

## **Interview of Albert Levy**

UCLA Library, Center for Oral History Research, University of California, Los Angeles  
Interview of Albert Levy

## **Transcript**

### **Session One (March 13, 2001)**

#### **LEVY:**

My name is Al Levy. I was born in Pasadena, California, on March 1, 1925. We lived in Pasadena all those years. In 1972, we moved to Newport Beach, my wife, Barbara Snyder Levy and I. My grandparents came to Pasadena in either 1918 or 1919, I'm not really quite sure. My folks followed a year later. The Torah sat in my grandmother's house at 266 No. Vernon Ave., which was west of Minovitz's store at Pearl and Walnut, about 4 blocks. Where ---- Parson's is today. The Torah used to sit in my grandmother's house. It sat there about 3 years before they built the first temple on Hudson and Walnut Street in 1923. They walked the Torah, (from the house to the temple), I don't know how long a distance from Vernon to Hudson/Walnut, probably 2-2 1/2 miles. They were very instrumental in the origination of the Pasadena Jewish Temple.

My grandfather, they were from Ohio after they came from Russia, had a severe asthma condition and the doctors told him that they had to go to California. So they ended up in Pasadena. My parents followed about a year later. At that time my folks were living in Cleveland, Ohio and they had a nice little kosher market with an apartment upstairs. My father walked in one day and told my mother, "We're packing, we're taking the train to California in 2 weeks." She almost died!! She already had 3 children, one of whom had already passed away at that time and she was really unhappy with my Dad but she came along.

My father taught himself the printing business. A hand press from my grandfather's schlock store which was used and new clothing, new and used luggage, anything he could sell. And it was very close to (Sadie and Phil) Pepper's open-air market on No. Fair Oaks, around the old Fair Oaks Theater.

#### **FINGERHUT:**

Where would that be?

#### **LEVY:**

Fair Oaks, north of Holly, within the first block.

**FINGERHUT:**

Not far from the present Reagan Theater?

**LEVY:**

Well, Raymond is a block east of Fair Oaks, so it was in the general area. He taught himself the printing business and he was in that from that time on till he passed away.

My grandparents, on my Dad's side, were from Russia. My Dad took several years to get from Russia to the States. He was born in England and had lived in Russia. My mother came from Rumania, came over when she was 13 years old. Both her parents passed away in the first year they were here, they contracted pneumonia.

**FINGERHUT:**

How did your parents meet?

**LEVY:**

A shidduch !! A matchmaker in Cleveland, Ohio. Let's see, my brother was 10 or 12 years old when they came out here. My sister, Evelyn, was 2 years younger- they came out here in 1919, 1920

**FINGERHUT:**

When they got here, they ran a store. Did your mother work in the store?

**LEVY:**

No. At that time, in 1923, my next brother, Lawrence, whom we called Laurie, was born on June 1, 1923. My grandfather passed away at the same time my brother was born. My grandfather had run the store while my father was out; he charged a dollar for a thousand cards, and he had this little printing press in the front of the store.

**FINGERHUT:**

Were they active in Jewish affairs?

**LEVY:**

That was their whole life !! From then until they passed away, they were always involved with the temple, with B'nai Brith, Hadassah, Boy Scouts, AZA. My father received the Award, in 1940, I think, from the Pasadena Lodge.

My father continued as head of the family. He had 4 brothers and a sister, he was the oldest. They were all out here. That was our close-knit family.

**FINGERHUT:**

Could you give us your family, your siblings.

**LEVY:**

I'm the baby of the family. My oldest brother, Earl, passed away 10 years ago this month. My sister, Evelyn, passed away 7 years ago on my birthday, March 1. My brother, Lawrence, was born June 1, 1923; I was born March 1, 1925.

**FINGERHUT:**

What do you remember about the Pasadena (Jewish) community when you were young?

**LEVY:**

Small. The same people did 90% of the work- nothing has changed in any organization as of today. It was the Bermans, the Minovitzes, the Levys, the Steinbergs, the Wittesses and a few others who kept the temple afloat.

**FINGERHUT:**

What years are you taking about? Because the synagogue was built on Hudson in 1923.

I'm talking about before 1923 and probably (for)the next 5, 6 years we had a very, very small congregation. David Goldman used to come to my grandmother's house before he was Bar Mitzvah. They couldn't get enough for a minyan. They used to pay a Gentile kid ten cents to come in and spend an hour so they could start a minyan in my grandmother's house.

**FINGERHUT:**

When you talk about a small group, you're talking about 50, 60 families?

**LEVY:**

Yes. At the most at that time and then it expanded a little bit, probably to about 75 – 100 all the way to the '40's. Of course, at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, they came out of the woodwork as Barbara and myself come up to Pasadena.

**FINGERHUT:**

You're speaking predominantly about the Jewish community. How do you remember your relationship to the greater Pasadena community, to school, to friends?

**LEVY:**

I'm talking about my immediate close knit group: Siebert Weissman, Ruthie Weisman, Irv Zelanka, Howard Levine, myself, Bernie Faibish, Gordon Mintz. We were always together but we all had outside Gentile friends.

In elementary school I won several awards; I was Chief of Safety in 6th grade for Jefferson Elementary. In Junior High School, both my brother and I were in the band for 3 years. Junior High went from 7th to 10th grades then. I was a student body officer at McKinley Junior High, the first student officer that I know of in the entire city of Pasadena that was Jewish. I was invited to join the High Y which I did. When I was 16, 17 years old, I was invited to join the De Molays. It was all Catholic. The fellow who invited me in – when we had our formal installation, it was at the old Masonic Lodge on S. Los Robles, which was a gorgeous old building then – and I realized that they had a big cross with Jesus Christ there and I saw each guy go up and cross himself. I leaned over to the guy who invited me to join and said “Jay, I can't do it”. He said, “Just pass”. I said, “I'm going to and whatever happens, happens”. Not one person said a word. All the other guys from the other Masonic Lodges, the older fellows 35 - 60 years old- not one said anything except “Congratulations.”

At age 18, I went into the service. I spent a year and a half in Europe and came home. Was home 2 years and I married my little bride, 18 years old at the time. On June 20th, we'll have been married 53 years.

**FINGERHUT:**

Let's go back to your home, the early years with your family - in the house in which you lived. Would you say it was small, was it an apartment, a house?

**LEVY:**

It was a clapboard farm house. To bring you up to speed real quick. All of my dad's sister, her husband and child lived with my grandmother. My parents with 4 children, lived with my grandparents. My mother finally said to my father, ultimatum, "Find us a place to live away from Bohbi or I'm going back to Cleveland." So my dad went out and bought this farmhouse for something like \$2700. The floor sagged. He had to add a bathroom. There was no bathroom because this was strictly on the old Fair Oaks Rancho which was the original parcel of Pasadena. There was no bathroom. It was funny. There were 4 kids.

**FINGERHUT:**

How many rooms?

**LEVY:**

There were not so much rooms as sort of areas. My mother's so-called bedroom had a curtain on it. We had to walk through the living room, her bedroom to our little, maybe 8, 9, 10 x 10 bedroom down some stairs through a screened porch into the added-on little bathroom and there were all these people, including my grandmother, who lived with us for a few years. She still owned the house on Vernon but she still stayed with us for a few years.

**FINGERHUT:**

Did you ever feel that you were poor? Was this the way everyone lived? How did you feel?

**LEVY:**

We didn't realize we were poor because, you know, this was the height of the Depression. We roamed all over Pasadena. There were no restrictions except my mom said, "I don't know where abouts you're going but be home at 10 o'clock at night." And that's what we did.

My dad was very liberal for that era, letting us roam around town.

I sort of realized we were poor when I went to McKinley Junior High School. I saw the rich kids from the Huntington Hotel area coming up and.....light up the scenes. I realized I was

poor then.

But we managed. My dad was very tough on us. He had a pretty good temper on him. But there were some good times, a lot of good times.

**FINGERHUT:**

You seem to remember them fondly, your parents, your childhood. Would you say that you had a good childhood?

**LEVY:**

We had a fantastic childhood along with a lot of hard knocks, created by family turmoil, the typical old Jewish screaming, meany family. Everybody knew what was right for everybody else. And nobody would give a nickel. It was tough going but there was a lot of fond memories. We had a lot of great times.

**FINGERHUT:**

There are frequently tensions between immigrants and their children. The children becoming Americanized and the parents or grandparents remaining European or traditional. Did you have any of that kind of generation gap?

**LEVY:**

No, the only one left from Europe was my grandmother and she passed away while I was in the Army, at Ford, in Kansas and they wouldn't let me come home. She passed away in July, 1944. In fact, we were encouraged to partake of everything we could, within reason, where money----- if you didn't have it, you didn't have it. We were into everything. We were in Scouting. We were in the Band. We played ball after school. I was on the Junior High School team. I was on the High School baseball team. I delivered papers; I started selling magazines in Pasadena when I was 9 years old. We were all out hustling and working; no time to get into trouble. But we had a good time.

**FINGERHUT:**

Do you remember family events, Bar Mitzvahs, weddings.

**LEVY:**

My dad's family was really all out here. All my mom's family was back in Akron, Ohio. So it was my dad's side of the family. Saturday nights they came to Pasadena from Griffith View Drive area, the Los Feliz section; Sunday afternoons we went there-- our cousins, played all afternoon. My dad played pinochle Saturday night and all day Sunday afternoon till it was time to go home Sunday night. And that's what my uncles did – they played pinochle. So as kids, we did things on our own together.

**FINGERHUT:**

At the Hudson Street Temple, the synagogue...did your family socialize there, did you socialize there?,

**LEVY:**

Our whole life revolved around the temple—everything we did outside of school and the extracurricular activity at school, our whole life revolved around the temple.

**FINGERHUT:**

Was that a social life or was your family particularly religious?

