Easter. Those people. They usually come for Easter. Nobody else would make them come. You know we're not profilers...I mean they come, and that's it, and maybe we hope that they will pay something. I don't know if they pay or not. I remember you know Art Chiles, he was a president. He came, and he was new, and he came on Yom Kippur or something like that. I was at the door, and he was not a member. He just came, and so I said, be my guest. We got seats, and he became active, and he became president. So I mean there are a lot of people like that...so it's...I think it's growing now. I think it's much better now. I mean we can hit 400 people, and you know Rabbi Grater, you talk about being active.. .He's..

MICHAEL

I know. He's already made a mark.

HY

He's almost like my grandson. See that sign over there, just right in front of you. (AUDIO CUT)

1.3. Session Three (March 10, 2009)

MICHAEL

Today is March 10, 2009. This is Michael Several. I am interviewing Hy Vego at his daughter's home and we are going to conduct the third interview that in the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center's oral history project. Lets say, I first wanted to ask some very specific questions about your first visit to temple B'Nai Israel. Previously you said you were stationed at camp Santa Anita. You heard or you saw a poster, a flyer that there was a US Old dance at the temple. Now, I want to ask some very specific questions. Do you remember what year that was?

HY

Yeah I can remember. Within a month or two, I enlisted. I was in the army in November of 1942 early and I was in Camp Dicks for less than a week and then we took a troop train, it took us all the way to Santa Anita so we were in Santa Anita may be in December, early December.

MICHAEL

Of 1942?

HY

And the first passes we got, we didn't think, we didn't know if Pasadena existed. We knew Hollywood, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills. That was the places to go so we had a weekend passes, we would go there and then when I, in December of 1942, the end of 1942, that's when I brought my clothes into a dry cleaning store at the camp, that was owned by the Spektor family, who are members of the temple and they had this poster there and that first

weekend I went there, I took my brother, I had a twin brother who enlisted with me and I had a couple of friends and we came to.

MICHAEL

Did you, so you went there, it was December of 1942?

HY

Yeah it was December 1942 or may be it could have been the beginning of January of 1943 but in that space of time.

MICHAEL

Did you, do you recall what rank you were?

HY

I was a private.

MICHAEL

The first class?

HY

I became a first class when I got out of the army, I was a sergeant but at the beginning, I was a private and then I was private first class when I was stationed in San Luis Obispo and then it was corporal when I was at Camp Roberts and then overseas, I became a sergeant.

MICHAEL

When you went to the Pasadena, to temple B'Nai Israel, did you go there wearing your uniform?

HY

Oh yeah, actually we hitchhiked into town into Pasadena from the camp and we thought that the shul was in the center of town so we wound up at Fair Oaks in Colorado, somewhere around there and we asked people and nobody knew where it was. And then we saw a taxi cab on the curb and we went over to him and he says I know, I have taken people there and he says yes how far is it? You know they would make it a lot of money those days, \$24 a month so we didn't want to spend it so he said it's a long walk. So we said well, so we all chipped in and he took us there and I thought he was lost. The Pasadena was dark, there was not too many homes like what I lived in for 52 years, it wasn't even built, that was built after the war, well I figured he was lost and he came to the place, there was light, it was all lit up.

MICHAEL

So say you went there, previously you testified within 15 minutes you met Miriam.

HY

It was in a minute, not 15 minutes. There was a girl who ran up to us, her name was Bernice Orlov, she became Bernice Feldstein, I don't know if that name rings a bell.

MICHAEL

It does it does.

HY

And she saw my brother and I coming in and she knew we were twins, I mean we were, I don't say we were identical but you can't miss that we were twins. That's why she ran over to me and she said, I have got a girlfriend, I would like to introduce, she has twin sisters, which she did. She had twin sisters, they were 16 years old at that time. There were kids but her mother was the chaperon.

MICHAEL

Oh she was.

HY

I hate to tell you but you know the girls were not even 16 years old, not only it wasn't even 16, she was going to be 16 in March and here I meet her, she is not even 16 but I mean we never thought about it that way. When we were single, when we were kids growing up, if a girl was younger, then we wouldn't even think to talk to her but this was different so anyway, that's the way we, and then she introduced me to her mother and her mother invited my brother and I to spend a night there, it was an old house, you know where Beckham Grill is?

MICHAEL

Oh yeah, yeah.

HY

You know the Beckham Grill is, you know where Parsons is. It's on Walnut Street, we lived there, and they had an old house at Walnut street and that's where eventually after we got married, we moved into that house, that's where I started my business but then after that, I came every weekend.

MICHAEL

So when you went there that first time, or even the subsequent times, did other soldiers from servicemen from camp Santa Anita, go?

HY

Oh yeah there was a group of soldiers, I remember there was an ammunition company and they were stationed. Santa Anita was a basic training, I mean it wasn't, and you had some other knowledge but mostly it was basic training. From there, we went on maneuvers and this and that but it was basics and there were all a lot of them were from Philadelphia and they were there and I had some of my, later on some of my friends who aren't Jewish came there to the dance. So it was very friendly and everything else, it was nice.

MICHAEL

So about how many people usually?

HY

Oh it was always full, it was at Kirshner auditorium, Wohlmann was called Kushner and so we had a jukebox there and I danced with her only, she is a great dancer, they like dance with their own.

MICHAEL

And the dances were every Saturday?

HY

Huh?

MICHAEL

The dances were held every Saturday?

HY

Every Saturday yeah.

MICHAEL

But were you able to get off the base every Saturday?

HY

Oh yeah I got off the base actually I couldn't go off the base, sometimes I got off during the week but she was so she was going, she was going to Pasadena Junior College and she was working part time and I didn't want to bother her. You know she had work to do so I made a point so it was just on weekends but there were sometimes something happened, I would see her during the week but most of the times, it was on weekends.

MICHAEL

How did you get there? Always by?

HY

Always hitchhike. I hitchhike except I could tell you the story later on about how I came after I left Santa Anita, we went to San Louis Obispo and that wasn't easy to come back, it was still, it was 224 whatever it was and I at the beginning I hitchhiked, I took the bus, I took the train, and then I had a, it was getting tough. It was getting hot especially hitchhiking. I never hitchhiked back, once I hitchhiked and got to Pasadena, on Sunday late in the afternoon or early evening, I would take the train or take the Greyhound because I didn't have the time if, because one time, we came late and I had duty for all week cleaning latrines and the mess hall and this and that but in Santa Anita, in San Luis Obispo, we lived in huts. In fact, I would just there about four months ago, I went to San Luis Obispo and I went to Camp Robertson where they showed to both those camps, so they had huts on those days.

MICHAEL

Quintet huts?

HY

You know its _____.

MICHAEL

Right.

HY

So...

MICHAEL

Were they the quintet huts?

HY

Well they were huts like, they were wooden framed, I don't think they even had a floor, just a dirt floor and then they had canvas tops, you know they

had beams going in triangle and a canvas over the top and then it was over the middle of the, it was cold up there especially at Camp Roberts but anyway as I am saying, I had a very close visit from the Ozarks, one of the nicest guys, we are friends for life, he passed away recently and he was going from San Luis Obispo with somebody out in the car with somebody else, Phil I had a car and he had a, but it was a coupe, two passengers. So he knew my frustrations, trying to get to Pasadena so he says, he talked it over with the driver of the car says, we got a proposition for you. The car, you know what a trundle back is?

MICHAEL

No.

HY

It's a coupe but the back, the car, you lift it up from the bumper, the back bumper and it goes all the way to the back seat of the driver's seat, it is about six feet. It is a long, that's a trundle back. We can put a pillow down there, that's a sleep with your overcoat and we put a stick by the bumper there to hold it up so you will get air coming through so he said its up to you, he says he will take us there so I said well, you got to be crazy, you got to be in love, either way.

MICHAEL

Or young.

HY

So that's the way I went back, even when we came to Roberts, it's the same way, I went that way, week in and week out, I _____.

MICHAEL

When you were in Camp Santa Anita, you hitched to the temple, how did you get back to Camp Santa Anita? Do you hitch then or?

HY

Well that was no problem. When I was in Santa Anita, I would either hitchhike or Miriam would take me, you know they had, my father in law had car tire business and they were issuing the stamps that you got for gas, food stamps and your ration so they had enough there and like when I was in San Luis, I went by this car and she would take me around 6 o'clock on Sunday night, I would leave to go to get the car either on Hollywood or Vine or 6 at Maine and she dropped me off at the entrance of the Pasadena Freeway which was close to home and I hitchhike, if I wanted to go to Hollywood but you know hitchhiking in those days, they picked up, everybody picked up soldiers, servicemen.

MICHAEL

Did any servicewoman from Camp Santa Anita go to the dances?

HY

Oh yeah I took some friends we had some, we had, it was a big company, we had about 250, 300, and we were very specialized company.

MICHAEL

Were the women in the?

HY

No there was no women, there was no blacks, it was segregated army. I don't remember seeing any women. I tell you may be I was just so concealed with Miriam that I really didn't see a lot but there was my company I would say, must have been a half a dozen or more Jewish kids.

MICHAEL

So it may would come to the dances and bring also non Jews to the dances?

HY

They would come like I did but they would go back to camp or somewhere. There was a couple these kids from Philadelphia evidently had same Jewish that I had, they slept over the Spektor house, they would have this dry cleaning place. I don't know, I didn't follow that.

MICHAEL

Did you ever go to the Hollywood canteen?

HY

Oh yeah that was the first thing we did when we came.

MICHAEL

Oh it was?

HY

Oh yeah the Hollywood canteen, the palladium, and there was a place, there was this screen actors guild, they had a whole house and they had lodging and if you got there early enough, you would sleep over and they had a big kitchen with I don't know how many refrigerators and there was a guy by the name, I cant think of his first name the actor Ryan.

MICHAEL

Paul Ryan?

HY

Oh yeah he was serving us sometimes but palladium was very popular and Santa Monica, I never reached Malibu.

MICHAEL

You went to the Hollywood canteen and the palladium but after you met Miriam?

HY

I just went to, we went before Miriam, at the Beverly Hills, at the Polo Lounge there, we did everything but once I met her, that's it.

MICHAEL

When you went to the Hollywood canteen, did you ever dance with any celebs?

HY

Oh not that I remember.

MICHAEL

Like Marley Dietrich or Betty _____.

HY

Well I did meet like, later on in the army, I was very, I was close to, I mean I talked to at work with two big names. I worked with Jack Barr and I worked with Danny Thomas. I could tell you that story. That story was that we had a service officer his name was Charlie Moore and he arranged movies and all the US troops and he didn't like to introduce to people. He was little shy, so he gave me the job and Jack Barr for example, in San Luis Obispo, no no this was overseas. I was in New Caledonia and he came one day and he was to perform that night and I said talk with them and he wanted a no, mostly about all the officers, when comedian kid the officers, the guys were really joy, they would love to see the officers, so I had to give him a lot of little dirt about some of the officers and I introduced them on the stage and the same thing with Danny Thomas was in Philippines, oh he was really fantastic you know beautiful outfit he had, I mean the suit, I had never seen suits, I was overseas for 20 months, so I didn't see a suit like this, he dressed very well, probably a Tuxedo, not a tuxedo but really well dress, a sports jacket so I introduced him and that's the.

MICHAEL

What was the difference, how would you describe the difference between the dances that the Hollywood canteen or the palladium or ones the temple B'Nai Israel.

HY

Oh I was home at the temple, you know it was like I was, back home, we grew up in a YMHA, we had dances every Saturday so I mean it was almost like the same thing, its continuation but palladium and all this is strange.

MICHAEL

Lets see the dances at temple B'Nai Israel, they were crowded?

HY

You know its not a large place, it was full all the time, in fact not as full as our wedding, that was our wedding reception in that place, there was flooring all over outside, there was a lot of people there, there was a lot of JIs.

MICHAEL

Who sponsored the dances?

HY

I think, I mean we called the USO dances, I don't know if it was the USO itself, the organization which is still in existence, I still contribute to them but I think it was a Jewish welfare or that you know they may have supplied the jukebox, and the women of the community supplied the refreshment but its like USO dances but basically they were sponsored by other, it could have been the temple itself but I think it was the Jewish welfare board.

MICHAEL

In previous interview, you mentioned something about the chaperons. Would you kind of elaborate on?

HY

Well you know Wolman, you go out to Wolman, there is a walkway, beyond that walkway is no man's land, we never went out, those soldier or any JI would walk off there with a girl. That's was the limit and the mothers were right there. Now there has never been an incident, really its may be we act a little different Jews but it was very you know very nice. All the kids were happy, all us guys were happy to be in that place, that we just didn't violate anything.

MICHAEL

About what were the hours of the dances? Do you recall when they start it, when they end it?