**LEVY:**

My mom and dad were fairly religious, not orthodox but conservative and my dad, after he couldn't get meat from Mr. Zimmerman and before Dave Minovitz – I don't know if he was strictly kosher, I don't think so. (

**FINGERHUT:**

I've heard not.) Well, my dad used to drive to Boyle Heights once a week to pick up meat and stuff. So, yes, everything revolved around the temple. As we got older we were in Scouting, we had what we called the Oreison Club. I don't know if you've heard of it. We had probably 25, 30 kids; they were from 12, 13, 14 years old to 17, 18. How it started I don't remember and I don't remember who was the older person in charge. We used to have all kinds of social events at the temple, dances, we'd get dressed up, (with) records.

**FINGERHUT:**

How old were you at this time?

**LEVY:**

Oh, probably, 15, 16 – teenagers. There was very little intermixing outside the Jewish faith as far as the game we were raised with in Pasadena. School was a different story. There was a little AntiSemitism.

**FINGERHUT:**

Can you remember an incident or two?

**LEVY:**

You know we always stayed out at Jewish holidays. In those days you had to have a note from your mother or dad and when you took the note into the office, you could just hear the snickering, "They get to stay out the Jewish holidays. What kind of a deal is that?" There was always "Dirty Jew" once in a while. But I never had any fights; my brother never had any fights. My oldest brother did. My brother graduated from Muir Tech in 1929 as a.....Could not find a job. Went on the WPA and was working cleaning brush up in Angles Crest. Some guy called him a dirty Jew. My brother went after him. The guy sank a pick in my brother's shoulder. Really, that was probably the worst that our family had.

**FINGERHUT:**

Do you remember any places that you were told not to go to or didn't go to? I mean the Huntington or you probably were not about to go to the Annandale Country Club.

**LEVY:**

Never got inside the Annandale Country Club. Could not get inside the Annandale Country Club and still today, I'm sure you can't. Could not get into the Shakespeare Club. Could not get into the Pasadena Athletic Club. To tell you the truth, in the 30's and 40's we weren't welcome even at the YMCA even though I know Morrie Melvin was..... and became a big contributor to the Y. The big hotels, we just were not invited to or did not feel comfortable going to. The Altadena Country Club - Barb used to go up there all the time, she lived close by. The temple had one dance up there - they used to have a yearly dance, you've seen all the yearbooks from them, which shocked us no end that they let us in. But outside of that, it wasn't that bad.

**FINGERHUT:**

What I've picked up from some other people is that they never felt Anti-Semitism in terms of these places because they knew they were places that they just shouldn't go and and they never tried to go there.

**LEVY:**

I agree with that. We just felt out of the element and we just stayed away.

**FINGERHUT:**

Was that economic or religious?

**LEVY:**

After all, you didn't go to the Annandale Country Club if you don't play golf and have a lot of money; I mean the entrance costs a lot of money. That's probably a big part of it. The other part was that we just knew we weren't supposed to be there, as Jews.

**FINGERHUT:**

In general, as you were growing up, do you remember playing with both Jewish and non-Jewish kids?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely.

**FINGERHUT:**

Did you tend to mix or were you compartmentalized.

**LEVY:**

We had no trouble intermixing at all, none. I'm only speaking of my brothers and me.

**FINGERHUT:**

How about your siblings, your relationship with your brothers and sister?

**LEVY:**

My oldest brother is 12 years older than I am, or was, so when I went into the Army at 18, he was 30 years old already. When he went left Pasadena at 19, I was 7. I never saw him again until we both got out of the service in '46. I was 21, he was 33. So there wasn't much of a relationship between my oldest brother and myself. My sister was 10 years older than I am. She stayed home in and around Pasadena area all the years so I saw my sister, Evelyn, much more.

**FINGERHUT:**

Did you travel much to the LA area, to the beach.

**LEVY:**

I have fond memories. My Dad had an old 1926 4 door Chrysler and right after the Depression, believe it or not, he was the only one that had a car with money enough to put gas in it. He used to pick up the whole family and we'd go to Ocean Park every Sunday. My mother would take a big suitcase with starched linen sailor suits and she'd clean us up and we'd come home clean. Ocean Park is near Venice Very expensive..... That was our enjoyment; we'd look forward to it. Once in a while he'd drive down Rosemead Blvd. all the way to Long Beach.

**FINGERHUT:**

When you were teenagers, did you go off by yourselves, travel into LA or to the beach?

**LEVY:**

We did when we had enough money for gas. My brother had an old '29 Ford 2 door sedan We bought gas, 10 gallons for a dollar, and everyone would pitch in nickels and dimes. We traveled as far as we could go in the old cars.

**FINGERHUT:**

Did you ride the Red Car System much?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely, from downtown LA, we used to take the big Red Cars. They had what they called the dinkies that ran along Colorado Street for a nickel. You'd ride all the way..... down to Colorado St. all the way up to Lake Ave. I don't know if anyone told you this before, if you wanted to go up to Mount Lowe, you'd transfer and you would get on this little car that followed the side of the mountain all the way up to Mount Lowe, for fifteen cents, I think it was. It scared the hell out of you. It went around the mountain. Around the late '30's, it burned down...

Those were the kind of things, the nostalgia, we loved it. We had a great time being raised then. That's why I wanted to raise my children in Pasadena, close to the temple, which we did.

**FINGERHUT:**

Let's look at about your World War II experience. You came out of high school, when?

**LEVY:**

At 17, in 1942. I started junior college and I was drafted. First of all, at 17, Siebert (Weissman) and some other guys enlisted in the Navy B12 program. I said, "Boy, that's great." They would send you to college or some kind of school. So I went down to 6th and Main Street and some poor striped cat said, "Jump on the deck". I said "What deck?". He said, "the floor, stupid !".

And I jumped up on that and he checked and he said, "You've got a heart murmur. You're rejected". I was broken-hearted. So I went back and said "Well, I'll just wait and see what happens". Sure enough they drafted me. I went down and they said, "We see you were rejected by the Navy." They sent me to Sawtelle, Veterans' Hospital They checked me and they said "that's normal for you. No problem." So they drafted me. I left June 10, '43 and I got home March 1 '46.

**FINGERHUT:**

What was your Army experience like?

**LEVY:**

I was a forward (?) observer for an artillery outfit, but we had no guns and no artillery. We did forward observation by sound region..... oscillographs. Microphones dug in the ground. Very pin-pointed with actual surveying instruments. We could cover 8 miles with these microphones buried into the ground and as a shell passes over, it makes like throwing a rock into a pond with sound waves and as a projectile came over these microphones, it went from mechanical energy into electrical energy and back to an oscillograph, what we called the "sound central". They had a "wet tape" and with calculus and logarithms and all that, they could determine a 25 yard triangle where that kind of shot came from. So we had the coordinates of the tape, they called the gun battery – we had 105's, 105.5's and they would just pound that area.

**FINGERHUT:**

Where did you serve?

**LEVY:**

I was in the Battle of the Bulge.

**FINGERHUT:**

Were you in D-Day?

**LEVY:**

Oh, no, on D-Day I was sitting in Pasadena at the Temple, the new temple on Altadena Drive, for a prayer service once everybody knew that the guys went in. My oldest brother went in, D Day, in Normandy. We didn't know that at the time. They had a prayer service on June 7, 1944, I think it was, in the little temple where Barb and I were married. The little chapel; now they call it the Knell Chapel. And that's where they had the service. I was home on a 15 day furlough, my one and only, and I got called back. I got a telegram saying I had to report back to camp. And when I got there, I shipped over. I went to Scotland; from Scotland to Winbourne, England, the southern part of England. We were there 3 months waiting for our equipment before we could sail across the pond. We sailed up the Seine River. Got scared as hell when the guy who was up at the front of the ship – we asked him, "Why are you up here?" He said, "We're looking for the first one that came up; the conning? tower is supposed to be sticking out of the water." Man, 200 of us ran our asses to the stern of the ship like crazy.

And then it got nasty. The next 3 months were sheer torture. Les Berman was in the Bulge, I think he was there 24 or 36 hours and he had his feet frozen so bad he had to be shipped home. I stayed; I had frozen feet also but I got stuck. So anyway, as far as outside war and even then it's an experience you never forget. The smell of death is always with you. And the cold, the bitter cold. It was one of the worst winters they ever had. We had no snow packs, we had no gloves. We had nothing, blankets. It was terrible.

**FINGERHUT:**

When did you get out?

**LEVY:**

I got out in March of '46. I came home. I was given an ultimatum. My brother-in-law said, "We are opening up a chain of delis. Do you want to make a lot of money or go back to school?" I said, "God, man, it took me 3 months of the old 40 and 8's, the old cattle cars, I spent 3 days on that, spent 30 days laying on a rain soaked tent in Le Havre, waiting for a ship to get home, it took 10, 12 days to get home, they flew us all the way from New Jersey to Long Beach, Long

Beach to San Francisco. They took us to Camp Beale, there 2 or 3 weeks, discharged, came home and I'm laying on the couch and my brother-in-law, Ben, walks in and said, "Here's the deal". So I decided I'd go to work and I never went back to school. I worked in the deli till he went bankrupt in 2 years.

The deli, I think the market is still there at Fremont and Huntington Drive in S. Pasadena. As you go down on South Fair Oaks, you turn right, it's on the first block at Fremont and the southeast corner of Fremont and Huntington Drive. I'm sure there's a market still there. Right across the street from the Barkley Restaurant.

When they went belly up, I already had one baby, 1950.....was born in January. I said, "What do I do now?". I heard about this guy selling house to house out of a car. I went down and got a job. After a year or two of doing that I said, "Baloney, I can do this on my own."

I went into business for myself for a few years and detested every minute, every day of it. I hated it—a filthy, dirty business. I hated it. I didn't go door to door. I had clients and they sent me to their relatives and friends. But it's still nasty.

## **FINGERHUT:**

What were you selling?

## **LEVY:**

Clothing, jewelry, bedding, anything you can think of. Then in the mid '50's, I decided I couldn't do this anymore.....building business. I started with a company as a laborer. I didn't know a 2x4 from a window frame. I learned everything from the ground up- reading.....how to build a house, how to sell it. Went to work for my brother in '64. In '69 I went to work for TransAmerica in Diamond Bar. I became an assistant general manager. Bought an 8000 acre ranch. I did everything- zoning, chief of police, fire department. We developed the city of Diamond Bar which is now a city, it was incorporated about 10,12 years ago. There are now something like 80, 000 people. When I got there, there were about 3,000 people. No double roads, everything was single roads, no gas stations. There was one place to eat, the country club, which is the Diamond Bar Country Club. Now there are probably 60 or 70 places to eat in Diamond Bar. I still lived here in Pasadena till December 7, 1972 when Barb and I sold and went to live at the beach. We lived at 2384 Galbreth Road, just 2 or 3 doors west of the Vego's. We were there first and then the Vego's moved in and we were still here.

**FINGERHUT:**

At that time, when you were traveling out to Diamond Bar, your social life continued to be pretty much around the temple?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely, and as you know we're always coming back.

**FINGERHUT:**

When did you stop work?

**LEVY:**

I retired officially in 1991, about 10 years ago, and the first year I stayed home and did the usual things, getting caught up with yard work, doing a little traveling and then I got a call from a friend who owns a company that manages a Homeowners Association in Diamond Bar.

He said, "Would you like to....". I said, "Stop". He said, "What do mean stop? I haven't told you anything." I said, "Whatever it is, I'm going to do."

So I went back as an outside building consultant to condominium projects that were leaking like sieves; they were built in the '80's very poorly and they sued the builders and the insurance companies and subcontractors. When they got the money, they called me and I watched their money, watched it work...

One project that was supposed to last 3 -6 months lasted 4 -5 years. I'm still doing some consulting work for a gentleman who owns Ford and we're going to start another 3 buildings on his project. I love it!. Barb loves it when I'm working.

**FINGERHUT:**

While you were living here – your relationship with the temple- your social life was here but did you get involved in running the temple, on committees or were you socially oriented?

**LEVY:**

We were always involved. We were always doing something for the temple. Barb was on the Board of the temple for several years. She also in the early '50's was an advisor to BBG. I was an advisor for AZA. We started a veteran's thing, around '46, '47; it didn't last too many years- Jewish War Veterans.

A lot of committees, but I did not take any chairmanship or anything like that. I think my dad burned us out on that. My dad's whole life revolved around the temple. Not only Friday nights, but all the holidays and nights when he should have been home with his family, he was at the temple and at the temple, they played cards. And that happened 2 to 3 nights a week; I still won't touch a card.

But before we finish this interview, I do want to tell you what my Dad did. In the late '20's, the temple was really hurting financially, just getting started. He negotiated a plot of land which is called the Pasadena section of Home of Peace with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, with Rabbi Magnin. They bought, which is still the Pasadena section now, I don't know how many plots. So the phone used to ring at 2 or 3 in the morning, Saturdays, Sundays. "Hey, Harry, my so-and-so passed away, a relative, I need a plot". So my dad bought the plots and in turn sold and made a profit for the temple. He held the money until the temple couldn't pay the bills and he'd come in and give them the money to support the temple. That went on from when I was 5 or 6 years old to when he passed away to in January of '69. There used to be a plaque in the lobby. I don't know what's happened to it. I don't think it's there any more.

**FINGERHUT:**

We have a history section in the file cabinet in the back of Wohlman Hall and we have a bunch of plaques. It may be there.

**LEVY:**

Well, it was on the wall and when they remodeled, they may have taken it off. My dad, really, I can honestly say, kept the temple afloat more than once. He knew that if he gave the money to the temple in dribs and drabs, it would just get mixed in. So he held on to it. He was always on

the Board. My dad was never President or Vice-President, but he was always on the Board of the temple. They gave him a life membership in 1940. I should have brought that plaque.

**FINGERHUT:**

It's in the temple.

**LEVY:**

No, I have a little plaque, it's not gold, it's brass.

**FINGERHUT:**

We have a certificate. So they did realize what he did.

**LEVY:**

And my mom was a charter member of both Hadassah and Sisterhood. No matter how many hours she worked, and she had 4 kids with no modern facilities – it was tough going but she was up at 5 every morning 7 days a week. She did the cooking at the temple for all the holidays, all the seders that we had at the temple and for all the soldier functions.

**FINGERHUT:**

Tell us something about that. At the Hudson Street Synagogue and later at the present facility. What do you remember about that old synagogue?

**LEVY:**

We had a great time. Fond memories. I remember Morrie Melvin every Friday night would come to temple. A lot of time they had a hell of a time getting a minyan, even after I was 5 or 6 years old, in the late 20's and early '30's. Morrie Melvin would come with Mildred and he'd sit down there, and Rabbi HaLevy would put him to sleep in no time flat. I shook the hand of Albert Einstein when I was 8 years old. They were in Pasadena. I remember he had this wiry gray hair. His wife looked like my bubbie did, with the long skirt, the black boots, and the jewelry.

And as we went through our Bar Mitzvah procedure, we had to attend Friday night and Saturday morning services. Dr. Baskin, before he became a dentist, was our Scout Master. And we'd all show up and we'd all be laughing and joking in the back, and they'd pound the bimah and John Hilson and Mr. Steinberg would be yelling at us, they'd be shrieking at us "Be quiet; Shut up". And as each friend became Bar Mitzvah, it was a big deal. The Saturday night of the Bar Mitzvah, all the families would pitch in to buy a watch. So at my Bar Mitzvah, about 9 o'clock at night, I'm saying, "Where's the people? Where's the people?" Nobody showed up. About 9:30, they intentionally did that, in they walked with the box and the people, into our little house on Maple Street. We had great times.

#### **FINGERHUT:**

Dave Goldman and Harold (Minovitz) both remember that there were classes in each corner and that there were no classrooms.

#### **LEVY:**

Absolutely !! There were no classrooms; we met in what we called the vestibule then – with doors that slid across, and it was hardwood. Probably held about 100 people for a sit-down dinner or something like that. That's where the Reisen Club met, that's where everybody met. In each corner of the temple were different classes. I had Bertha Goldman as my teacher for kindergarten and first grade in Sunday School.

#### **FINGERHUT:**

What do you remember about the temple moving to the new facility? Were you around then?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I was around. I was about 16 years old. It was in the middle of no place.

**FINGERHUT:**

I've heard several stories about it. Did the Catholic Church own it?

**LEVY:**

Not that I remember. What were the other stories?

**FINGERHUT:**

The other stories are some of the things that went on there before the Temple moved in.

**LEVY:**

That's what we were told; that it was a high-class road house for the elite of Pasadena, the guys would come to visit.

**FINGERHUT:**

I just went to the City Directory in the Pasadena Room of the Public Library and took down the City Directory. This facility wasn't built until about 1931 and there were restaurants there. But the restaurants only lasted a couple of years (they weren't very good) and the place was declining in terms of businesses and by 1940 it was vacant. (That's right.) So that if there was anything, it was not during the height of Prohibition, because the place wasn't built until '31. And there was turnover -The El Padre Inn was there for 2 years and then they moved downtown someplace. I can't remember the address. Then there was an artist, a guy named DesPlantes who ran a café,

according to the City Directory. Now what he did in this café, I don't know. But the last tenants I found in the (rest is missing).

There were some families that you may remember that may be important You were just talking, off the tape about the Wittess family. Can you tell us some of your memories about them and any other families that you can remember as being important, besides, of course, your father and your family.

### **LEVY:**

I think all the families that held the original temple group together were important but there were always a certain few with money who really helped. When they were down and out, couldn't do anything, they had to go to the money people. Sam Wittess was one of them. I. (?) Wittess was another. In fact, I bought Barb's engagement from I. Wittess. Ben Tufeld, in the early '30's, mid '30's, was a very powerful influence in the Pasadena Jewish Community. He was president many times over. It was either Dave Goldman or Bentley J. Tufeld. Tufeld, I'll never forget, bought a 1938 red Packard convertible. And in 1938, man, was that flashy, it had money written all over it. Mr. Hilson, we could not do the services on Saturday morning without him, was a very wealthy man. There was a Mr. Karsh who owned a shoe store on Colorado Street. And of course Jon Beskin and the Beskin family also always contributed very heavily. A small but very important group.

### **FINGERHUT:**

Can you give us some example of what you mean by the leadership of the Wittess family?

### **LEVY:**

Sam Wittess could hardly speak English, and I. Wittess – there were 4 brothers that I knew as a kid, really had a hard time expressing themselves, but they were leaders. When they made a decision, they followed through and they put their money where their mouth was. There were not many people who had money in those days.

### **FINGERHUT:**

The stories that I heard was that the Wittess brothers were significantly important in building the Hudson Street Temple and that Bentley Tufeld was significantly important in getting the present facility that the temple is now located at - that these are 2 very important families for those reasons, if nothing else.

**LEVY:**

I think that's true. I was only 16 when they bought the property in '41; I know it had to be before June of '41 because I was already in the service and when they had that service there, I was in uniform, so they bought that prior to June of 1941. Another family that was important was Barney Aviram; Barney and his wife had 2 daughters. Barney owned a furniture store on North Fair Oaks. He was knee deep in the temple also – he deserves a lot of credit for that.

**FINGERHUT:**

I interviewed, some time ago, Hedda Gutenberg, the widow of Bino ? Gutenberg, one of the few members of the CalTech faculty that belonged to the Temple. She said that by and large, the makeup of the Pasadena Jewish Temple community was very different from the makeup of the Jews who were at Cal-Tech.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely.

**FINGERHUT:**

The temple was more bourgeois, more store shop owner, more petty businessmen – not that intellectual to meet the CalTech group.