HY

I don't know, all I know is that at the end of the dance, they played goodnight sweetheart, well that's what all the USO dances, they also played goodnight sweetheart. I don't know may be 11 o'clock something about that, they stopped that late. It was not until midnight or anything like that.

MICHAEL

During the war or when you at Camp Santa Anita, did you go to the temple for any of the regions?

HY

No.

MICHAEL

You didn't go for services?

HY

No I wasn't old enough for come to think of it.

MICHAEL

Passover?

HY

It may have been Passover because I became part of the family, yes I remember thanks for reminding me, one of Miriam's uncles got married he came home from _____ and I held a _____ that wasn't permanent, he had four rods, it wasn't even anchored to the ground, you had to hold it, it was hard, just long winded rabbi.

MICHAEL

That was rabbi Cohen?

HY

That was rabbi Cohen I think, no wait up. I don't know who the rabbi was, I know the rabbi who married us, it was rabbi Cohen and Max _____ was the first regular rabbi. Rabbi Cohen was the part time rabbi and I don't know who Miriam's Uncle Dave and Ruth, I don't know who the rabbi was. May be it was Cohen, may be it was still Cohen, I don't know. It was in 1943.

MICHAEL

Yeah it would be Cohen. And where was it?

HY

At the B'Nai Israel chapel.

MICHAEL

That's what it was called at that time?

HY

Yeah we called it B'Nai Israel chapel. That's where the place was B'Nai Israel chapel plus Wolman and Kushner and the Youthful which was next to Kushner. That was the whole structure of the temple.

MICHAEL

In May of 1943, there were the Izutsu riots in Los Angeles. I am just wondering, did that have any impact on your movement around Los Angeles? The reason I ask is I am just wondering.

HY

It was 1943 that year it was?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Even before I got into the army when we wore trousers, we had a _____ Izutsu but not as elaborate like they wore chains, but our trousers were up and then they came down so towards by the ankle, they came down that's the way you wore them, that was the style for guys then.

MICHAEL

It was the knickers?

HY

Well knickers are wore up till almost to bar mitzvah.

MICHAEL

Yeah I remember those.

HY

I always wore knickers.

MICHAEL

The reason I ask, is just I was just wondering that perhaps you would go into the Hollywood canteen and because of the tensions in the city you know, that wasn't...

HY

I didn't notice that. It seemed like you know a safe place, I mean downtown LA, even back home before the war, it was safe to walk on streets. We never had a problem. The same year, you know downtown Pasadena or _____ was not exactly later became a little loud but we never heard about that.

MICHAEL

Do you recall what food they served at the dances? I mean I told you that this was going to be specific.

HY

Yeah I could tell you what other foods they served later on before the war, I think I should come to the torah fund, how the torah fund, have you got that? Okay they were serving at that time, you know I think.

MICHAEL

I mean they served drinks?

HY

Yeah you had drinks definitely but soft drinks. No beer or anything like that, it was cokes or lemonade or stuff like that, and a lot of cookies a lot of pastries or margarine.

MICHAEL

Kosher?

HY

Maybe could have been some kosher, smoke.. you know it was kosher, small sandwiches something like that but...

MICHAEL

Lets say I have a note here, Pasadena Athletic club. I don't know if you have mentioned.

HY

Yeah sometimes during a week when I did go to Miriam, I would go to some of the other guys I would go with at the Pasadena Athletic Club and civic had dances.

MICHAEL

Oh did they?

HY

Yeah and because Pasadena Athletic Club, Jew couldn't belong although later on I belonged, that was later on in the 60s or 70s I think but no I would prefer, you know some of the guys went so I went with them but I would more or less..

MICHAEL

Were they some of the same way that they had a juke box or local heroes?

HY

No they didn't have bands or anything like that, in the palladium they would have a band I think no its just jukebox.

MICHAEL

And the dances that B'Nai Israel, the girls who were there were all girls whose parents were members of the congregation?

HY

More or less I think more or less they were all members.

MICHAEL

Then they were all Jews, I mean there wouldn't be Christian girls?

HY

No there were no Christian girls at all but the GIs I mean like I brought in a couple and I am sure everybody thereof.

MICHAEL

Lets see I want to go now to the post war years, I want to ask you some questions about the Jewish war veterans. Do you recall what year the local chapter was established? Were you married then?

HY

I would say you know I came, I got married in 1946, probably 1947 or 1948 something like that.

MICHAEL

It was affiliated with national?

HY

Oh yeah it was national, the Jewish war veterans are the oldest war veteran organization in the country, the head of the American Legion that were slaughtered in the civil war and they are still going but not as strong as the fact, like no veteran organization is strong as like that. After the war was VFW, American Legion, they were very strong I mean Jewish war veterans were strong, I mean we would have lot of members and then little by little it faded.

MICHAEL

And you had meetings, you met at the temple?

HY

Yeah all the legions at the temple and we did a lot of good work.

MICHAEL

Where at the temple? What room did you have?

HY

Usually in the Wolman Hall Kershner.

MICHAEL

Okay.

HY

There was no other place I mean up until they started building, what was in the '58, I think it was '58.

MICHAEL

Actually I think it may have been '54, '55.

HY

There was war before that?

MICHAEL

Well that's when that being sanctuary was built.

HY

No we all met at the Kershner Wolman.

MICHAEL

There was something I read, may be you said it there was a merger with Alhambra. Now what was the story with that?

HY

Well we were both weak post so we merged together and we lasted a little longer than we should have but then we did last and we raised money, we had rummage sales of this and that and because we would visit people with GIs in the hospital, we had a favorite place right here in Altadena on Lincoln, if you went Lincoln passed Altadena drive, well Altadena drive used to be called Foothill, it was sanitariums there, Lovina and they had GIs for tuberculosis and we would go and play bingo with them and we would bring

some food with us and we got acquainted with a barbershop quartet in Pasadena, through somebody, they called themselves Crown City 4. You know right now the barbershoppers, they have a quartet and then they have a choir and women then had a quartet, they have the Sweet Adeline's they call it and so we got a hold of them and they called themselves the Crown City 4, four guys beautiful and they went all over, wherever we went, they were with us. No charge, nothing. I mean it was just so good so stuff like that we did and then we took care of a... I don't know if it was my job or it just happened to me because you know GIs come into town, they are poverty, they didn't have any money so we had to raise money you know we put them up, made arrangements to YMCA so they can stay spend a night or two and near my house, there were Parsons was a nice little coffee shop or a little luncheon there and I got to know the people there and I gave out tickets to these guys and they used them to eat you know, so we raised money for stuff like that.

MICHAEL

One thing you helped, they weren't necessarily Jews?

HY

No they were mostly Jews.

MICHAEL

Oh they were.

HY

Mostly Jews. They would come to the temple and then the temple would refer them to me.

MICHAEL

Did any ultimately stay in Pasadena?

HY

No the fact that I tell you, there was one family that unfortunately did this throughout the state of California, they were using us, you know they just were using us. They pleaded poverty with kids and this and that, we worked, we raised a lot of money and gave it to them, fed them, this and that but anyways, that's, it happens.

MICHAEL

When did the merger with Alhambra take place? Do you?

HY

I don't think probably the '50, '51, no later than '52. I think that by that time we were just falling apart, we started a City of Hope chapter and that's where we put all our energy into that.

MICHAEL

After the merger with Alhambra, where did you meet? Did you still meet?

HY

We met at both places. We had Beth Torah and we had our Temple but it was just dwindling, just dissipated.

MICHAEL

So it faded pretty quickly?

HY

It faded yeah but for me, it was Godsend because I didn't know anybody who came. All I knew was my wife's family and I had no body and this is the first group that we met and actually I knew some people, no no this was, no I joined the B'Nai B'rith young men now that was afterwards. I think the first thing was Jewish war veterans that's where I made my good friend, then I made friends with, we had the B'Nai B'rith young men and I saw, because I wanted to play softball and basketball, so we had teams, we played other BBYM teams but the basic friendship started and Shirley Hoffman was one of the girls you know, she is the only one left now. Of the all girls, I met her the same time I met Marion. She was there at the Burman's but I say that Jewish War Veterans were my first lifelong friends, we were friends for life. They are all gone now.

MICHAEL

Did the veteran, did that group march in any parade?

HY

Oh yes, yes yes. We had a dentist Dock Baskin, he was a veteran and he had a horse, we watched Armistice Day, there were parades in those days, Armistice Day was November 11 I think and we marched down Colorado Boulevard, a couple of times then we go to bar and have some beers after that. They didn't have veterans day like they have, now they come all together and we also participated in funerals too. We had rifles and I in fact I had a couple of them. That I kept in my house, Marion was like, would you get rid of them? She didn't want the guns in the house afterwards and I gave it to some customer of mine or some supplier who would say, who was you know a gunman, who would kept, he had a good gun collections so this was an old infield rifle I think they used those in World War I but we did a few funerals.

MICHAEL

Who were the people who were buried? Were the members of your group?

HY

It could have been. None of our guys, it could have been may be sometimes the cemetery calls you and says like they do now, they call a post if you are a veteran, you can go to military funeral, so I think we did that a couple of times but some many have called us, we were probably at the Home of Peace. Sinai was not around at that time.

MICHAEL

Do you have any records of that group?

HY

Of what?

MICHAEL

The Jewish War Veterans?

HY

No.

MICHAEL

Oh, that would be, you know its..

HY

I wouldn't know where?

MICHAEL

Did you do any decorate graves on Memorial Day or any of this?

HY

No. I would, I have personally gone to the Home of Peace attending memorial services, Wore my cap, actually I represented myself in a sense, at that time, the post was disbanded but I still have my cap.

MICHAEL

So you were going to the services?

HY

Yeah now and then, you know I get a notice, I say ok I'll go. I know I went there a couple of times but that's about it.

MICHAEL

And that would have been in 1950s even more recent.

HY

May be in the 60s. The 60s I think. I mean it is just on my own, I didn't go with any body, may be Marion went with me, I think may be she has gone but I think she used to go with me paying tribute to them.

MICHAEL

Lets see I want to go to the construction of facilities. The swimming pool. Do you recall if there was any controversy over the construction of the swimming pool?

HY

I think it was donated by a family that may be wrong but may be somebody can collaborate. I think it was Joseph someone who was a family there, they donated that pool.

MICHAEL

There was a plunge, a swimming pool next door?

HY

Yes Wagners.

MICHAEL

Yeah did the temple ever used that?

HY

No no, I don't know, there was some talk that he wasn't exactly, I wouldn't say anti-Semitic but he was not friendly I never used that pool, I don't know why? I guess may be because of that but the temple pool was Godsend I mean that's where all these friendships came about. Fingerhuts, there is a lot of others came close because of that pool, you know we had divers swimmers, we had barbeques on Friday night and then we go to Shula and we had on the 4th of July, we had English events, you know Ruth Kay and

Leslie Steve, they were British so we throw him in the pool and then on Labor Day, people like me, they threw you know entrepreneurs anti-laborers so that was every year same thing, threw the guys in the pool but the pool was a great Godsend and then of course everybody started building their own, I did, but other people did and Phil Callahan worked like heck to keep that thing going, he worked his butt off and then it came to a point where there just was not feasible financially, it would cost a lot and in fact we had an offer from YMCA, to use our pool, you know they have a pool in YMCA on New York Drive I think you know that.

MICHAEL

No I didn't.

HY

There was a YMCA but they didn't have a pool. They would have used our pool that was in good shape but to fix it, so they covered it up and now its cat's terrace.

MICHAEL

Do you recall why the pool was built? I mean did they see, I mean there is a saying you know the shul with a pool was there a feelings of you know that the temple needed a pool because of the social activities?

HY

Pool, I don't think so, I think it was welcomed you know not gungho but I mean if you tell me if the temple wanted bingo, then I can tell you there was a definitely no, I mean the rabbi didn't want it especially we would have it but as a pool, I don't think there is any descent.

MICHAEL

Was there any effort to have bingo?

HY

Oh may be somebody suggested the rabbi Galpert didn't want it, I mean he made a stand on that and I am glad we didn't have it because it didn't help Alhambra, it is not helping share a Torah in Arcadia and I don't know about temple B'rith, they still have it but it is not what it was.

MICHAEL

Well what is the story with this bingo? Did somebody proposed it and rabbi Galpert said no?

HY

No I think there was no vote on it and I don't think, I think it was just talking here and there and you know its squash before it really that is my feeling, I never saw it.

MICHAEL

Was the main sanctuary, I hear the main sanctuary was completed in 1954, the construction started around 1952 or so. Do you know if the financing, how it was financed and whether the financing began with rabbi Vorspan?

HY

The rabbi Vorspan, I don't think he was there when there was a rebuilding, I am not sure.

MICHAEL

He left in mid 1952.