**LEVY:**

None that I know of. Dr. Bino Gutenberg very seldom came to the temple. Mrs. Gutenberg came on the High Holidays and some functions. I went to school with Stephanie Gutenberg, the younger daughter. Mark Gutenberg was my brother's age and Siebert Weissman's age. We had a family by the name of Rock; Robert Rock was a brilliant young man. When he was 16,17 years old he was headed for CalTech. During the summer, they had guest speakers at the temple on Hudson Street and he got up and said there was no God. Well, don't you think that contradiction fell through the floor! Rabbi HaLevy was sitting there shaking his head; he got up and sort of excused him as being young. Bob did not believe in God because he was a scientist and he knew he was going to CalTech at a very young age. When his father passed away a few years later, he realized he was wrong and admitted that he had found the Jewish religion. He became a heart specialist because his dad died of heart failure. Sort of renounced all that. But you're right – there were very few intellectuals at that time that belonged to the temple.

#### **FINGERHUT:**

The tone of the temple community seems to have changed after World War II with the development of Jews coming into JPL and Jews coming into the professions here and then the quality of life seems to have changed in terms of a significant number of professional people. But up until World War II, it was predominantly businessmen, petty businessmen.

#### **LEVY:**

I think we had, if I remember right, this is sort of on the quick thinking, we had Dr. Charles Posner and Dr. David Berkus, who was a dentist, and outside of when Dr. Beskin came along, several years later, they were the only 3 professional people that I knew personally. About 2 years ago I went through the Pasadena roster and out of the 300 families or so, I think there were 220 that had either PhD's or MD's after their names, husbands or wives. I could not believe the tremendous turn-around that has happened.

#### **FINGERHUT:**

I think that probably explains why Jews did not take part in Pasadena politics or Pasadena civic life – they were generally considered not part of the elite – they were busy making a living. I was talking to Harry Strear, many years ago, a druggist, and he said, "Who had time to do all this? I was busy in the drugstore."

**LEVY:**

A nice guy. Maury Hillinger. I worked for Maury in the drugstore when I was 15 years old, selling cigarettes, liquor, condoms – doing everything but actually making prescriptions when I was 15-17 years old. He came (to the temple) but his wife and his kids weren't active in the temple. I think that's why Barb and I – it's so tiny, this town, we love coming back, I can see old friends.

**Session Two (March 14, 2009)**

**CARLTON:**

Okay this is an interview of Al Levy, it's March 14, 2009, we are at Al's house in Laguna Woods California, my name is John Carlton and operating the camera is Michael Several, also present is Al's wife Barbara and Shirley Hoffman. So Al, just a start out, you were born in Pasadena in 1925 is that right?

**CARLTON:**

And you were not born in the Huntington Hospital were you? Where were you born?

**LEVY:**

I am told I was born across the street where poor women gave birth, it was called the women's hospital and I think Les Berman, Shirley's brother was born there, Harold Minovitz was born there, those are the three I know for sure but I think we all denied it.

**CARLTON:**

Now I would like to just sort of get an idea where you lived during the time that you lived in Pasadena, when you were born, where was your family living?

**LEVY:**

1119 Maple Street in Pasadena which is now the Frontage road to the 210 freeway.

**CARLTON:**

Okay what was the cross street?

**LEVY:**

Between Mar Vista and Wilson, North of Walnut.

**CARLTON:**

Did your mom and dad own a house?

**LEVY:**

So called house, it was partly original Fair Oaks Rancho built in the late 1800s with no bathroom, it was not a level house, it was not hardwood floors, it was like rough 2x12 flooring, my dad added a bathroom but you had to walk through this bedroom that went down hill a little bit, yeah three stairs through the washroom into this little bathroom that had a washbasin and a tub toilet that was it.

**CARLTON:**

Okay and did your parents own that property?

**LEVY:**

Yes and no. They were buying it from a man who owned a printing store in Pasadena by the name of Mr. Silver, during the depression, I remember the conversations on the phone, my dad paid \$24 a month on the mortgage, he couldn't make the payments so he paid \$7 a month interest until, yeah eventually they got it paid.

**CARLTON:**

Eventually they owned it?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

And was Mr. Silver a temple man?

**LEVY:**

Yes he was and his son was very active and grew up with my sister and my older brother in Pasadena.

**CARLTON:**

Ah and what was his name?

**HOFFMAN:**

Her name was it Jillian Silver?

**LEVY:**

No. It is in one of those sheets, if you refer to those.

**CARLTON:**

So Mr. Silver had a printing business right?

**LEVY:**

Yes in Colorado and my dad was in printing business in Los Angeles.

**CARLTON:**

Oh Los Angeles?

**LEVY:**

Yeah so they knew each other pretty well.

**CARLTON:**

All right. Were there other Jews living in the area in that neighborhood?

**LEVY:**

Only one. Mrs. Goldman's the original president of the sisterhood, Helena Goldman's sister lived around the corner on Wilson street and my brother Lawrence, Lorrie as we call him, was a blonde ringlets and I had dark hair, and she named us blacky and whitey and that was the only Jewish family we had around on the other corner, we had some African-Americans and we had some mulattos and we had a mixed area. It was great. Great to be raised there.

**CARLTON:**

How long did you live in that house?

**LEVY:**

They brought me back from the hospital until I left to enter the army in 18, my folks sold the property when I was down in Tennessee on maneuvers and moved to Windship street which is now part of the parking lot of Pasadena City College, south of Colorado.

**CARLTON:**

Now when you were growing up in that house, was there an area a part of Pasadena where most of your Jewish friends lived?

**LEVY:**

A lot of lived on the west side, the Berman's, Minovitz's, Press's, oh there were a lot of, I don't remember now. If I knew that question was coming, I would have thought about it.

**CARLTON:**

What was the area when you say the west side?

**LEVY:**

You know the Fair Oaks and Walnut area, where the Minovitz market used to be. From there, west to Orange Grove. Orange Grove turns in north and south and turns goes east and west through Pasadena and so it is where Ralph Parson is now.

**CARLTON:**

So the Parson has taken over?

**LEVY:**

My grandmother's house and Minovitz's house, they took the whole west side, I think that's right. I don't think the streets are still there.

**HOFFMAN:**

Isn't it still there? Like going all the way to Orange Grove?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah where Walnut goes.

**HOFFMAN:**

Yeah we lived off of Walnut.

**LEVY:**

We lived north of Walnut and so did my grandparents.

**HOFFMAN:**

We lived okay, Orange Grove went like that and so Walnut was here and we lived on Rosemont and of course.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay Rosemont is still there.

**HOFFMAN:**

Then it goes through Orange Grove so we were in that middle part and other was Pasadena Avenue where they lived, Vernon.

**LEVY:**

My grandmother lived on Vernon Avenue.

**HOFFMAN:**

And Vernon yeah so all of those streets that went from Walnut to Orange Grove north is where.

**LEVY:**

That's all down now isn't it? Have you been down there lately?

**HOFFMAN:**

Well I have been there I don't know if those streets are there anymore, I really don't know.

**HOFFMAN:**

I know the Roosevelt school is still there on Rosemont you know, I don't know about the other street.

**LEVY:**

Yeah I thought it was all taken out.

**CARLTON:**

Would you say, did you think of it as a Jewish area or was it a mixed neighborhood?

**LEVY:**

Oh it was mixed, there was no solid Jewish community at all, everybody was spread out but all working people were basically on the west side and my mom and dad were about in the middle of Pasadena, that's about it. They were all over.

**CARLTON:**

And where did you go to school?

**LEVY:**

Started at Columbia Elementary which was knocked down and the original farmers market at Lake and Walnut was developed.

**CARLTON:**

Oh so Columbia school was at.

**LEVY:**

On the property and that was owned by and here again, it was in those papers and one of the major investors in that was a Jewish guy.

**CARLTON:**

Investors in the?

**LEVY:**

Market. Farmers market they called it and Minnie and Joe Weissman owned a meat market in there.

**HOFFMAN:**

Joe Spiegel owned the drug store.

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**CARLTON:**

And this is all at Lake and Walnut. And when the Columbia school torn down?

**LEVY:**

Probably in 1933, 1934.

**CARLTON:**

Was that a public school?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. My oldest sister, 10 years older one went to school.

**CARLTON:**

And they tore down public school to build a farmer's market?

**LEVY:**

Right.

**CARLTON:**

That's interesting and farmer's market was developed or owned by a Jew?

**LEVY:**

I am sure it was Papino or something like that.

**HOFFMAN:**

Tufeld.

**LEVY:**

Oh I think it was Tufeld I think so.

**CARLTON:**

And was this farmer's market a structure? Was it an open air?

**LEVY:**

One side was open, the Walnut Street side was open market and Minnie and Joe's meat shop was open and we all worked in there, we all froze to death. We worked into summer.

**CARLTON:**

Okay so you went to Columbia school, and when did you leave that?

**LEVY:**

I went to another elementary, they bussed us from our house in Maple Street to Madison and that's around El Molino some place up in there, north of Walnut, I don't know if it is still there or not.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah it is.

**LEVY:**

That was Madison school. Webster is where Peggy and Carey went to elementary school. I spent the last three years at Jefferson Elementary which is still there on east villa and on the north side was the original Jefferson Elementary, then they built the newer buildings across the street two story and then while I was there, they built one single level and I left there in 1936.

**CARLTON:**

So you were 11 or so?

**LEVY:**

Yeah I was 11 when I started the Junior high and then we went to McKinley, the whole gang went to McKinley.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah remind me where that is?

**LEVY:**

She lives right next door to it, now.

**HOFFMAN:**

I am across the street, I went to school there and I am across the street from there now.

**CARLTON:**

Have not strayed too far.

**HOFFMAN:**

No and not that far.

**LEVY:**

Yeah it is in 500 block if I remember that. She looks onto the football field that we played on, baseball all that stuff and then graduated McKinley junior high in 1940, went to PJC what they call west campus, if you have heard that terminology.

**SEVERAL:**

I have heard of.

**CARLTON:**

You were in 10th grade in 1940, and.

**LEVY:**

Going into 11th grade, the first two years of high school, 11th to 12th, you were still into junior college it was called lower division and upper division. The lower division was the last two years of high school, the next two years was prep for college. This was supposed to be good for two years but everybody who left junior college at the end of the second year, they had a start back year because they never had the right counselors to tell you what you needed to go to UCLA or universities or colleges.

**CARLTON:**

And this was at the on the PCC campus.

**LEVY:**

No my oldest brother graduated from Muir Tech High School on North Lincoln Avenue in 1929 and I got there in 1940, never went back to school which was who knows, everything worked out okay so I guess it was alright.

**CARLTON:**

Okay now I want to ask you some questions about your Jewish education. Let me ask you even a different question. What is your earliest memory of the Hudson Street Shul, what's the first thing that comes to your mind?

**LEVY:**

Probably five or six years old, the Sunday school, the services, Friday night, I remember we all went to sleep including the people, the few people who came, everybody went to sleep, Morris Melvin, you have heard of Melvin insurance, he used to come there and he used to sleep every Friday night. There was not many people and we had a lot of fun there, we had a great time at that temple.

**CARLTON:**

Did your family go to Friday night services regularly?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah my dad was the Shammis. He drove in from Los Angeles and they had four furnaces, two in the front, two in the back, in the floor and he light the furnace so it would be warm at 8 o'clock for services, and her dad, he was like a rabbi there in fact he ran the services before they hired rabbi.

**CARLTON:**

By her dad you are referring to Shirley?

**HOFFMAN:**

When the rabbi went on vacation, he was doing the services.

**CARLTON:**

And who was the rabbi in the 30s that you remember?

**LEVY:**

Rabbi Radlin, I only remember a little bit, but there was a rabbi before Radlin that they hired just for the high holidays and I remember the big stink about it. He declared a two or three hour recess and he came back and he had food all over his mouth and somebody saw him up at Coast Ice cream and they fired him just like that, I don't know his name or anything but I have heard the stories from my folks. That's a true story. I don't remember he might have been there in one or two years and then they hired Rabbi Halevi.

**CARLTON:**

So do you remember anything about Rabbi Halevi at all?

**LEVY:**

He was thin, a sort of brunette kind of guy, and as far as how he spoke, what he spoke, no I don't remember but I got a picture of him.

**CARLTON:**

And do you know whether he wasn't a full time rabbi was he?

**LEVY:**

No, there was no full time rabbi and reading the history, I thought Halevi was an ordain rabbi but they said they had no ordain rabbis until Max Vorspan who married us. Now that I don't know if that's true or not John. But that's what it says in my history.

**CARLTON:**

So about when did rabbi Halevi start?

**LEVY:**

1934 I think to 1939.

**CARLTON:**

And what was he like?

**LEVY:**

I liked the guy, really fun. He was great with the kids. He had an old 28 or 29 Ford with not a rumble seat but trunk, lid that came up and he jammed two or three kids in the back there, two or three in the front and took us to Brookside park play baseball with us and I will never forget Mrs. Halevi, Clara Halevi was there and we said hey rabbi throw the ball throw the ball, and she said don't call him rabbi, call him Jack. And we were very young and as I got older, I thought that she was ashamed for anybody else to hear him called rabbi.

**CARLTON:**

Because you were out in Brookside Park. Do you have any idea how old he was? Of course you were little, he seemed old I am sure.

**LEVY:**

Hey I was in the army at 18. If a guy was 25 year old, my brother was 31, he was old man. Are you kidding?

**CARLTON:**

So did you have religious school at the temple? At the Hudson Street temple?

**LEVY:**

At the time us guys were bar mitzvahs because there was no girl being bar mitzvah there at all, we went to Hebrew school for about two years before our bar mitzvah and that was the extent of the religious training. Yeah went to Sunday school for years, as you can see in the picture, the higher in the picture you were or older you were in that picture, the young ones were always down in front.

**CARLTON:**

Okay then what's the difference then between the Sunday school and Hebrew school that you had?

**LEVY:**

Strictly taught us Hebrew in fact, rabbi Halevi's wife taught me my bar mitzvah.

**CARLTON:**

How often did you go to Hebrew school?

**LEVY:**

Twice a week.

**CARLTON:**

What days?

**LEVY:**

I think it was Tuesdays and Thursdays and it interfered with my baseball playing and all, my other activities in junior high school.

**CARLTON:**

Was it held at the temple?

**LEVY:**

Sure. Everything was held at the temple. All bar mitzvahs including my brothers, not the oldest one, that's interesting I don't know if my oldest brother had bar mitzvah or not.

**CARLTON:**

And what was Sunday school? What did you learn in that?

**LEVY:**

They taught us from books, you know school books and it lasted an hour and hour and a half, and like I said it was four classrooms in the main sanctuary, they held classes in the kitchen.

**HOFFMAN:**

The other room, all the rooms were divided.

**LEVY:**

Right social hall is I think what they called it and the Rabbi's study which wasn't much of a study, he came off the bema, went passed the organ through his office to get to the kitchen it was like Grand Central Station.

**CARLTON:**

Actually I would just like to get an idea of sort of how the old Hudson Street temple was laid down and what was there. So you walked in, there was the entry door was on Hudson street right?

**SEVERAL:**

Actually I wonder this might be a good time to show you this map. This is from the 1930 map called the sandborn maps and.

**LEVY:**

This is it here.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah that's it there.

**LEVY:**

You know the property line I assume? Yeah it had to because it was almost a rectangle, it was a rectangle building and this here is where we played football and baseball with tin cans and stuff on.

**SEVERAL:**

There was, somebody says there was an empty lot next to.

**LEVY:**

Not here, this is Hudson, this is Walnut, this is the temple and the lot was here absolutely.

**CARLTON:**

Okay just for clarity purposes since the camera can't see this, the temple, Hudson street temple is on the southeast corner of Hudson and Walnut, the temple is right there at the corner and there is a vacant lot just to the south of it right? And that's you would play games and do things there. Now as you walked into the temple from Hudson Street, what was there you walked in?

**LEVY:**

You walked in and there was a little for probably 8-9 feet in depth, women's bathroom on the left, men's bathroom on the right, then you hit two double doors and you walked into the main sanctuary and you were facing the bema which was facing east.

**CARLTON:**

Bema was at the far side of the room?

**LEVY:**

Back into the wall.

**CARLTON:**

And it was just one room?

**LEVY:**

One big room.

**CARLTON:**

What kind of seating did they have?

**LEVY:**

They had I remember at first there were hard benches, then several years later, they brought in like used movie seats, made a lot of noise going up and down, but it was better than sitting on a hard benches all day.

**CARLTON:**

And what was the ark made of? Do you recall was there any like decoration that stuck in your mind?

**LEVY:**

It wasn't as ornate as what there is now but the ark was there and the torahs were there, my grandmother donated the silver breast plates for the torah with the spindles on them and I asked rabbi Collin one day, he was in his office and I said, I would like to find those, so he opened up the ark for me and they were not on those torahs there so where they are? I don't know but it had been donated by Bessie Levy. Where they are, I don't know.

**CARLTON:**

Was there any artwork, any artwork, any other significant things as you went to temples, services, is there anything?

**LEVY:**

It was bearable, I do remember and we always enjoyed the Berman's, they sat in front of us, always. We sat behind them always and during the services when we were young you know, 15, 20 and 30 minutes, we got bored and we went outside and we would go and sit in somebody's car and listen to the World Series because it was always on and comeback and then we run away, go up to Coast Ice Cream and ice cream cones and stuff at that time of the year and we came back and windows were usually very warm in September and October I remember I sat next to

the window and standing up to watch all the cars go by, did that for by eight hours and then the sirens of policeman would come.

**CARLTON:**

So did you have High Holiday services in the shul?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely. That was my earliest part I remember.

**HOFFMAN:**

To the right of bema was the choir.

**LEVY:**

Yeah right at the corner here. Right in the corner it went to the back wall and right here would be the rabbi's office and then the kitchen.

**SEVERAL:**

You might indicate.

**LEVY:**

Oh this is hard.

**CARLTON:**

Okay so I just want to make sure you walk in this direction but the bema was on the north side oh the east side.

**LEVY:**

Here facing east and then you come down and the organ was here with Mrs. Hassler you have heard that name and the rabbi's office, you walk into this larger room that like Shirley said they pulled you know the separation and it was a social hall so actually the temple, if you split the temple about like this would be the whole sanctuary and the rest of it was a social hall and the kitchen.

**CARLTON:**

So the north two thirds of approximately were the sanctuary?

**LEVY:**

I would say 60-65% yeah and the rest was a social hall and everything was done in there, the dinners and meetings and all the holidays and everything were held in that shul, not outside except the yearly dances. Remember the yearly dances? They were fun. Big orchestra, tuxedos in those days yeah.

**CARLTON:**

We will get back to those. When you were growing up, did you ever have High Holiday services at an outside hall or did they always at the shul?

**LEVY:**

As far as I know, only after World War II and that was one holiday service, the first one I was back in '46 was held at the Esquire [note: from internet, cinematreasures.com, that Esquire theater opened in 1964] Uptown movie theater on east Colorado and then the year after that pacific auditorium right?

**HOFFMAN:**

They held at the couple of years there, few times yeah.

**CARLTON:**

They outgrew the temple?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah you know high holidays like now, you know they would fill up the whole place. The rest of the year was empty.

**CARLTON:**

Friday night services yeah. What was attendance like?