HY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

And the question that I have is when he was rabbi, did the plans and financing start to build the main sanctuary or did it occur after? I mean one of the things that struck me, I was looking at a year book at the temple from 1951 and it has kind of a wish list and it said, a building that can hold 1000 people for high holiday services that would have a basketball court you know.

HY

It came to pass.... When was.... This was in 1958.

MICHAEL

In 1951.

HY

But when was it actually built?

MICHAEL

I think the shell was completed in 1954, some people said that the first service, the floor had not built.

HY

Yeah the floor wasn't and I will tell you another thing, the member of the services prior to that high holiday services, I remember going to a theater in Pasadena, a movie theater and I don't know one of the place, but I remember what you say when the floors were not in, they had a truck outside the building that blew in the air into the building you know because you know you on Yom Kippur, you can always know its going to be a hot day so I remember those trucks were rolling in big air, I mean a lot of air I will tell you one of the thing is that my knowledge I was not, I was very busy, from September to January there were 60-70 to be honest 60-70 hour a week, just starting a business and a lot of it was we had funds to really begin but we did in fact we began our business by working elsewhere. We had jobs at during the day and we came back at night and did go to work and that we did for two to three years until we could get started and then we so just and we did have the money for more powerful machines, we did a lot of I of it by hand and so until later on, we got all those machines but it took hours to weeks.

MICHAEL

Do you recall what theater these services were held?

HY

Well usually the United Artist but its not there anymore. I think it was the United Artist I am not sure.

MICHAEL

That's on Colorado.

HY

Colorado may have been the old one, you know some place or it could have been, one of them was, I was thinking may be you know there used to be a levily I mean on the south side of the Colorado, not the levily now is on Elvaleno side but I think it was United Artist, on Elvaleno or Oakland somewhere around that place.

MICHAEL

Do you recall for how many years they had services at the movie theater?

HY

I don't know how many years but prior to the building, they could not fit, they had to have at some place, it could be in the premises, it was just no room. The temple was too small B'Nai Israel temple even though if you outstretch, you know they had a balcony and they had the like an L for this way and that went to the pass the library and brought it up against Wolman at the Kushner home but even then you couldn't fit that many on the high holidays.

MICHAEL

In the years before, did they ever have high holiday services in what is now Nell chapel?

HY

No I don't think so, not to my knowledge.

MICHAEL

In addition to the movie theaters where else do you recall, some people have said the Shakespeare club.

HY

Shakespeare, you have the right, I think so yeah the Shakespeare club. I never went to a service high holiday service at the old B'Nai Israel.

MICHAEL

How about the, I think somebody said the Sipicouta auditorium.

HY

That could be too, that is possible too yeah that's possible.

MICHAEL

Do you recall going to Sipicouta auditorium for any high holiday services?

HY

I always went you know my family, Marion's family we always went to services we attend especially high holidays, I don't think I missed Yom Kippur my whole life. I don't think, even in the army, I was fortunate enough to be in a place where we could have the service but Marion's family, her mother was, on the Friday nights used to go quite often. Now I like to go Saturday. I just feel better Saturday but....

MICHAEL

The Louis B. Silver building which was constructed in 1964, finished in 1964, do you recall any consideration to renovating Wolman instead of building this? Do you recall any discussion?

HY

No. Louis Silver was, my wife Marion worked for him. He had the Pasadena Tobacco Company and she worked for him at one time, part time I think. He was a very nice man and Max Stone, you probably have him mentioned in there, he was the contractor. He developed a lot of Orange Grove. There is always a story about Max Stone. He was very tough guy. He got sick and Paul Hoffman and I went down to see him and he was in one of his offices on Orange Grove, one of these prefabricated, he had an office there. We wanted to see him just to say you know how are you feelin and he kept looking at us and said okay what do you want? I mean nobody comes to say how are you Max, how is your family, not to me, what do you want? That was Max but he put out, he gave a lot of his time and money and he built the temple, he had a contractor that did work and Max would save every nail. When he built the condo, he had few of those he built Orange Grove, is still standing.

MICHAEL

Lets say I interviewed Irving Burg.

HY

Irving Burg you did?

MICHAEL

A couple of months ago.

HY

He is a nice guy.

MICHAEL

Now he says something I want you to, I don't think right, he says that the connection with the Louis B. Silver building, there was a question about financing it so he Irving Burg recommended that there be an appeal at Yom Kippur and he claims that the Yom Kippur appealed in 1962 or so it was the first time there was a Yom Kippur appeal?

HY

I don't know, Irv was a banker, he was at US Bank. He also had a plane, air plane and he flew away and flew around a lot. I just saw him recently about a year or so ago.

MICHAEL

He looks good.

HY

He owns Two Chuckey Cheeses and his wife, I always didn't recognize her but I got to know, they probably mentioned the great play we had called mutiny.

MICHAEL

Well actually I wanted to ask you about that.

HY

That's when I really got to know Irv and his wife.

MICHAEL

What was the story with that play? When was it in 1958? I

HY

I think 1958 I think. We had a woman in a clinic I can't even think of her name, she just passed away. She was, there was a society orchestra in LA, that played for most of the socialites, her name was Mandy Harmon and the orchestra and she knew him personally and she got a hold of this script it was called mutiny, you know about this script, it's about three Cohen families and they lived, at each part of their yard but in, comes together some ways, now one day something gushes out of the yard and they thought it was oil. That's what the whole play consists of each wife in the three Cohens thinking of what I will do with all that money, one to be a ballerina, one to want to be this and those were the dreams and the cowboys and we had everybody and we rehearsed a lot at the Burgs house and then we went off for one night, not like here they had the music for two nights, two days we both rented the Marshall High School, their auditorium for one night. I don't know what money they made or anything but it was the biggest production at that time.

MICHAEL

Who, was it done under the auspices of any club or group or just kind of ad hoc? I mean it wasn't under the sisterhood.

HY

The sisterhood had the smaller ones that I was in also but this is one here I don't know it took a lot, I think I mean I would say it was part of the fundraiser the temple itself rather than because it was everybody's that is my feeling. Everybody chipped in, I don't think it was sisterhood or this group or what, there was a group also called the Wednesday Nighters that contributed a lot to the temple and B'Nai B'rith and all that, it was everybody put together and it was a temple function.

MICHAEL

What was your role?

HY

I had two roles. This woman that wanted to be a ballerina, well we did Swan Lake and we had a director from the Pasadena play house and we had six klutzes like me, I was the famous guy at Wolman you know we had tu-tus and everything else and we were so bad that we were good, if we were perfect or Borishnakov it would be nothing, was so clumsy, and this woman I still know, her name was Doris Keevman, she wasn't a light weight either, I had to carry her up there ... I don't know, I think four or six of us were in that scene and then there was a scene I was a cowboy, I was dressed as a cowboy, I was dressed as a cowboy that was my.

MICHAEL

Did you have to sing?

HY

Well we all sing, that's solo. You know we, this play I think it was going around the country, I mean various Jewish, I am sure it was. The script was produced widely and you know we plagiarized the song. You know we put the word, they put the words into beautiful popular songs. That's what the sisterhood plays were all about. The music was, we had the best, Rogers and Hammerstein, we didn't have to pay for it either you know the music band had to pay, you can't just do that I don't know what they paid but so that was my.

MICHAEL

You mention the Wednesday night?

HY

That I don't know too much about but they were a higher, they were pretty people pretty well off, they were middle upper, they had a lot of money, you know they had the money and they contributed, I think they played a lot of cards too but it was, I can't even say they are like the guardians, but they were in a sense but they were really exclusive I mean they were not you know this is a _____ and it means the word how would you say it not exactly wealthy I mean they hold onto their money, rather in the lower middle class. They did you know they contributed to the temple in their own way.

MICHAEL

Yeah. Now there was a, the area at the front of Wolman was a grassy area at one time. Do you recall when the parking lot was put in?

HY

First of all, I don't, I mean we didn't park on the street and come in, I mean there was a lot and.

MICHAEL

I mean there was like a driveway, apparently they came in from the street and went around may be people park in the driveway I don't know.

HY

Lets face it you know the old buildings all at Wolman and at the Youth _____ and B'Nai Israel, I mean there is a lot of room out there in some way, I just don't think I cant remember. There must be picture of those, someone may have taken some pictures.

MICHAEL

You know I mean it is so scattered, I think I saw a picture that was taken in 1949 that was part of a year book it showed the building and it showed the grassy area, I think I saw a picture of a confirmation class.

HY

Yeah my wife was in the confirmation class pictures of both confirmation classes at, you know I tell you once you talk to Levy and Lou and, you will get a better view of the temple before '46, before I came, they would,

because they were there, that was in the AZA and everything else and so they would come with cars and they were the one they parked, you know they would do a lot of this scenery that you are mentioning. They would be, I think you will get a good, you can ask that question to them.

MICHAEL

There was an organ in the temple. Do you recall when the organ was removed?

HY

I don't know. She was a lovely woman. She wasn't Jewish and she played for us in our wedding and she played the organ _____. She is part of our congregation. We considered her, she was just part of her, nice, literally really a nice Christian lady.

MICHAEL

I want to ask some questions about the B'Nai B'rith, there was a bowling league.

HY

Oh yeah, big time. We had bowling leagues, women and men. Did I say _____ is it still there? I am always _____. I think its still there. Anyway.

MICHAEL

Yeah right there is one in the stop part of the shopping.

HY

Yeah we bowled every once a week and B'Nai B'rith, the women and the men.

MICHAEL

And who did you bowl against?

HY

We bowled against all members, you know just members but then there was tournaments. B'Nai B'rith tournaments, I remember going to San Diego once and few other places where we can compete with other lodges and I bowled 264 scratch.

MICHAEL

Wow.

HY

I have a granddaughter, she is little girl. She bowled a couple of 300 games, she makes, she is a nurse and she go bowls and she bowls for money a lot and she comes home with 300\$ and 500\$ I mean she is a great athlete. She can play, she bowls, she plays tennis. She is just a great athlete. Probably takes it after me. That's my first granddaughter. You know you look forward to it. There was a bowling craze in those days.

MICHAEL

Yeah I remember. I was a member.

HY

If we would go to say Santa Barbara for a weekend, take a night out, we will take our bowling bowl, that's we bowl. We had summer leagues and this and

that. B'Nai B'rith didn't have a summer league but we joined summer leagues. It was just bowling was a phenomenon.

MICHAEL

Yeah I remember 50s, 60s.

HY

Yeah so but that was very active, kept the B'Nai B'rith together, the B'Nai B'rith now is very..

MICHAEL

Yeah I wanted to ask about that what I mean did they, I saw something about David Goldman lodge.

HY

That's the ones we were in.

MICHAEL

Yeah I mean how many members are in now?

HY

There are members but they are not active. You know we have very few active members.

MICHAEL

Do you still meet regularly?

HY

Yeah we have a couple of things we had going over time one week's cook. We had the night with the rabbi coming this Monday or next Monday or whatever it is, that's, we started that and then we had this thing that I have been running through years and is called _____ normally it is St. Patrick's Day, we have corned beef and cabbage, I was at it personally in charge of it may be 25 years, every year I got the corned beef and Ricky Lane helped me lately and then because my wife was always chipped in and my family, we had a few guys and ordered somebody and had about 100 or 125 people and it was good company.

MICHAEL

When you first came to the temple to Pasadena in 1946 you said that the first group was the Jewish War Veterans and then you became involved in the B'Nai B'rith.

HY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

About how many members were in at that time?

HY

We had good men, the young men in those were nice group, lets face it we had a softball team so we got to have nine men easy but we had meetings and this and that and we played basketball, it was mostly sports I mean I don't think I went to a meeting that had business. I just played. I was married and all these other guys were still single, I mean Marion would be sitting down the stairs and watching me play, she was probably pregnant at

that time and all these kids you know they were little younger, Irv Levi was little younger than I am, he probably is in his 80s, early 80s, may be four five years younger.

MICHAEL

I mean the B'Nai B'rith was so big, you had seniors, young, AZA...?

HY

B'Nai B'rith itself, I have never attended a meeting of the B'Nai B'rith the adult at that time and they were swiftly and all honestly card playing and that was the reason I came down. They played cards right here _____ and it was people who just came in and they played cards. People you know I even to this day, I am still a member, I have got the member for 50 years, I was just paying my dues that's all, what we had, we get a meeting every now and then, you know we have so much money in the treasury so we had to dispense with some of it, with this and that, and he will still _____ last president, he is still acting president and we had Dave Halmof, you know Dave Halmof?

MICHAEL

His name sounds familiar yeah.