**LEVY:**

10, 11, 12.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

13. Let me hold you there, Saturday morning service to get a minyon, it was really strange. A lot of the older gentleman more orthodox did not come to Friday night service but they were there full blast Saturday morning and they ran the service. Rabbi had nothing to do with Saturday morning services. John Hillison, remember John Hillison, you don't remember him?

**HOFFMAN:**

John who?

**LEVY:**

Hillison. Looked like a man from England with the pitt's glasses, tall, big starched collars, he was the bema, bema where the books are, \_\_\_\_\_ and because we were all there back there cracking jokes and laughing and waiting to get bar mitzvah so we can get out of there but yeah and a lot of men that we do not remember anymore except him that was really pretty orthodox for Saturday morning. Now when they couldn't get a minion across the street from the farmers market that I described, was a fresh chicken market owned by Sam and Rosie Baker and they had a son by the name of Joey who I just talked to last week and they had this real chicken place where they had live chickens in cages and if somebody wanted chicken they go in there grab the chicken's neck out and put it in water and clean them.

**CARLTON:**

Like you go to Chinatown.

**LEVY:**

And pluck them, you know pull all the feathers and all that and they put them in, nobody had refrigeration but they used ice flat cakes of ice it made good \_\_\_\_ there. Well Joey always liked to sleep in Saturday mornings, couldn't get a minion, he was one block away from Hudson and Walnut street, they knocked on Joey's door get up get up so Joey get up and go to the temple and so he reminded me of that last week, he said be sure to tell you. Joey is now 88.

**CARLTON:**

Who taught the Sunday school?

**LEVY:**

My teacher was Bertha Goldman and before she was married, her name was Bertha Citoren and we thought she was an old lady, she must have been 28 years old or less and she was very nice, we were bunch of rowdy kids.

**CARLTON:**

Oh there was different age groups though, right?

**LEVY:**

There were classes a year or two apart in age—every two years was a different class. We had seven or eight spots in that old temple that they were holding classes and they had confirmation class at the same time.

**CARLTON:**

So different people though would teach different age groups right?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah you had the same teacher.

**CARLTON:**

That teacher stayed with you as you got older?

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**CARLTON:**

Do you know it was a separate religious school or were there?

**LEVY:**

Oh no all volunteer teachers. Everything was volunteer on those days. You know the only one that got paid was the rabbi and not much. And Mrs. Hassler and the singers outside of Andy Shearer and you probably remember, I don't remember Andy Shearer singing so High Holydays was done by the time you and I would remember that they had three to four people that were excellent, non-Jews and with Mrs. Hassler singing and playing it was great, we enjoyed it.

**CARLTON:**

Now for your bar mitzvah, did you chant torah?

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**CARLTON:**

Tell me what did you have to do for your bar mitzvah.

**LEVY:**

I actually wrote the speech. In those days, you actually sat down and wrote the speech with someone you knew helped dot in the I's and all that stuff and we did a half torah and did a little of the torah work and we made the speech and then everybody said how great we were and we went to the social hall and had cake and you know whatever and in those days, it was ritual, the kid who got bar mitzvah which were all boys had surprise party and you got wrist watches and I remember coming to my house for my brother's bar mitzvah around 7:30 or 8 o'clock. By 8:30 or 9 o'clock, I was saying mom, they are not coming with my watch and about 9:15 they all showed up and gave me the watch, that was fun. Good memory.

**HOFFMAN:**

I didn't realize you read from the torah, because I don't remember my brother doing that.

**LEVY:**

It wasn't much.

**HOFFMAN:**

And I don't remember Steve doing it.

**CARLTON:**

Who did you work most closely with in preparing for your bar mitzvah?

**LEVY:**

Claire Halevi, Mrs. Halevi. There was no chanting and she taught us everything, the rabbi wasn't much involved if I remember.

**CARLTON:**

Did he give sermons during the Friday night services?

**LEVY:**

Did he? He put everybody to sleep. He was notorious. He never prepared or wrote a speech and never used anybody's canned speeches like they do today. He started talking and it could be about government, I got to tell you a quick story. In 1942, after the war started, I was at PJC West Campus and I was sitting next to Seibert Weisman and who was the guest speaker, we had assembly every week and the guest speaker was Dr. Rabbi Halevi. He picked up his doctorate from the time he left the Pasadena Temple to the time I saw him in '42 and it was about FDR, the assembly was 45 minutes. When the bell rang, he was still talking and he wouldn't stop. Seibert says I am going to go back and see rabbi Halevi, he said you want to go, I said no. I was embarrassed again, I was really, you know it was terrible.

**CARLTON:**

He left in 1939, Who followed him?

**LEVY:**

Rabbi Cohen, very nice guy.

**HOFFMAN:**

He married me first time.

**LEVY:**

Did you got married after I got married? Yeah I guess so. After we got married, sorry.

**HOFFMAN:**

I got married in '45.

**LEVY:**

Oh that's right because he was before Vorspan, that's right. We got married in '48. 1945 you were a kid. How old were you 18?

**HOFFMAN:**

18 and a half.

**LEVY:**

18 and a half.

**CARLTON:**

So how long did Cohen stayed there do you know?

**LEVY:**

Not long.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah?

**LEVY:**

Not long. He was a nice guy. He couldn't inspire anybody. He was just a nice guy.

**CARLTON:**

And you didn't have a cantor on staff during those years?

**LEVY:**

Yeah Blumenthal, was Galpert's time.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I think so too.

**LEVY:**

Because there is a picture on our wall with Galpert at Carey's bar mitzvah at 13 and that was in '66.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. On Friday night services, did you have a cantor there every week?

**LEVY:**

No. No cantor on Friday. No and no cantor for the High Holiday services that I remember. It was done by the guys, you know the older guys Steinberg.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

What was his first name?

**HOFFMAN:**

Harry.

**LEVY:**

Harry Steinberg. A guy about 5'1", stuttered had a big furniture store.

**HOFFMAN:**

He always got drunk on perm(4:07).

**LEVY:**

But he never stuttered when it was in Hebrew. The only time he would stutter is when he say now you can go to the kkkhhh . He couldn't say the social hall though he was trying to say something and everybody used to laugh. Every year it was terrible. It was funny.

**CARLTON:**

So you had a confirmation too? Did you?

**LEVY:**

Yes we did in fact Ruthy Howard, Marcus was in there, Leslie Burman was in there, Gordon Mintz, Molly Sokoloff, I have got the original paper some place of the program for that.

**CARLTON:**

And what year was that do you remember?

**LEVY:**

It had to be around when we were 15 to 16 years old.

**CARLTON:**

Did most kids go on and get confirmed?

**LEVY:**

No our gang so called gang that we raised with were all bar mitzvah, all the guys went through bar mitzvah, the girls and guys were confirmed. That was the rule of the day or.

**CARLTON:**

Now were you all friends in your confirmation class, you were pretty much all friends outside.

**LEVY:**

Friends forever remember.

**CARLTON:**

Friends before the class? Did the whole experience tie you together more or would you been friends anyway?

**LEVY:**

No we wouldn't not have known anyone if it was not from the temple tie. The temple binded us together all the way through you know grammar school all the way up through the war years. We were tied by the temple and we had a click and a click and a click and you sort of work out but

we were all friends. There was Seibert Weisman, my brother Lawrence, myself, Irv Howard, Howard Levine and Joey Baker because we all sort of live in the same area and we were close, then we had Les, Gordan and whole bunch of kids who were our friends. I went to school with Les, he was in my gym class and we were real friends, good friends. And my older brother and sister were friends with her older sister. Always.

**CARLTON:**

Do you think it is fair to say that through the temple you made relationships through your whole life?

**LEVY:**

Oh absolutely no question. Absolutely. What's going on in the temples today, in Pasadena you know those relations are going to stay.

**CARLTON:**

Did you, well in school, did you ever run into other Jewish kids whose family's were not temple members?

**LEVY:**

Not very often. Remember Dr. Gutenberg, he was with the Richter scale involved with Dr. Richter, he had a son and older son of Art Gutenberg who became professor and Stephanie Gutenberg who is in that picture married a doctor, she is up in the Northern California now. Yeah you know now they were friends but they weren't part of the every day social contact that we have.

**CARLTON:**

Lets talk about some of these Jewish stores. It sounds like there were quite a few of them in the city, you talked about the farmers market, what the Wiseman's had the meat store there right? There was a drug store owned by the Spiegels, was that in the farmers market or nearby?

**HOFFMAN:**

Oh yeah.

**CARLTON:**

Oh yeah and the bakers had the fresh chicken place across the street?

**LEVY:**

And one that has been dating Mickey Minovitz what's his name?

**HOFFMAN:**

Who?

**LEVY:**

Mickey Minovitz, what's his name?

**HOFFMAN:**

Dave Minovitz?

**LEVY:**

Oh no no no no, he had a jewelry shop inside the farmers market. Anyway, there was one more other that I know was Jewish he owned a jewelry store in farmers market in later years. His name is Maury Negin.

**CARLTON:**

There was a Zimmerman store in town?

**LEVY:**

Zimmerman's, Harry Zimmerman, right. Nice guy, had family, daughter, son, had a kosher meat shop, South of Walnut on the west side of Fair Oaks around 100 or 200 block of Fair Oaks, between Colorado and Walnut.

**HOFFMAN:**

But he didn't last a long time.

**LEVY:**

No he didn't. Not many Jewish people and then Dave Minovitz opened up his store at Walnut in Fair Oaks. But there was the My Lady shop, owned by Mr. & Mrs. John Baskin, it was a hat store, strictly hats.

**HOFFMAN:**

Billy's husband

**LEVY:**

Billy Titner?

**BARBARA:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

And the Minovitz store, you said it was at Walnut and Fair Oaks?

**LEVY:**

Fair Oaks. The northwest corner.

**CARLTON:**

So that's I am trying to think that's Parsons now right? Is that gone?

**SEVERAL:**

Parking lot is that?