HY

Dave was, he was the catalyst. We would still _____, Dave always kept me, many times I wanted to quit I mean what, people told me, you know it was getting too much to me, and Dave kept driving me in and I will get you help I will get you help yeah yeah well thank God if it wasn't for Ricky, I would never even continue I mean she was you know she knew all this and this is where all the stuff was at the temple. You know in old days we didn't have the stoves they have now. You know the kitchen, our kitchen is very bad. Temple kitchen needs work, like my sister says designed by men that is why. You go to when we have Dinty Moore in some other places now and then, I had a less time and last Dinty Moore temple Beth David, we just wanted to spread it around and they have got a great kitchen, I mean lots of room and this and that but our kitchen is.. that's why they have a kitchen fund, they want to for some reason or another Nancy Carlton and you know that group, I was in that group, we met at her House, doing this last building and they just didn't have enough money to pay for a kitchen. I think 75,000 or something that was a big mistake.

MICHAEL

Where did the B'Nai B'rith meet? What room did they meet when they met at the.. was it Kushner?

HY

Yeah it was Kushner. In the early days it was Kushner. I thought I saw and met them afterwards, I don't think I met in one meeting except one meeting, the only meeting I went to I remember was they used to have sports night. They would have baseball players from local teams, you know may be I don't know it was Dodgers, you know we did have some from the

Dodgers at one time and that's the one I went to. I am trying to think may be that was part of Dinty Moore instead of entertainment, we had Dinty Moore and then we had some little sports nights to go along with it, so it was part of the whole thing.

MICHAEL

Where does that event, can you spell, Dinty Moore, click it by hearing that right?

HY

Yeah Dinty Moore is an Irish, it's a trademark of a food they have they sell Dinty Moore corn beef and this and that, its like a character out of Irish lore I think, I don't know I never made it up. That's the way it was being the St. Patrick's Day Dinty Moore.

MICHAEL

A nice Jewish event.

HY

You know the last one we had, Rickey got some ornaments at St. Patrick's Day and rabbi graded them like that so we never used it again.

MICHAEL

So that was what how many years ago?

HY

Not that many years ago. Rabbi, gosh how long has he been here?

MICHAEL

Five years.

HY

I think we missed, this is the second year we missed it in all these years. I am going way back 40 or 50 years. Last two years, this is the second year that we missed it.

MICHAEL

And they were always found at the temple?

HY

Mostly in temple. Actually I would say 99.9%, I know we didn't want it at temple Beth David, that's the only one I remember. We used it on the temple, we had this kitchen, we knew what we were doing. It was a strange kitchen, you got some strange people that run it from the temple and you know _____.

MICHAEL

On this event, I never went to, I never heard, I mean who went to it? Just the members of B'Nai B'rith?

HY

Oh no no. A lot of people, it just was an annual event. People went to it. If you wanted somebody for example, they would bring their friends and their families so you got a large group there and its just people that don't belong but they know for example, the price was always right I mean it was very reasonable and they kept it and corned beef and cabbage and turkey all you

can eat, we never ran out of food. We gave it away or try to sell it, but no people just like its like people going to see a music man, there was a lot of people who didn't belong to the temple, they went to high school together last week, there was a lot that don't belong to the temple but it is an event, just like Dinty Moore, there is people that used to come and just ordered the food and we wrapped it for them and they take it home.

MICHAEL

About how many people went at the end I mean?

HY

Its 100, it was usually 100 or 120 people. We reached to 125 but usually set around 100 people and that's it. We always had good entertainment. I once had Harry Tobias. Harry Tobias wrote don't sit under the apple tree and his daughter Phyllis Brown is a member of our temple so I got him and we had some _____ quartets, we had comedians, for the last couple of times, I have remembered his name, Archie _____, I saw him at the Elva Hostel. He is a Jewish comedian, he plays a piano, he sings, after you have seen him two times, we used him twice for the same jokes but anyway, he was a nice man. We made good friends with him so that's the story.

MICHAEL

Now lets see another group I think you mentioned, you were in a Life Savers.

HY

Oh that's the City of Hope. That was a good, we raised a lot of money. That came right the war veterans, right after the war veterans.

MICHAEL

So 1950s.

HY

And I went to a long time and we had our biggest fundraiser was dinner dance at the temple, Pasadena Temple, last Saturday of July and we gave them primary dinners, all Kosher, I mean it was so cheap, it was ridiculous but the way we made our money was, we got a lot of, we had not auctions but we had raffles and we had furniture, we had trips, hotels, chips to vegas, that kind of stuff, that's how we made the money.

MICHAEL

This dinner was held just once or did you have it regularly?

HY

Every year. Last Saturday of the month for years.

MICHAEL

And this was not a.....

HY

It was B'Nai B'rith, no it was City of Hope.

MICHAEL

City of Hope. Now did the Life Savers meet at the temple?

HY

Yes.

MICHAEL

Or did they just have these events.

HY

Sometimes, we met at people's houses, I think we met at people's houses. Yeah we had meetings, we had a lot of, we had president. I was a president once, we had presidents and I will tell you how we made the most money and eventually it became illegal, and you know in the newspapers you see coupons for 10 cents 20 cents off this and that and we had somebody in our group that clipped those out from all the newspapers and put them in the packs of all those that were 10 cents or \$1 or this and that, and we would give it to a liquor store, lets say we gave him \$5000 worth of these stamps, he turns them in against \$5000. We cant and he gives us, \$2500 or \$3000 worth of liquor so we are selling cases of Jack Daniels for half price and the most, we were bringing to the City of Hope and the City of Hope itself was saving these coupons and they gave a lot of them to us and we had this friend this guy had some of these Latino families that were just sorting them out because he did favors for them but the City of Hope was giving us bags of all this, we were contributing 40-\$50,000 a year and for donate, used to have a convention at the end of the year and each group gives their donations and the more you give, the closer you get to the front dice or whatever and we were almost right up there so we raised a lot of money and then we also once a month we prepared the bingo at the City of Hope. We ran the machines, we ran runners, and the girls made a lot of sandwiches and you know we made money for them.

MICHAEL

So the Life Savers was both men and women?

HY

Its still there but it's a different name now, it's a different name. I think I don't know what name it is, but it is a continuation because there were a lot of all members that the temple Beth David I think they had a group.

MICHAEL

The Life Savers group that you were a member of, was that just based at PJTC?

HY

No no, we had in fact we had people from Sherry Torah we got people from all over, there was no you know, you didn't have to belong to any temple but mostly at our temple there was a lot from Arcadia temple and there were people from the temple Beth David I mean its like a whole St. Gabriel Valley.

MICHAEL

So the Life Saver group that you were a member of represented the St. Gabriel Valley.

HY

More or less may be it did not represented because they had a lot of chapters in different places. We don't represent, we were just a small group that represented a small section at St. Gabriel Valley.

MICHAEL

About how many remembers do you recall?

HY

I don't know. 50 or 75 I don't know I mean active were, active people we only had a few anyway. Just a few people who run the whole thing anyway but no we had a good, very dedicated group of people, very dedicated.

MICHAEL

So the group forms sometimes in the 1950s and continued to be active?

HY

It was right after the war of veterans group, that we formed this group. We started from scratch. You know they have people they come out from the City of Hope that form these groups, I mean you know give you a charter and this and that and so we did that.

MICHAEL

Do you recall when the last dinner was at the big fundraiser?

HY

I cant.

MICHAEL

Let's see rabbi Galpert was there.

HY

I think rabbi Galpert was, I would say rabbi definitely rabbi Galpert was still around.

MICHAEL

Yeah okay I mean it didn't stop when rabbi Collin, it was before that.

HY

No I don't know if rabbi Collin, we were out of there already by that time, I think mostly through rabbi Galpert's tenure that we existed.

MICHAEL

Lets see also you were involved in Israel bonds?

HY

Oh yeah I was involved in Israel Bonds, there was rabbi Burney Campbell, he had a cousin Kimmel somebody also _____ the rabbi slept later this and that, all these rabbi series, Kimmelman, that is his cousin, anyway rabbi Kimmel, he was the head of Israeli Bonds and they ordered Marion and myself and that's why I got to know him because you know you have a dinner and raise money and this and that and you bring you friends in this so we became very close friends, we really became good friends.

MICHAEL

So you were on, you got the 1976 freedom award in part?

HY

I have a lot of stuff.

MICHAEL

How long were you involved in raising bonds for Israel? How did you get involved?

HY

Well I was involved, one from example that they had somebody in Pasadena, he had dinners all over rabbi Kimmel, its not just our temple, he had all others, if he had one in Pasadena, I would help him.

MICHAEL

So it was Kimmel who was raising the money?

HY

Actually he made a living, good living selling artifacts I mean he was all over, he was in Egypt getting stuff when they didn't allowed Jews in there, I don't know how he got in there but he had stuff there from the Spanish inquisition I mean he had things, I think he sold it to museum in Oakland and Berkley, Magmas you ever hear of that?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

That was one of their buyers. He sold a lot of stuff to them. I remember he has had a gadget that inside it was candles and everything else, to hide the religious significance so it was just like a box you didn't see anything but once you did something to do it, open up to places it, it had candles so he showed Marsha helped and I went there at one time, he showed all this stuff but the bonds were a big drive, I don't see too much, they don't have too many of them. I don't remember the last one they had. Then it's a shame but we always had bonds I mean I couldn't even keep track of them you know when they were due, I mean he kept sometimes, they weren't earning anything but there was a good you know investment, you have to help.

MICHAEL

In 1972 there was a mortgage burning. Do you recall?

HY

There was a what?

MICHAEL

The burning of the mortgage ceremony. Do you remember anything about that?

HY

I think I remember the fact there was one, I just can't.

MICHAEL

You don't remember any details about the mortgage?

HY

No but I remember there was a ceremony. I know there was I think what year was that?

MICHAEL

1972.

HY

Probably Mrs. Silver was in on that.

MICHAEL

Because it would be great if we could find the copy of that mortgage because it would be you know it would tell how much they paid for the building and perhaps who the lender was and you know all sorts of things.

HY

I will tell you, you know all these people you know in 1920s keeping the temple going they really put on, they didn't have that kind of money to put out and there were times that when I first got active in the temple. I was on the board of directors and it was a very hectic board I mean they were very, there was just too many, they couldn't do anything properly. It was just too noisy and there were no rules or regulations, involving rules of order was out and the president didn't have, but the president had to be somebody like someone because bills came to pay the utilities and this and that and presidents usually did that and then they got paid when the money came in.

MICHAEL

Did your property the house that you bought have a restrictive covenant on that?

HY

No.

MICHAEL

I mean they were unenforceable, but some people bought houses and they still were on the paper.

HY

First house I built was in Northwest Pasadena by Lincoln and Altadena drive and there was a new area that is called Floriceda and I bought the lot and then I built a house on a GI alone but there was still gentleman's agreement or whatever there was about not selling to minority groups and even us but I never ran across it, when I sold the house I was concerned my neighbors might be mad, but we made up our mind that who ever buys the house, buys it, I mean, we are not going to discriminate and so we didn't have any problem and we built, bought this house Galpert there was no covenant there so we didn't have any problem there. We were not San Marino or Orange Grove. I mean that's where Jews were not allowed.

MICHAEL

Do you recall the desegregation, how that impacted?

HY

The what?

MICHAEL

The desegregation of the public schools in Pasadena. Did that?

HY

Oh my God, Reva was the only one that was bussed. Before that, there was no problem. When she was bussed from you know you have to know

Pasadena but our house is so well situated, elementary school a block away, you had Marshall Middle school a block away and though may be not block away, four five blocks, I mean with the walk, and Pasadena High School, well that's where my kids went except Reva up until the time she had to go to middle school and instead of going to Marshall, they sent her all the way out to Wilson, I think some place else but you know we drove there I think, she will remember that I cant but the school system was one time great and then it really came down to very problematic, I mean people were getting their kids out of school and going elsewhere to private schools built up, we just had a lot of problems with the Pasadena school system it used to be great.

MICHAEL

But you kept Reva in the public school.

HY

Yeah she came back from middle school, she came to Pasadena High School, then she went on to college.

MICHAEL

How did the congregation respond to desegregation? Did it cause a lot of splits in the congregation?

HY

I tell I was working so hard it was, I couldn't, but you know we talked about bussing and this and that, nobody liked it and so.

MICHAEL

Was the meetings at the temple about it and did the rabbi speak about it?

HY

Rabbi Galpert didn't raise, he was not an activist like rabbi Grader. Rabbi Galpert was a different person, I mean you know he is like a good friend, he is really but he never took sides like that, that's number one, somebody going to Baccalaureate service and there was mentioning of Jesus and all that his fellow came up to rabbi and said lets do something about this and then the rabbi acted, he spoke to this and that but he never did it on his own.

MICHAEL

Did he ever speak about the Vietnam war or desegregation, the civil rights movement?

HY

Not to my knowledge. Rabbi Grader was the most vocal in a short time, he is like you know I know him so well because he stayed with me a few times you know when he came here, he slept in my house. You know we had long talks of this and that but he is the most active of all rabbis, may be Horseband would have done something but he was destined for something bigger than Pasadena, he completely became dean of admissions of Judaism, he raised kids, rabbi wrote a book at Los Angeles Jews, but two different rabbis, rabbi Galpert, Collin, Grader, three different ones.

MICHAEL

If the congregation needed moyal where they get one?

HY

Oh that's no problem. We had, my kids here, my four grandsons and they all had, we found moyals. I think one slept in my house and then came walked over to one of my grandsons here who live here, there was no problem there, no problem with Moyals.

MICHAEL

Did any live in the area or?

HY

Oh they were available. They weren't next door but there was no problem, I mean I had lots of cards, I had four daughters, I had lots of cards so there was no problem.

MICHAEL

Lets say your daughter had bat mitzvah.

HY

All of them had, all four had bat mitzvahs on Friday.

MICHAEL

On Friday night?

HY

Yeah they didn't have bat mitzvah on Saturday.

MICHAEL

What was the name of the daughter, I mean apparently the Goodstein daughters, Marlene and..

HY

They were the first I think.

MICHAEL

Right in 1950 or 1951. And your daughter may have been the second one in 1960.

HY

I think she was born in 1947, so she was 13 in 1940 or 1950.

MICHAEL

If she was born in 1947 so she would have been 13 in 1960.

HY

Yeah so she was after my two sister in laws.

MICHAEL

Right so she had a Friday night service.

HY

And all the other girls had it. you know on Friday you don't read from the torah a whole lot. I am not sure what they did, I think but they did very well, all four were married at the temple here. All four of my girls were married here but they were married and you know when the temple was built, they had the social hall and all.

MICHAEL

Did your daughters went to Hebrew school, was it with the boys, the boys were in the Hebrew school learning Hebrew and it would be bar mitzvah and they had Saturday morning services and the girls.

HY

That's the good question, I have to ask Reva, I cant answer that. Hold that question that Michael, before we leave we will try to get those answers. She would know, I am sure they all were in one class, I mean I don't think they assimilated I mean I think they were in one class.

MICHAEL

Marsha Alpert was the first woman to read the torah for Saturday morning service around 1986 or 1987.

HY

She was also the first woman president.

MICHAEL

Right. Do you recall if any women read the Haphtarah before she started reading the torah?

HY

No I cant remember anybody other than the Marcia, then of course you know Ruth, everybody, there is a lot of women, my daughter Bobbie does the Haphtarah but she doesn't read the torah itself without the vowels but she could do if she wants to but I would say Marcia was the first.

MICHAEL

When did Bobbie start reading the Haphtarah?

HY

Oh recently I would say within the last three years or so. She is very good.

1.4. Session Four (September 1, 2011)

MICHAEL

Today is September 1, 2011. I am Michael Several and I am with Hy Vego and we are going to continue our conversation that we have had two or three already and I think Gene Fingerhut had at least one with you. Now you were about to tell a story about Moshe Sherer.

HY

Moshe Sherer was a very poor man and I think he was like a _____. That's what we used to call people in my neighborhood in Elizabeth, New Jersey. They had horse and wagons. I don't know if Moshe Sherer had a horse and wagon. He may have had a pickup truck, but he was a poor man and I think the temple and my wife's family helped them out in some incidences and one day, this was before 1948, and there were many rallies for the country of Israel, partition of Palestine, the UN was debating on it and there were rallies all over the country and there was a big one at the Hollywood Bowl and my wife came and told me, wouldn't it be nice if Moshe Sherer would

come along with us? I mean he's an old man and I'm sure he would appreciate it. So I said, that's all well that's good, but he's an elderly guy and he has to climb up all the steps and the Hollywood Bowl is not an easy place, so my wife said its up to him. So we told him, and I guess his eyes popped out. I said, you think you can handle this? He said, God will take care of me, and we took him there. I held on to him, and even to this day when they play _____, we all cry. He was so happy to go. It made his whole life, really. He was great.

MICHAEL

Was he an immigrant from eastern Europe? Did he immigrate to the United States?

HY

I don't know. I should've known, but I didn't. I was young. I was not even 26 years old. I didn't ask questions. In fact, in one of my stories, I said, why didn't I ask these questions to people, my father and my aunts and uncles? Why didn't I ask those questions that I am trying to figure out now? I'm 82. But you just didn't think about it, it just didn't come to mind, but now I am inquisitive. Now when I meet somebody, before I leave them I know what they did for a living. That's the kind of guy I am, but then I was just not that kind.

MICHAEL

Before I get to the core questions I wanted to ask you, there was one follow-up question that I don't believe I asked you last time. Do you recall any High Holiday services at the Shakespeare Club, at the convention center or any movie theaters before the main sanctuary was built in the 1950s?

HY

Not particularly. There was a movie house we went to. There was a Shakespeare Club. I am not basically a religious fellow.

MICHAEL

But you did go to High Holidays.

HY

Oh yeah. I would say without a question. I am 89 years old and I never missed a Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah, even in the army when we had one set up in a burned out theater in the Philippines, we still had it and so I never missed one. Even Cheslow tells me, he was already a civilian and he attended one in Dublin, Ireland. He was very funny, but I never missed one.

MICHAEL

But you don't recall any at Shakespeare Club.

HY

No nothing.

MICHAEL

Before we get to World War II, I want to ask you questions about the cemetery first. Are you still a member? You are a co-chair?

HY

I have been a member for almost 30 years now and we accomplished a lot of stuff, but before that you had Al Levy. His father, he was the big man. He had more money in his treasury than the temple had and they I'm sure borrowed from it. He was very tight with it and he didn't give it out freely, but he was really, he was a funny guy, Harry Levy. He was a printer and I think he wasn't religious because one time we went to _____ at a certain house and the rabbi didn't show up or somebody, so I said Harry why don't you take over? He said I can't. He didn't know how to do that. I am trying to describe what type of Jew he was. Probably a little like me; we are not familiar with all the songs, this and that, but we're familiar with the customs and were Jewish.

MICHAEL

What is so surprising is that Harry Levy's father was very religious. In fact, he sued the synagogue.

HY

Yes he was one of the fathers of the synagogue along with my wife's parents, the Press family.

MICHAEL

Why did you get involved in this cemetery committee? What drew you to it?

HY

Well I took it over from Ernie Robinson. He didn't want it after a while and I just happened to be there. I didn't ask for it. He may have asked me to take over and just like I asked Kenny _____ to help me with it. In fact, you know I probably do very little. I asked them to see if we could get somebody else with him. It's the oldest committee in the temple.

MICHAEL

Yeah, except for the sisterhood.

HY

We had a lot of money involved in plots and everything else, but unfortunately it is not the right cemeteries.

MICHAEL

Do you personally have any records of the cemetery committee indicating where the plots are?

HY

We have records of almost all the plots that we sold at Mt. Sinai and a lot that we sold, old plots, the original cemetery is at Home of Peace. There's records somewhere. I think maybe Kenny has a lot of them. I could go through them. Old plots; plots for my wife's grandparents in there. I think Eddi's in-laws are there.

MICHAEL

I would really appreciate if you could track those documents down and I'll make copies of them.

HY

Well I have records of... When I came in I don't think we had many plots left at Home of Peace. I don't think there were any and the only reason we have it now is that we merged with the temple in Tujunga. They had about 24 plots.

MICHAEL

Was it in a special area like the one at Home of Peace for B'Nai Israel?

HY

That's the way they, they had a B'Nai Israel section. Temple Sinai doesn't have that. You may have Pasadena at a section in the temple Sinai, but they called it _____. They never went after the temple name and the one in Home of Peace, it was the _____ society. In the early days of Tujunga, they had a hundred plots or more and they sold it, but the Home of Peace goes under the name of the temple or the society that owns the plots, that owns that section.

MICHAEL

So I have gone to Home of Peace, I saw the B'Nai Israel section, so there is a section for PJTC also has a section there.

HY

We had B'Nai, I don't know about PJTC, we never bought any plots there. We just kept the remaining plots that the proceeding committees bought.

MICHAEL

Oh because there is a section.

HY

Near the chapel?

MICHAEL

I seem to recall across the road or something. The B'Nai Israel section is on the west side of Home of Peace and this one is on the eastern side.

HY

Well the place where my in-laws are buried, my wife's grandparents on that section near the chapel, next to chapel is the newer one it was B'Nai Israel and the other one I think they call it the same thing but maybe B'Nai Israel #2 or something like that. I'm not familiar with it. The only time we sold any plots there because we didn't have any, and the people that moved away from here called and said can you sell our plot, or they gave it to us.

MICHAEL

Well I was told, I went over to Home of Peace a couple of months ago and that's where Morton Fuchs is buried.

HY

That plot was donated by Al Levy's brother. Al Levy had an older brother, he had two plots and he donated those two plots to the temple and Morton Fuchs was one of them and his wife will be in another one or the same one, so that was very nice of him.

MICHAEL

So that plot is in that section where PJTC has...

HY

That's the newer one. Here's a chapel and to the left of it. It's more expensive because it's a better location.

MICHAEL

Did you have anything to do with the buying of plots in that section or anything?

HY

No. I started buying the plots when I first became chairman and we bought 40 plots and we sold them very good and we had an occasion to buy another 40, they were very nice. There was a general manager, his name was Dewaska, and he always gave us a deal where we didn't have to pay interest on the loan and we knew there was something new coming up called companion, it's where one plot could take two caskets and they were offering it for \$1200 and the board of directors voted on it and they okayed it and then they changed their mind. That was a new thing and this and that. Maybe I didn't fight enough for it, but right now they are worth 17 or \$18,000. 40 plots.

MICHAEL

If you can get any records about that PJTC section where the Fuchs are buried or Morton is buried.

HY

Well I went through it once. Marshall Katz got after me. There are a lot of people who bought plots at the Home of Peace and they were never buried there and those were the plots we are trying to find. It's going to take Sherlock Holmes really to get those plots and put it back in our names, it's really an impossibility. Somebody is going to have to live down there. It's a big job. But I know for a fact that there are people that aren't buried there and those plots are still in their name.

MICHAEL

I think there were also some people buried there that were not members of the congregation too.

HY

Oh well look, there are people buried in Jewish cemeteries that are not Jewish. Rabbi Grader once told me, between you and me, you know Barbara McCustin? She's a converted Jew and she had a son. They lived in Ohio and the son went out one night and never came back. He was a high school kid and they thought maybe foul play. She bought a plot for him. We were in Rose Hills. We bought almost close to 100 plots, we sold about 60, so we had a plot and then they found a body, they brought it in and the rabbi said, he is not Jewish. He has to be buried close to a fence. We had a plot that was maybe 3 or 4 rows from the fence. We tried to sell plots in order. And so the rabbi said, you've got to do it, so I had to transfer the plot. It caused the temple \$75, but this was ridiculous. I told the rabbi one time I wished I had a nickel for all the gentiles buried in Jewish cemeteries, I would be a

millionaire. So anyway, we had those. I will have to, I see Kenny all the time, he's got most of the records.

MICHAEL

Oh he does?

HY

I gave him everything I had except for a few things, some maps in case somebody called me and I can keep up to date with what is remaining. I have this form you have to fill out, burial forms, this and that, but all the other stuff he's got it.

MICHAEL

Okay, I will contact him.

HY

I will tell him to try to assemble what he can.

MICHAEL

In the earlier interview you said that there were plots at Home of Peace that were donated by a member through his Benevolent Association.

HY

It doesn't ring a bell. If it was benevolent, you didn't buy a plot from the temple. It has nothing to do with associations. The temple plot, it's not like one that we got from Tujunga, they had their own lot lines, but the name is two towns, two _____, they add together into such and such, that's the section at the Home of Peace.

MICHAEL

The 1957-58 yearbook at the temple which has the list of members, sometimes they have descriptions of committees, it said there were three sections at Home of Peace. Do you know what that would be? One would be B'Nai Israel section and I suppose the other one might be...

HY

You know when I came here, I'm talking about the 70s or maybe the 80s, it was all sold. I mean the only ones that were empty were ones that gave it back to us and so on. I know there were two for sure, but they said it was three huh? In 1958 of course you know was when we first started the building the temple, I mean remodeling the old temple. We didn't have the sanctuary, all we had was a _____ which was B'Nai Israel, now we have Wolman Hall which was called Kirchner, so that was it and there was another section of Kirchner or Wolman, they called it the youth room so that's all it was in 1958.

MICHAEL

Do you remember when Home of Peace stopped selling plots?

HY

They didn't stop it, we stopped. They would have been happy to sell those plots. With Mt. Sinai they had limited space and then they sold it at about wholesale and they built a new cemetery in _____ Valley, which is half the price of here in Hollywood Hills they call this place. It's half the price, right

now it's about \$9000 a plot and you can get at _____ Valley a nice plot for maybe \$5000, so they would be happy to sell us plots.