**LEVY:**

Is that?

**HOFFMAN:**

No.

**LEVY:**

I don't know if it went that far.

**CARLTON:**

Oh no the Walnut and the Fair Oaks would be where the Pasadena Athletic Club used to be now that's gone too.

**HOFFMAN:**

Yes and they are not going to do anything with it.

**CARLTON:**

Yes that stopped.

**LEVY:**

Pasadena Athletic Club at Walnut? No no no no.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah the old Pasadena Athletic Club was down in Colorado, when they built the mall in late 70s or early 80s in Colorado, they tore down the Pasadena Athletic Club and it moved up to Walnut and Fair Oaks and that's where it remained until about a year ago.

**HOFFMAN:**

Wait, okay. I am getting confused.

**CARLTON:**

Well, it's not important.

**BARBARA:**

Is that across from Parson's?

**CARLTON:**

Yeah. Do you remember when that store started operating, the Minovitz store?

**LEVY:**

Yeah I would say in the mid 30s.

**CARLTON:**

And did you, did your family patronize it?

**LEVY:**

Oh sure sure, in fact Dave Minovitz used to deliver you know canned goods and meat. I will never forget Dave Minovitz, he would go into the Boyle Heights and get the meat, bring it back and he had a 1935 or '34 black panel, not a truck but there's a car with you know like a panel car and then he shlepped it in the market and then he stood there and would be smoking, he smoked a cigarette dangling out of his mouth, and the ashes would go over the meat.

**HOFFMAN:**

But you still bought it.

**LEVY:**

Oh sure. It was fun going in, you heard all the dirt around town from everybody in the store.

**CARLTON:**

How big was that store?

**LEVY:**

Not big. I don't know maybe 20 or 25 feet.

**CARLTON:**

What did they sell in them?

**LEVY:**

They had little of everything, canned goods, you know a lot of Jewish food and a lot of American stuff but they had the kosher meat and then they had a liquor section, I guess before or right after war, the kids were old enough to make a full liquor store and they did very well there. They had a couple of stores.

**CARLTON:**

Was the cliental at that time mostly Jews before that time?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, before they had liquor and the area was turning bad, I mean it was bad.

**CARLTON:**

During course of all that time?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah that was the whole west side turning bad, really bad.

**CARLTON:**

And do you remember who worked there?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. Mrs. Minovitz and Dave Minovitz and two young kids and Muriel once in a while, who did art.

**CARLTON:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. And was there anything about, oh let me ask you, any other Jewish store that you can think of, there was this Mullady Hat store.

**HOFFMAN:**

You had a lot listed in that book.

**LEVY:**

Yeah and Lou Kerish had the shoe store and he I don't remember his wife- but he had a son and they came to our house a couple of times on Passover she had just passed away, rather young so my folks had them over the kitchen we had 12, 14 people in that small house.

**CARLTON:**

Was there anything about any of these stores that was especially Jewish?

**LEVY:**

Dr. Emmanuel Rosenberg had an optometry office on Colorado Street and he was involved in splitting the temple trying to start a reformed temple.

**CARLTON:**

Emmanuel Rosenberg?

**LEVY:**

Dr. Emmanuel Rosenberg, nice guy and he acted as a rabbi and when he came back, he got the old and the temples together and said look, we got to work together and they did.

**CARLTON:**

So he got the old and the new temple together?

**LEVY:**

Well Dr. Rosenberg took some of the clients of people of members from the Jewish temple.

**CARLTON:**

When was that?

**LEVY:**

Early 30s, it had to be early 30s and it didn't work because he didn't have enough members,

didn't have any money so he brought them back and they made peace with each other is what I'm trying to say so that was very dark time and I guess you know my grandfather Simon Levy sued in court the Pasadena Temple for wanting to go other than orthodox. He wanted a strictly orthodox temple I will show you the note, you saw that.

**SEVERAL:**

Your grandfather?

**LEVY:**

It was my grandfather. Simon Levy.

**CARLTON:**

I didn't know this.

**LEVY:**

I didn't know that until two years ago.

**CARLTON:**

And when was that?

**LEVY:**

I think it says 1923, that was in '23 and you know who was the attorney?

**CARLTON:**

No.

**LEVY:**

Wagner.

**CARLTON:**

Joseph worked for Wagner his father.

**LEVY:**

An old judge Wagner right.

**CARLTON:**

Was Wagner Jewish, do you know?

**LEVY:**

I don't know but that's who he used. I will show you that I have got it here. I got a little blurred with that.

**CARLTON:**

This obviously his suit did not succeed.

**LEVY:**

No I don't think it succeeded but they became a conservative, very conservative temple then.

**CARLTON:**

Hmm. And was your grandfather brought back into the fold after that?

**LEVY:**

Well he died in '27. Yeah that's right, '23, he died in '27 at the Huntington Hospital so I can't answer.

**CARLTON:**

Now I remember you said the last time that you grandmother had the torah, the community torah I guess in her house right?

**LEVY:**

Right for three years.

**CARLTON:**

And then that was moved to the Hudson street.

**LEVY:**

They walked it from basically Fair Oaks and Walnut all the way down to Hudson and Walnut which was what a mile and a half or 2 miles?

**CARLTON:**

Yeah and that's the one that had the silver breast plates on it?

**LEVY:**

Right.

**CARLTON:**

Where did the Torah come from? Why did she have it in her house?

**LEVY:**

Oh there was no buildings, there was no temple. There was only a handful of Jewish people in 1921.

**CARLTON:**

So where did she get that from?

**LEVY:**

My grandfather brought it from Boyle Heights. No it didn't say where he got it from or how he got it but he brought it from Boyle Heights to Pasadena.

**CARLTON:**

Had they lived in Boyle Heights beforehand?

**LEVY:**

No. No they came to Pasadena from the first and that is where they stayed.

**CARLTON:**

So your grandfather brought it, kept it at your grandparents house through years, then walked the new Shul and after that, we just don't know? I mean that's after the new facility on..

**LEVY:**

There is something on the torah and described on the torah, you know the wood roll up part I don't know.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah because we have quite a few, there is 9 or 10 or 11 or something in the torah.

**LEVY:**

There is about two or three inside the ark.

**CARLTON:**

Oh more than that.

**HOFFMAN:**

They are in Galpert and in Nell.

**LEVY:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I haven't even thought about one.

**CARLTON:**

Oh yeah and now we have a number of them and we have two at least maybe more. They are not kosher anymore.

**LEVY:**

Do they have breast plates on them you know?

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't know.

**CARLTON:**

Boy we should find that out.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

Okay you told us a little while ago these boy scout troops.

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**CARLTON:**

Pictures of boy scout troops. Now just sort of get that on the record here. That was boy scout troop 36 and do you know when that was started at the temple? That was just at the Jewish troop.

**LEVY:**

My brother, oldest brother was one of the first people on the troop so they came out in 1921, you know my older brother was 10 years old, so probably in 1921 or 1922 when they started that troop.

**CARLTON:**

Did your parents have some involvement in running the troop?

**LEVY:**

Always. My dad as tough as he was, he was pretty tough to handle. He got into scouting and he loved it. He went to Cherry Valley, boys scout camp.

**CARLTON:**

On Catalina?

**LEVY:**

For three years, he went as a troop committee member, he had a uniform and everything yeah he loved it.

**CARLTON:**

And you were scout right?

**LEVY:**

I was a scout.

**CARLTON:**

And you are talking about they had special kerchiefs.

**LEVY:**

All troops. I think they still have. They had colored neckerchief that you wore and ours had light blue and dark blue and a star of David with 36 on the center of it.

**CARLTON:**

I remember when I was a boy scout, you just got standard neckerchief. You didn't have special ones.

**LEVY:**

Well we had special ones. I don't know. Everybody look forward to get neckerchief.

**CARLTON:**

Well there were other boy scout troops around town?

**LEVY:**

Oh lots of them. Yeah we had court of honor down to civic auditorium, they bring out probably 30 to 40 troops. Maybe more, had a big, one of the big dance hall and have chairs and they called each troop up for the award and the guys who got merit badges and eagle scout, in my scouting days they were all done at that one, now it's all done just troop setting I guess yeah big deal. This is the same way as our graduation, high school. Were you in the Rose Bowl?

**HOFFMAN:**

I was in junior high?

**CARLTON:**

Junior high school?

**LEVY:**

And high school and upper division. All hundreds and hundreds and thousands of kids and they never screwed up. You walk by these big towers and cap and gown gal & guy they hand you and you look at ... that was junior high school, high school and junior college.

**CARLTON:**

Also organization.

**LEVY:**

Boy it was well done. He get thousands of people. It was fun.

**CARLTON:**

And how many kids did you have in the troop?

**LEVY:**

Probably 25 give or take, some little more.

**CARLTON:**

Did you ever get a sense of realm that you were singled out as a Jewish troop or was that important to you at all?

**LEVY:**

I honestly say we never had trouble being a Jewish troop and I would like to say, we were brought in 5 or 6 gentiles. No problems.

**CARLTON:**

Tell us about that.

**LEVY:**

Well it started when Lorry, myself and Joey Baker were in the band and we became friends. We had a band for three years together. We did a lot of stuff in that band, while marching in the Tournament of Roses, treasure island in San Francisco, the world's fair and all over and so we got to know each other very well, we got along great so they asked us can we join the troop? We said sure and they accepted that.

**CARLTON:**

They came in to wear the blue neckerchiefs too?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely.

**CARLTON:**

Boy. And how long did this boy scout troop continue at the temple? Do you have any idea?

**LEVY:**

Oh sure Seibert Wiseman after World War II became scout master and I was his assistant and Harold Minovitz became, no Harold was for AZA advisor. Oh yeah, I don't know if its still going or not, to tell you the truth.

**CARLTON:**

No.

**LEVY:**

Don't forget we left Pasadena in '72 so a long time ago.