MICHAEL

What is the process of getting the plots. I mean, where did the money come from?

HY

It comes from the board of directors vote on it and the money comes from funds usually from selling the plots.

MICHAEL

But you have to buy the plots first from say Home of Peace or whatever or Sinai, so where does that money come from?

HY

It comes from the general fund, but a lot of times it comes from the plots that we sell and that eases it, but there were times even at Rose Hills when we bought the plots there that we had to take it from the general fund because they don't sell that much. Rose Hills was, Marshall Katz was the instigator when he was president, he got the federation to do something and we looked around and rabbi Galpert was there at that time but he didn't take too much interest in Rose Hills and it was the rabbi at the temple of Beth Torah in Alhambra, I think. I think I have a good memory, and the rabbi from Sheri Torah, Perry Froman, he was really strict on making sure that this is a Jewish cemetery. They had Jews at the fence and this and that, so they didn't sell that fast but then they started to move, you know it was very reasonable to start at \$600 a plot, but we paid \$500 so I wanted to get the thing going and now it's up to \$2200.

MICHAEL

You sell a plot now for \$2200?

HY

Yeah we sell the plot now for \$2200 and I have people that can't pay it all at once. I bought my plots in Sinai in the 70s at \$350 and I paid it off in a year. The plots at Rose Hills were bought by the Eastern Area Cemetery Association that consists of all temples in the St. Gabriel Valley to Wolman, all except but the temple Beth David, they didn't go in on that. All the other temples, we all put in so much money to buy and make that cemetery. We had options to go here and if we paid this off we could go there. We only used the one option and the others we could not afford. We were the only temple making payments on time and so we could not afford to, but in the meanwhile, in the end we cut out the eastern area, we went out of business and the inventory we had, and what we owed Rose Hills, we said okay if each temple if you buy a plot for 200\$ we can get rid of the debt that we owed so I bought 41 plots at \$200.

MICHAEL

Where did you get the money?

HY

\$200? I put it in myself. I tell you where I got the money from, from Marshall Katz, Marshall Alpert and myself, we put up the money and the understanding was that we would be paid back. \$200 a plot it's stupid, you would have to be crazy not to accept it. We sold for \$2200, but that's a once in a lifetime thing. So Marshall Katz, Marshall Alpert and myself put in the money but nobody knows about it.

MICHAEL

So if somebody wants to buy a plot at Rose Hills what is the process that person does?

HY

Well first of all, you take an application and give the name, address, social security number and everything else and.

MICHAEL

They would contact you?

HY

They contact us, they fill out this form and when this whole paid up, we send that form to Rose Hills and they give us a certificate, a deed, but up until then they don't get it. In the funeral business, I don't know who you are or what you are, a plot has to be paid up before you're buried. I have a couple right now that bought a plot for their parents and he's owed me money for the last 2 to 3 years. He is a young fellow yet, but I keep telling the girl in the office to send him a notice. God forbid something happens; the family is going to have to pay it. There is no nonsense, that's the way it is. So they fill out this form and I keep it and when it's all paid up I send it to the girl at Home of Peace, the girl at Rose Hills and there is a guy at Mount Sinai, Eric Frank.

MICHAEL

So as far as the bookkeeping is concerned, the money part, that is handled by the temple?

HY

Well everything is by the temple. I never had an account. It all came out of the chapel of fund except when they wouldn't buy the double plots, but that would be a lot of money. We knew in our hearts we are not going to build a cemetery. I mean, Rose Hills was the only one that wanted us, we were thinking of buying it, I mean it was out of sight. There was a guy in Rose Hills who really, really wanted a Jewish cemetery. Right now according to one of the guys leading the negotiations the people of Rose Hills would want Jewish cemetery. They want it, they like that land.

MICHAEL

Are there any plots left Home of Peace?

HY

Yes. Maybe 6 or 8.

MICHAEL

Are they in the Tujunga area?

HY

Oh yes. We've sold a lot to relatives, relations of the Tujunga people. They wanted to be near their parents. I sold 4 or 6 plots I remember to one family of Weinberg's and they were right next to their parents, as close as possible. It's not cheap, its about \$2000 but by the time you know they have the high headstone, they have this cement slab, by the time you bury somebody its another \$3000 just for the stone and for the slab and plus the funeral itself so you are getting a bargain at \$2000. It creeps up to maybe 6, 7, \$8000 maybe \$10,000. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

MICHAEL

Are there still plots in the Pasadena Jewish Temple Center?

HY

No those are gone. We don't have any there. The whole we have is just Tujunga and believe or not, people sold more recently in the Home of Peace and people like you know, Al Baron and Kathy, they would rather be in a kosher place like an orthodox place, they feel much better.

MICHAEL

What section are they in?

HY

They are in the Tujunga section. That's all we have is the Tujunga section.

MICHAEL

Interesting.

HY

There is another one name's Howard Fried, he just died. I was away, I was in Texas, but they buried him there.

MICHAEL

Oh really. Well my wife and I have talked about buying some plots in Home of Peace after we went there. I mean it looks like the kind of place both of us would like to be buried in. It has a certain character that Mount Sinai doesn't.

HY

I regret very much temple Beth _____ bought these double plots from Sinai and he couldn't sell them, I mean the distance or whatever. Because people don't visit graves. I mean, I do. I visit my wife's grave every time in Sinai on her birthday, but people don't do that. If you had it in Sinai in _____ valley, its one day you're there. Most people don't go. So I was telling you about Beth _____. Howard _____ is the fellow in charge. He's got about 8 plots he wants me to sell for him, so I said you know I will do him a favor I wasn't going to ask. He gave me a commission on each one, so I said whatever you want Howard. He said how about \$3000 and I sold them in maybe a month or two. People like buying these double plots for one person, it was cheaper than buying the full plot from Sinai which was at that time maybe 6 or \$7000. I made a mistake, my daughter Bobbie, I should have gotten those plots for them. I just wasn't thinking.

MICHAEL

I saw a reference that the plots that the Jewish Federation bought at Rose Hills was called Covenant Law. How did that name come about?

HY

Oh somebody named it. That's the way they name them down there. I mean they name sections something with a lawn at the end. The other ones have a Christian name. Well, covenant could be universal. It's not just Jewish or Hebrew.

MICHAEL

What year were the plots at Rose Hills purchased, do you remember?

HY

Maybe in the late 70s or 80s. I'll tell you how to find out; Marshall Katz was president. That would give you an idea because he pushed it.

MICHAEL

Now with the mergers, Alhambra merging with Sheri Torah.

HY

Yeah they became Sheri Torah. What was is before?

MICHAEL

Tikfah. So now did PJTC get any plots that they owned?

HY

Yes, they are still at Rose Hills. We own those plots. You know, Jim Hogan, he was a big guy at that temple and he took _____. They came and they took care of the Foundation which was almost a million dollars when they came in. I don't know what they're using it for or what they are doing with it, but he was at the church cemetery and so. In fact, he just called me the other day. What did he call me about? Anyway...

MICHAEL

But I could find out from the records some that you got from this merger with Arcadia.

HY

Oh yeah. I could get you those figures. I will see. I will talk to Kenny. I see him all the time.

MICHAEL

One other thing. I did some research on the Internet and I discovered that Home of Peace is now owned by Rose Hills.

HY

Is that right? Well I don't think it's owned by Rose Hills. I think it's owned by a conglomerate that is on the New York stock exchange. They own all these cemeteries, a lot of them like Sinai are owned by temple Sinai, but Rose Hills if that's the case, then Home of Peace is owned by one of these big conglomerates.

MICHAEL

Interesting. I think in an earlier interview, you mentioned something about referral payments from Mount Sinai. I don't know, the temple will get money?

HY

This is what we're working on. We are losing money on this because people want to go to Sinai and they don't like to pay the money, but they rather pay it. Rose Hills is still far to them and so I am trying to arrange with Eric Frank. What they have is, they have a program that if you sell so many plots a year, they advertise in your paper, they give a donation to Tujunga, and they do a lot of stuff like that, but they could never get around to it.

MICHAEL

You are speaking about Sinai doing this?

HY

Mount Sinai is the only way we're going to be making extra change you might say. It's not going to be making big money. They had a woman there, Natalie Gilford that was a counselor there and when I sent people down to her, she would on her own she made sure we got a nice donation. You get a lot of those and it adds up. So this is our test the future. We are going to have to be working with Sinai. Once we sell out all these plots at Rose Hills and Home of Peace we are out of the ownership of the plots. We're out.

MICHAEL

Did PJTC ever own plots at Mount Sinai?

HY

Oh yes, sure. They owned at least over a hundred plots.

MICHAEL

At Mount Sinai?

HY

Oh yeah. This is when I came in we had plots left. I was selling them at very low prices in those days. I tried to sell them. If a plot sold for \$1000, we probably go for \$800, which was lower. Some people didn't like that, but what did they know.

MICHAEL

So at some point Mount Sinai stopped selling you plots?

HY

After we lost that deal with those double plots, we were out of business. Not only just us, any temple. They just felt that especially in Hollywood Hills, there is a limited space you know. They are still building around there, but it's not endless. I mean you know, so they take advantage of it and they want to have it for themselves, so they never offered us any of those. They offer deals, like if you sold 8 plots a year or something like that you will get something from them. It's a donation. It's not a commission, that's not a good name, but they give you something.

MICHAEL

Were the plots that PJTC owned, were they in one area?

HY

There were a couple of areas. I know one is _____ that's where we are and there is another one. There are about two areas, two big areas.

MICHAEL

Is there some kind of plaque thing in this PJTC area?

HY

There is something posted. Sinai, you know _____ chapel, you just pass that and then you go around it and go down and on the right hand side you will see on the curve with a stick and a sign, Pasadena Jewish Temple, that's the sign there.

MICHAEL

Well that's it for the cemetery. Before we get to World War II, I want to ask you some questions about the Jewish war veterans.

HY

That's my cup of tea. I was a commander. I just transcribed something about the Jewish war veterans. I did the history and I gave two incidences, that's very odd.

MICHAEL

What are those incidences?

HY

Well we started the Post in the late 40s, right after the war. The VFW; everybody was joining organizations like this eventually. First of all an elderly gentleman comes into a meeting and I just happened to be commander at the time, and says he's Jewish war veteran. Well it did strike me because he was old. He definitely was not in the Navy in World War II. But we had a real old guy that was with the United States Army chasing Poncho Villa; that's in early century practically. So we have a couple of meetings with him and he was a veteran of World War I. Then all of a sudden it comes out and says he was a veteran of World War I, but with the German Army. If he was a member or a Jewish war veteran from Canada or New Zealand, it is possible we would give him an honorary membership because the charter definitely reads Jewish war veteran of the United States, so we had to let him go. In the ladies auxiliary, one of my best friend's wife was an Irish catholic and she was the president of the Jewish war veteran. So those are two things. I don't know what's in their charter, but this guy he decided his fate so we had to let him go. I don't think of that would happen with any other post.

MICHAEL

Who got the ball rolling about the Jewish war veterans?

HY

They had people out there, the National organization. They went to towns and all and they started these posts. They came and we met with them at the Wolman Hall at that time at Kirscher and we started the post. We got affiliated. They supplied us with weapons for funerals. One of the mortuaries

would give us American flags. My father had one. I got the flag right now, my father's flag that was on his coffin. They would give them for the veteran's of the war, and so that's the way we got started. We didn't start all our own, and I tell you it was the best thing. I was just a stranger in town. We were all New York, Chicago, and we just formed life-long friendships.

MICHAEL

Do you recall some of those names?

HY

Cheslow came a little later, but names like, I think I am the only survivor. I think there were people like Bob Gordon, Leo _____, Gus Gold and Eddie Collins, Burt Mandelson. These are names who were members of the temple. Al Rabin; that one you talked about, Solenka, that was his son in-law, he was a commander also. We all took turns being a commander. We were just for a year, so these were the names. They are all gone. If they were alive I would know them. I mean, I'm the oldest guy. And then guys like Cheslow, I think he came a little later and Josh _____ was a veteran but he wasn't during the war, he was the peace time airman, but he was a veteran. He wasn't in combat. A lot of these guys came in the 50s and I was one of the earliest ones there. I mean Al Levy, I don't think Al Levy was there. Al Levy is younger than me.

MICHAEL

He said that he was but he was an inactive member. I asked him about it.

HY

He probably was. We played a lot of, he and I were, he was one of my first friends that I formed a friendship with B'Nai B'Rith young men. We had a softball team and we had a basketball team. That's what I was in there for, for the sports.

MICHAEL

Do you recall, how often did the chapter meet? Once a month?

HY

At least once a month. We didn't go two months, it was once a month. Maybe sometime we had some meetings, things came up, we want to raise some money. A family would come in; a lot of these homeless Jews would come through town and they were really peddlers and so we had to make arrangements for them. We had arranged for sleeping boards at the YMCA and there was a little cafe where I lived. My house at that time was on Walnut Street, you know where the _____ Grill is?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

HY

Right next to it was my house. My factory too at first. There right across the street was a little cafe. So he gave me slips, like what do you call them, vouchers, and I would give them to the people that came and they would go there and then I would come, its right across the street so I would come and

he would show me the vouchers and I would give him the money, stuff like that. Then we had rummage sales, we went to the VA Hospitals and we played bingo with the guys and we were lucky when we got a hold of a barbershop quartet that was called the Crown City 4 and they came with us to all these places and sang and so this is what we did. Then we merged with the Alhambra post and then things faded. It just wasn't the same.

MICHAEL

Crown City 4, was it a Jewish group?

HY

No it was a regular barbershop quartet. If you've ever heard barbershop, they usually have a group of 4, but sometimes they have a whole choir, like a whole glee club, and they sang and they were part of this but they called it Crown City 4, part of a large group. They were very nice boys and they really helped us out a lot. We went to, I still remember, there was a sanitarium up in Lincoln, in Pasadena, well past Altadena Drive there. The guys would come with TB and they sang there for a few times, some at the Veteran Hospitals in the valley.

MICHAEL

Now when you met, had your meetings, where do you meet, at the temple?

HY

At the Kirscher.

MICHAEL

And you got a charter from the national?

HY

Oh yeah we had a charter everything, we had caps and we watched in those days _____ on November 11th, so we marched in Pasadena, they had a parade and one of our members is Todd Baskin, that's another guy, he's my dentist, he had a horse so we watched him played with his horse. He rode the horse and we watched. So we did a lot of little things.

MICHAEL

You got guns. Where did you store the guns? Did you store them at the temple?

HY

My house. My wife was really, finally after a while, I gave them away to one of the guys one of my suppliers, he was a gun collector. It wasn't the _____ that we would use. It was what they used in World War I, but they added grenade launchers on it and so it was kept at my house. I had four rifles my house. My wife didn't like that at all and so one guy, I gave it to one other kid and he made it to like a shotgun. He cut it down. I don't know what he did, but I got rid of it. I didn't want no part of it.

MICHAEL

Now I suppose you used the guns.

HY

Not many times.

MICHAEL

But would you use them during the parades?

HY

Just the funerals.

MICHAEL

How about for the parades?

HY

No I don't think.

MICHAEL

So at funerals, what would you do?

HY

We fired them.

MICHAEL

Who were the people buried? Were they people from Pasadena? When you would go to a funeral, who was the person? Were they veterans?

HY

There were some people that were veterans.

MICHAEL

Did they live in Pasadena? Or not necessarily.

HY

It wasn't that many, maybe 2 or 3 people the most. I didn't fire the gun. I gave it to someone else. They had a committee there that did that.

MICHAEL

Where did you do this? Was it at the VA cemetery?

HY

No. We did it in a normal cemetery. I think we did it at the Home of Peace. We used blanks. It wasn't real bullets.

MICHAEL

There was a women's auxiliary. Was your wife in that?

HY

Oh yes, she was the president also. The JWV was formed which was in 1854. It was the oldest. It was called the Union Soldiers and then it became; I don't know what else it was. There were some _____ Jewish soldiers too and they merged together then it became a Jewish war veterans, but my wife, she served as president.

MICHAEL

What did the auxiliary do?

HY

Oh they were the ones that raised the money. They ran the rummage sales. The rummage sales made a lot of money. There was a place in downtown Pasadena that they rented out a store and it was just a place that all the organization could sell their _____ and so we rented the store for a day and we collected all the stuff that we could and we sold it there. That's where we made money because we had to pay. We had these families that came in

with kids and it just wasn't an individual, they came and they would come to the temple and the rabbi had a discretionary fund but not much, so I mean we had to raise money for it.

MICHAEL

In the previous interview you mentioned something, the Lavina Hut?

HY

Lavina was a sanitarium. That was the one we talked about the tuberculosis in, that was Lavina. It was a wilderness there, now it has got a lot of homes, condos, I mean you can't believe that street. That was in the northwest.

MICHAEL

Do you have any records of the Jewish war veterans?

HY

Oh no it's all gone. We disbanded it, we never handed it over. It just dissipated for some reason.

MICHAEL

When did you disband?

HY

I think it was in the early 50s. I don't think it was any later than '54 we were out. We had a good 6 years I think. It wasn't just us. Some of the guys belonged to the American Legion or something like that, they had the same problem. The war was over, we had to settle down, we had to raise our family, so I think they just didn't take that interest like we had at the beginning. It was so intense I mean, to be with the people that went through the same war with you and we became life-long friends.

MICHAEL

Did you have any activities with other chapters of the Jewish war veterans?

HY

Well I was a delegate. We had a county council and if you know in LA there is a _____ patriotic order. We used to go there maybe once a month and I met a guy I think his name was Jim Lithias, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, and he was very active with Jewish war veterans. Then I got acquainted with Alvin Mallinau. Mallinau and Silverman were our funeral directors, but Al Mallinau became the state commander of the Jewish war veterans so I got to know him pretty well. He was very friendly with my wife's uncle and so it was a good friendship there. So I knew a lot of these people down there and it just dissipated and it just wasn't there anymore. The spirit was there but the effort wasn't.

MICHAEL

Did you have any relationship with the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the American Legion?

HY

Not too much, no. We would have them in the parade. We'd meet them afterwards at a bar on Greenfield, and we'd joke around but we didn't mingle with them.

MICHAEL

Did you join any other veteran's organizations? American Legion?

HY

No, I didn't join the American Legion. My father was a veteran of World War I. He belonged to a post in Elizabeth, New Jersey. They were all World War I veterans in those days.

MICHAEL

One of the things that surprise me, I interviewed Al Levy a month ago about the Jewish war veterans and his experience in World War II.

HY

He wasn't active at all.

MICHAEL

He is now active in the Jewish war veterans. There is apparently a chapter down there and he has been very active in that.

HY

Every month I get something from them. I am not a member; you might call me cheap, but I hate paying dues. Just last week I got Rosh Hashanah cards, new years cards he sent here and there, but he hadn't sent them in years. I tried, in fact, I just called them up and got this book by Addy Cheslow, because I had a book and when I moved from my house to here or something like that, somehow I lost that book. It's the same thing as the book except I think they made this one a little more elaborate, a much better cover and all. So I called up the Jewish war veterans last week, it was Thursday, I got a hold of a girl there and a little while we found what I really wanted and it was under the freedom fighters, the liberators. This book is about the GIs that went into the concentration camps and so I got it because Addy Cheslow had it, but she gave it to her son in law, so I couldn't get it back, so I said you know what, I will call up the Jewish war veterans and boy she was a very sharp girl. We finally found what I wanted. I had to describe it by the size of the book I had and all. I told her it was about the liberators and she went on to find the book.

MICHAEL

I am going to now ask you about World War II. You joined right?

HY

I was recruited in New Jersey. I was working as an inspector of making cannons and aircraft guns for the British army and my job was just the barrel of the gun itself, not the breach block with the firing mechanisms, my job was to inspect the barrel. It was a solid piece of metal that was cast and after I drilled the hole through the bore, I measured the inside dimensions and there's an aluminum scope you used with a magnifying glass to see if there are any cracks and then they would start putting the _____ in the gun and that is why I inspected it again with a star gauge and then I get this _____ scope to see if this lifeling created any breaks. It was steel and all we needed was for that thing to... So we came in and there was a big company

being formed and they had all crafts in there from a machinist, opticians, electricians, carpenters, mechanics you name it, it was a big company maybe 350 or 400 men and they did everything. They could repair a pistol to a tank. We had all these trades in there and a lot of older guys. They had guys coming in 40 years old and they made them sergeants or corporals. I was just 20 years old so I came in as a private. I was happy to get in.

MICHAEL

Who were you working for doing this? What company was it?

HY

It was called Keller press. They were making presses at peace time, printing presses and they turned it into a gun factory. I used to go to work by bicycle; it wasn't that far.

MICHAEL

When you joined, did you want to fight in pacific or did you go to fight in the atlantic?

HY

I was inducted at Fort Dix, and they shipped me, I didn't know where I was going.

MICHAEL

Now the reason I ask is that apparently there were Jews that enlisted because they wanted to fight in Europe and fight the Nazis.

HY

They had a company the same as mine in Europe too. We came to California and we had our basic training on the race track in San Anita and before we got there, the Japanese were trained there.

MICHAEL

Let's see, you came in at Fort Dix, what year was it?

HY

1942.

MICHAEL

And they immediately sent you to San Anita.

HY

They sent me from there by train and we went to San Anita, we stayed there. I got there in December of 1942 and for four months we were there and then I went up to San Luis Obispo, that's where our company formed. From there we went to Camp Roberts which is _____ and from there we went to Camp Stollman which was in _____ California, and from there we shipped off to... We didn't know where we were going, we finally wound up in New Caledonia which was a French colony. They had made a big base on it and it was just perfect for our company. We could still bring the stuff in from the battle tanks and everything from Guadalcanal and New Guinea. It was a safe haven. So we'd repaired all their stuff and ship it back.

MICHAEL

You were in San Anita for four months and they went to.

HY

San Luis Obispo.

MICHAEL

How long were you there?

HY

We split the time till 1944 when we went overseas between San Luis Obispo, we went to San Anita to Camp Robbins so that was the army division and we had to get them ready to go to Europe or wherever they would go and so we were between two camps. We left for overseas from Camp Robbins to Camp Stallman and then we took off.

MICHAEL

How long were you at Camp Stallman, just kind of like a week?

HY

A couple of weeks or less than that. They gave you shots, you went to the dentist, all that stuff, and then we took a train ride to Old Glimp and then a shuttle bus to Ford Mason in California and we boarded a liberty ship that was the smaller ship in the navy, it wasn't even a navy ship, it was a merchant marine ship. It was a cargo ship, they were making them by the thousands and they only carried cargo but they ran out of troop ships so they made them into a troop ship and they were run by a merchant marine and they had a naval gunnery crew. I mean if a jap ship came close by we would've been gone. It wasn't just in that area, we went all the way down to South America, we didn't know where we were going and we wound up in Caledonia.

MICHAEL

How long did it take you?

HY

Over 35 days.

MICHAEL

So from the time you left to the time you got to New Caledonia you never stopped?

HY

On the ship. It was a slow ship and we took a long route, you know. They said it was a straight line, but we didn't do that. We went this way and that way.

MICHAEL

Were you in a convoy?

HY

No. We were a lone hip. We had a convoy but we went up to the Philippines later on, a year later. I think we were pretty lucky, but you know in the army you have to have luck. You don't know what is going to happen. I had a cousin, he got into the service, four weeks he is in his barrack and some guys fooling around with a grenade, it explodes, a couple of guys were killed or injured. He got injured, but not so seriously and they automatically

discharged all of them. They didn't want to have any problems, any aftermath, and so my cousin in four weeks and came out perfect, but he got lucky.

MICHAEL

Now before you went in, did you keep kosher?

HY

Yes. I always kept kosher.

MICHAEL

So when you were in the army did you have any problem?

HY

No, I ate everything. I loved bacon, I never had bacon in my life but the rabbis gave us permission to eat all this. I never ate ham. We had Spam; we had it almost every day. But a ham that's cut like a roast, I never ate that and I never ate shellfish.

MICHAEL

When you were in, did you encounter any anti-Semitism?

HY

No, not that I can remember. I did as a kid, we had an Italian neighborhood, I remember.

MICHAEL

But in the army?

HY

No, no. I remember reading the _____ that anti-Semitism book, but no, I never really encountered it. I was there with my twin brother. When I enlisted, I told him to go down and sign up because we were ready to be drafted anyway. It was just a question of either be drafted or if this recruit didn't come in we would be drafted and we wouldn't know what we went into.

MICHAEL

Did you attend services?

HY

Whenever I could. I mean only on holidays.

MICHAEL

But not Friday night services?

HY

No.

MICHAEL

So you were in training several places during High Holiday services, did you go then?

HY

Over here was no problem. I was in San Anita and I went to schul a couple times and my wife's uncle got married there. I held a hoopa for them. I didn't attend any services here. I wasn't here for Rosh Hashanah, I was in

San Luis Obispo. In San Luis Obispo we had services outside of the camp in a synagogue.

MICHAEL

Oh really? Not in the army camp?

HY

No, no. It wasn't in the army camp. We had a sailor there. I remember a sailor there. In fact, he was a rabbi. Not only was he a rabbi, he had a great voice, too.

MICHAEL

So you went to services in the community near the military base.

HY

Yeah. But in New Caledonia, I think we went to a chapel or something like that, a non-sectarian chapel.

MICHAEL

So in New Caledonia you didn't go to Friday services?

HY

No, no.

MICHAEL

Did they have them?

HY

They must have, but as I told you, I'm not a religious guy but I loved the traditions. I mean, I never miss Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah. The only time I missed a first Seder was on our honeymoon. We were going back east and we were supposed to go to my folk's house for a reception. We got into a lot of bad weather, the car broke down and this and that, so we missed the first Seder, but we got back for the second. So things like that we never miss. But Friday night, not at all. Maybe because as kids, we were bar mitzvah, the president of the schul, we had a very small orthodox schul about a block away and after we bar mitzvah, the president of schul who lived across the street would come into our house on Saturday morning and got us up and we had to go to schul to make up a minion. It was very hard, so we went that way. We put on film, we did everything you know and they knocked the heck out of us and we did not want to do it until we got older.

MICHAEL

Were there other Jews in your unit?

HY

Oh yeah. Our first sergeant was Jewish. Samuel his name was. He was broken down to private, I still didn't know what he did to deserve it, but there weren't a lot of us, maybe 10 or 12 I think out of 400, but I had most of my friends. I wrote a piece about my friends. We lived in huts in those days. I never lived in a barrack, maybe except in _____ we stayed in the stables once they cleaned them up. But we always had four men to a hut in New Caledonia and Camp Roberts and San Luis Obispo, we had 3 guys and myself, we were close. There are only two of us left, the other two passed

away. The non Jews were a kid from the Ozarks and another Italian kid from the Pittsburg area, the Irish kid not far from New Jersey and myself.

MICHAEL

And they knew you were Jewish?

HY

They knew I was Jewish and they knew my friend Timmy was Irish. The other two were quiet. I'll tell you a story too. I knew a lot of Yiddish songs and he knew a lot of Irish songs and in our spare time, I taught him Yiddish songs and he taught me Irish songs. Well, his knowledge of the Yiddish songs made him a hit. After the war he joined General Electric in the appliance department and he worked himself up and became a minor executive and he would go to these conventions and I cannot tell you how many Jewish appliance dealers there were. One time, he tells this story, he had a couple of beers and he starts singing these Yiddish songs I taught him and it got all over the country that this is Irish kid is singing Yiddish songs. I'm sure it didn't hurt him at all.

MICHAEL

That's a great story.

HY

It was fun. His parents, they didn't live too far from mine. My sisters and his sisters arranged a meeting and you're talking about a couple of families, his were very Irish Catholic and my family was very Jewish, they never mingled and they kept to their own, but they got together and it was like magic. They came together two or three times just because their kids were together.

MICHAEL

When you went to the services, the High Holiday services in New Caledonia, who conducted them, a rabbi?

HY

The chaplain. You know there were chaplains only because of the Jewish war veterans and B'Nai B'rith to that matter that got to him into the army in the early 18th or 19th century to serve in the army. They didn't have any chaplains before but they really pushed it and we got them.

MICHAEL

What did you know, before the war began, what did you know about what was happening in Europe in terms of?

HY

We did not know exactly. My father made couldn't make contact. Before the war, my grandfather, my grandmother on my father's side, my father's two sisters, their two husbands, we didn't hear from them. My father, I remember I was 16 or 17 something like that, he took the train to Canada to go to the consulate there to see if he could get them in. And my father, you know they were just not letting anybody in. So I knew there was something wrong and then you know, out of my whole family my grandfather was the

only one that stayed. All his brothers, and sisters, my aunts and uncles, all came to United States except one in Argentina and because of that he stayed there. My grandmother, two aunts, two uncles, and my first cousin were killed in _____. My mother was the same way. Her parents died before the holocaust, but my mother had a sister, a husband and three kids, one kid was named after the same person that I was named after, Hyam, and they died in _____. Not one survived. So we knew what was going on with that.

MICHAEL

Where did they live in Poland? Russia?

HY

They lived in Poland, but at one time, it was Russia. When my father lived there it was Russia, because he ran away from the Russian Army.

MICHAEL

When did you learn about the holocaust?

HY

Almost right after the war. Through the Jewish war veterans we got a documentary which was really hard to take. It wasn't easy to see, brutal. We got it and a lot of people came to Kirshner and they would show that film. I used to write for my grandfather, grandparents in Yiddish before I was 13 and bar mitzvah. In those days you didn't go to Hebrew school, you went to Yiddish school, but then it became a Hebrew school. When it was time for bar mitzvah you started to learn Hebrew but before that you learn how to read and write Yiddish. Of course we spoke it as kids, but we learned to read and write Yiddish. It was always felt that wherever you are going to be in this world in any city, you could find some people who speak your language. That was their thinking.

MICHAEL

It might have happened if it wasn't for the holocaust. That broke down a whole civilization.

HY

In fact, I went to visit my uncle and aunt in Argentina, I didn't speak Spanish, I spoke Yiddish and I spoke in Yiddish with them. I mean, I made it a point that I had a Yiddish/Spanish dictionary and I got along.

MICHAEL

Did you on Christmas Day, I assume the Christians went to church.

HY

We, the Jews, all of us, always took on duty.

MICHAEL

Like what?

HY

Like CP duty, guard duty, whatever had to be done, we all worked on Christmas Day. Every Christian holiday we did it.

MICHAEL

Did the Christians then do jobs and things for the Jews on their High Holidays or were there just not enough of the Jews to?

HY

No we would. We took it all over, it was their holiday. But when it was our holiday, it just one day, you know. We could just make up a list. I used to make up the list; I was the company clerk for a while. I got out of the artillery because there was an opening. The company clerk is a guy that he is at the command post and he does the payroll and he puts people on KP, he takes care of the roster, writes the menu, all that kind of communication with battalion. My section chief saw there was an opening there and he knew that I was, there were no instruments for me to work in the artillery section. He looked at my resume and I was a fast typist in high school and that's the reason why I became the company clerk. But anyway so he saw I was a fast typist and I could do payroll. The reason I became a master typist was, I went to an all boy's school and there wasn't a typist club and an all girl's school my sister went to, they had a typist club and they had a lot of socials. We didn't have socials in our boy's school so I went to this club. We would go back and forth, so it was worth it. I really became a good typist. It paid off.

MICHAEL

Yeah. When I was in high school, my dad told me your typing is going to be a very valuable thing. He paid me to practice.

HY

Bobbie tells a story, my daughter Bobbie. She was an aspiring actress and she couldn't get a job or find any work, so my wife told her learn how to type. In those days that was what you did. Today we would say don't put all your eggs in one basket. You've got to have a backup. Learn how to type.

MICHAEL

Do you recall where you were on December 7, 1941?

HY

I was going to the YMHA. I was walking in, I really didn't know what Pearl Harbor was. We were walking in, I think it was a Sunday because that's when we would usually go to the Y. We'd swim, we played basketball, shot pool. YMHA was a godsend. I don't know how I'd grow up without Y. We'd meet new people.

MICHAEL

So how did you hear about the Japanese bombing the Pearl Harbor?

HY

We knew that something was going on. In fact, today in 1939, today is September 1st, the Nazis invaded Poland. Today September 1st, 1939, so I knew it was coming, the war was coming and you know, you saw the bombing in Warsaw and all that.

MICHAEL

Where were you when you learned about the dropping of the atomic bomb?

HY

I was on the island of Sabu in the Philippines. We were packing to go to I thought Okinawa, but they didn't tell you. It seemed the logical spot. Even Abe Cheslow for example, after the war was finished he came back and got a furlough at home in New York then they transferred him to the west coast to await ship, pacific fleet. He went to see the Rose Bowl game, and you know the war ended. But we were in Sabu and the natives were going crazy; they were kissing us, this and that. It was a happy moment.

MICHAEL

When the war ended then how long were you in the Philippines? I mean what happened after that?

HY

Well they had a point system and the longer you're overseas the quicker you went home. And I have to say that in the army was very good to all of us. They were tough before and they didn't let you know anything. But then they were very transparent. So in August of 1945, it took us up till the beginning of December to take a ship. We left Sabu to go to the island of Lateng. That's where we boarded one of the most beautiful ships I have ever seen. It was a sister ship of the Queen Mary. The Queen Mary was a troop ship they made and this was one was too. And of course on the other ships, the Liberty ship and another one were a delivery ship, and I mean terrible, but this wasn't. It took us from August to the very beginning of December to take off tour and we docked in San Pedro.

MICHAEL

And then you took a train back to New Jersey?

HY

Well we had a choice. Once I knew where we were going, I called Marian. We were sort of unofficially engaged and they gave us a three day pass and then we had to come back promptly because it was imminent that we were going to go. We had a choice either to fly or take a train. I never flew before so I figured we'd take the plane. They shuttled us, it took us 20 hours to get from Long Beach airport to Newark airport. We stopped in a few places; we dropped off guys, picked people up. It was a C47 transport and I think if I remember there were just rows of benches on either side. It wasn't even seats like you see in an airplane, no seatbelts nothing, but it was something. So I had a three day pass and that's when I proposed to her. That was December and we set the wedding for April of that year, 1946. So I went back east and got this job, got discharged, got married and then went back again. My folks couldn't come to the wedding because of their health, I guess, but when the first grandchild was born they came and they came to live here and so they lived with us for a while then they moved to the west Adams section, it was a Jewish section of LA.

MICHAEL

When you were in the Philippines after the war, you went to High Holiday services there didn't you?

HY

Yeah. It was in a burned out theater.

MICHAEL

And who conducted them, a chaplain?

HY

Yeah, a chaplain. In fact that theater was burnt up, but they fixed it up a little and you know who appeared in that? Danny Thomas. He put on a show. I also I met a lot of celebrities in New Caledonia. A guy walks into the room where I was and he was supposed to appear. We built our own theater. Of course we had all these guys; we had carpenters, we knew how to do things. So we built a theater and most of the outfits would come at night; we'd have movies. They'd rather be home than doing this, but this was the next best thing, you know. So this guy tells me his name is Jack Paar. So he wanted to know about the officers. He had some things for an officer's kid, so I gave them to the officer. Jack Paar became a famous guy.

MICHAEL

Did you ever see any combat?

HY

No. The only thing we ever saw was, we were on Manila Bay and we were waiting for another transport to take us to we didn't know where, we didn't know it was going to be Sabu, but that's what it was. So we were there for a couple of days and Manila was wiped out. You could see shells, you could hear shells, and then in Sabu there was some of these Japanese never gave up, just isolated cases, but I remember they caught one guy and I had to put my brother on, he was on guard duty. I had reservations about it, but he had to go and they caught this one guy or he came out somehow and we put him in a cage until they transferred him to some other place. But that's the only time. I said you got to be lucky. My kids tell me, especially my son in-law Paul, that I just joined the army to play softball. We were the champions of New Caledonia. My brother was a pitcher and I was second base and we won the championship and my brother pitched I think it was a no hit game, maybe one hit and we built our own field and we had 2000 or 3000 people on a Sunday. He says you only played softball, big deal. How did we ever win the war?

MICHAEL

It sounds like a match.

HY

You know, it's the way cookie crumbles. My father for example, was drafted into World War I. He was in the _____ and he fought in a battle there as a machine gunner and came back okay. He just had a whiff of gas and that's about it.

MICHAEL

I had an uncle who was in the army and he fought over the Pacific. He was on the island of Imoshima which is a small island off of Okinawa and that's the island that Ernie Pile was killed on. Anyway, my uncle made it through the war without any physical damage, but boy, I mean he was scheduled to be on the evasion of Japan.

HY

God forbid. There would have been millions killed. You know people say, some of them, we should've dropped the bomb someplace else. But the reason they dropped that second bomb was just to show Japanese, hey we not only had one bomb, we had another one. How many have they got?

MICHAEL

Yes. In fact, they had a third one lined up.

HY

See that's the attitude. Because if they just did one and waited, the war would still be going on. It's possible. But they showed them they that hey, they must have more than one. We had to do it fast. I think they did the right thing.

MICHAEL

When you went in, how did your parents feel?

HY

Oh very tough. My parents, they didn't know where their parents were, and here they had two sons in the army. My father was a war veteran in World War I; in all respects, he didn't know where we were going. If you tell him you were in ordinance, he probably didn't know what it was or quarter maslow something like that, so my father was... I'll tell you, I said in my speech at the temple on my birthday. If it wasn't for my sister, I don't think my parents would have been married. My father was just broken hearted. He would come home from work and go out to play pinnacle. My mother, she would sit home and cry. And Eddy, she didn't give up. Things worked out though, we got together. They came here and had grandchildren. My father was very active in the _____ Society. My father was president and there were quite a few of them here from the same chapel. So things worked out, but it was very tough.

MICHAEL

Well that's it for now.

HY

So what do you want from me. You want _____ from the cemetery committee.

MICHAEL

Yeah any kind of documents you have.

HY

Well I have seen them. I don't know what's happened to them. I think they are still around.

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