**CARLTON:**

Did you know if it was still going at that time?

**LEVY:**

When we left Pasadena, yes. It was.

**CARLTON:**

And then you mentioned something called the Orisa club. I don't know if I am pronouncing it right.

**LEVY:**

Yeah Orisa club and I don't remember what it stands for but it's a Jewish name, it's a Hebrew Jewish name but we had a great time, basically teenagers and we had radios and records, and we had Saturday night dances, we had a lot of fun. You don't remember Shirley? Sharon Hoffman: I don't remember that.

**LEVY:**

Well see two years is a big difference you know when you're 11 to 13 I got to tell you a quick story, my brother must have been 16 or 17 years old and I was the youngest in that whole gang that I described already, most of were two to three years older than I was so he would get dressed up so I got dressed, Saturday night and I said where are we going tonight? He said you are not going any place. I said what do you mean? It's a Saturday night you are getting dressed up. He says that's right. I am going but you're not. I said why? He said because we're going out with girls. I said oh man, I was broken hearted.

**CARLTON:**

Well I wish you wanted to do that.

**LEVY:**

Yeah. But the Orisa club, I can't do this on camera.

**CARLTON:**

How many kids were in this club?

**LEVY:**

Probably 15 or 20.

**CARLTON:**

And where did you have your dances?

**LEVY:**

At the temple in the social hall.

**CARLTON:**

Was there adult, that sort of looked it over or monitored what you were up to?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember. I think there was but I don't remember who it was.

**CARLTON:**

Now you also just a while ago talked about yearly dances that you had it.

**LEVY:**

Yes. They were fun. It was put on by the temple and my dad, Shirley's dad, Art Berman were heavily involved, all the wheels at the temple really put their backs into that thing. It was John Beskin, Steinberg, Minovitz, all the old timers really worked hard. They had the yearbook which I saw Les had a big bunch of, you know where they are?

**HOFFMAN:**

They are probably in his garage.

**LEVY:**

Yeah all these kind of things right. 1943, April of '43 my goodness. Look at all the Jewish Businesses.

**HOFFMAN:**

Yeah a lot of Jewish stores in there that I recognize.

**LEVY:**

Yeah and there is a lot Levy Printing company first one I see. You see that?

**CARLTON:**

Before we go on with the dances, there are just questions that I might ask, about any of these Jewish stores, was there anything that identified that it was Jewish stores, anything like lettered in Hebrew or anything like that?

**LEVY:**

No. It's Zimmerman's and Minovitz. And I do have to tell you and I don't want to forget, the Press family you know Miriam, Hy Vegos, Miriam's family, Isador Press had a tailor shop on North Fair Oaks. A lot of the stores on Fair Oaks were Jewish, Ross, shoemaker was on Fair Oaks, that's another Jewish and so on the sign we talked about signs, he said "I Press tailor."

**HOFFMAN:**

He got into Readers Digest.

**LEVY:**

It got into believe it or not, Ripley's believe it or not.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah I just talked to Lou Press about this last week, I talked to both Joe and Lou last week and he said that will be sure to tell and I will be sure to tell so they were in the believe it or not Ripley's believe it or not "I Press tailor" and so they had and I also want to mention, they had Rachel, who was born in Austria and moved to Pasadena with family in the early 20s and then there was Rachel, Joe, Harry, David, Daisy and Lou, were their six children, all brilliant kids. Daisy and Lou Press were friends of my older brother and sister and Harry also and Daisy Press, it says about having performances at the temple and shows and stuff like, after Mrs. Press and I don't remember her doing that but she had evidently put on plays and shows at the temple on the Poland. And the plays I was in and my brother were in, were handled by Daisy Press who is still alive. She is 93 and half and she lives in Costa Mesa with one of her sons, and she really was very good at, you also I am sure, we had a lot of fun doing those things.

**CARLTON:**

What kind of shows?

**LEVY:**

Jewish holidays program and all.

**HOFFMAN:**

I have, I don't know if I gave Gina a book or not but my mother's picture is in one of the forum books that I had, I have to look and see if I have it.

**LEVY:**

Was your mother in the play?

**HOFFMAN:**

Ahan.

**LEVY:**

Yeah see that was way before.

**HOFFMAN:**

I mean she was stressed up and it said in the history that I read that Rebecca Press which was the mother ran these shows so evidently, Daisy took over from the mother, I don't know how she had time to rehearsal, what with six kids, and did all this and they walked. Nobody had a car. They walked and my mom used to shop with two big sacks and they ride little dinky street cars, remember those old dinkies in Pasadena? All over town it was amazing what they did. With no conveniences, you know wash tub had to fill with water.

**HOFFMAN:**

I think back on Passovers with my mother doing them and how she did without the ice and you know they had to go shopping in Boyle Heights to bring the stuff back and she had 25 to 30 people for Passover and I don't know how she did it, I mean I don't know, but she did. She changed dishes and without conveniences.

**LEVY:**

I know my mom got up at 5 o'clock in the morning seven days a week, didn't go to bed till midnight, we used to go to the beach during the depression, my dad was the only one who had a car and enough money I guess to put gas in the car and we go on collecting the relatives in LA and went to Ocean Park or Venice and we got sandy and wet and all that, my mother brought with us a suitcase, she sponged us off and we came home in starched linen sailor suits and I don't know how she did it.

**CARLTON:**

Got working I guess.

**LEVY:**

No refrigerator, we had ice, I remember the ice got we used to steal ice off the back end of the truck and oh yeah it was tough going.

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't know how they did it, they really did it.

**LEVY:**

I tell Barb she says she has a lot of work to do with the laundry, I said you pick it up, you throw them in the washer then in the dryer and you're done but my mom had to do everything by hand.

**CARLTON:**

wash board chore sand all of that kind of stuff?

**LEVY:**

Yeah sure. The old fashioned ringer and then finally got a ringer and had to add cold water and hot tub and you rinse back and forth and then she shlept putting them on a close line, drained the water herself and then she did all this cooking for Passover and Friday night and then Saturday nights, all the family from LA would come to Pasadena. Sundays, we go to my aunt's house, another aunts in LA for Sunday afternoon early dinner and that going on all during the depression, that's all we had to do and I never forget people say "Al, how come you don't like Salmon?" and I said I remember my mom Salmon. She got it in cans with black salmon with white bones, remember that? You guys don't remember that.

**CARLTON:**

Oh when I grew up, the only Salmon I ever had was out of the can. That was us, that was salmon for us, it was like tuna fish, fish in a can, I was out of college before I had a piece of salmon a filet or I mean and I realize I really like that.

**LEVY:**

Just buying it out of the can, that was the cheapest stuff. It was tough going. It was..

**CARLTON:**

What grocery did your parents shop at? What groceries?

**LEVY:**

Mainly my dad shopped in LA, so Saturday afternoon he come back from L.A., picked up my mom and stop at Peppers fruit market, and they had fruit markets side by side by side by side, you can take a choice, two or three, and they were busy on Saturdays and eight to ten people working, waiting on you and there was no scales, except the pound or two pound scale, they throw it on and they say it was 2 pounds, it was really only a pound and a half, but for a dollar or dollar half, you got a crate full of fruits and vegetables.

**CARLTON:**

This was in Los Angeles?

**LEVY:**

Pasadena, on Fair Oaks.

**CARLTON:**

So Fair Oaks sounds like it was really, it was center of activity.

**LEVY:**

It was, it was probably 75% Jewish people in those days. Yeah and on North Fair Oaks, there was furniture store before Irv Caplans, Harry Steinberg and Barney Aviron, this was all on Fair Oaks Street. My grandfather Simon had a new and used clothing store at 138 N. Fair Oaks in the early 20's.

**HOFFMAN:**

Browns.

**LEVY:**

Browns right. They were all on Holly.

**HOFFMAN:**

Raymond.

**LEVY:**

Yeah Raymond on Holly before, the folks, they were all in together and they had a split, then they moved Dave Brown, Irvin moved to Raymond Street.

**CARLTON:**

Did any other Jewish organizations hold meetings at the Hudson street temple that you remember?

**LEVY:**

Not that I know.

**CARLTON:**

Just like Hadassah.

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't think so.

**CARLTON:**

Or they all met elsewhere.

**LEVY:**

I think so.

**CARLTON:**

And B'Nai B'rith you said had its own meetings hall on Colorado Street?

**LEVY:**

Yeah on Colorado Street around Chester Michigan on the south side of the street upstairs, it was a beat up old hall.

**HOFFMAN:**

And when the temple was moving, I think they met there for some meetings before they could get anything together in old building, I think so.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. And did you, well lets say you left, you joined the army in 1942 right?

**LEVY:**

1943.

**CARLTON:**

1943? So were you around when they acquired the property?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah.

**CARLTON:**

It was at that time, now called Altadena Drive.

**LEVY:**

Yeah, they oh sure sure.

**CARLTON:**

And what do you remember about that?

**LEVY:**

They did a pretty good job. They had the wood seats again, and they had an upstairs with an organ on Mrs. Hassler and the choir was upstairs.

**CARLTON:**

Now you are talking about what is the Knell Chapel. Is that upstairs blocked off now?

**LEVY:**

Oh they blocked it off for a room.

**CARLTON:**

In other words, there is the sanctuary or the Ark at one end and were you talking about the stairs is at the other end?

**HOFFMAN:**

Robert's room was where the loft was with the choir and they closed it up and then where the library is, is where it was opened and you can see what people in the out, it was called alcove.

**CARLTON:**

The whole library was an alcove?

**LEVY:**

Right and they always was aside you like this was the temple and this side was a right angle looking at the sides of everybody. It worked.

**SEVERAL:**

And the choir was above that alcove?

**LEVY:**

No no.

**HOFFMAN:**

The choir was upstairs in Robert's office.

**CARLTON:**

Above?

**LEVY:**

Where the front door is now, is right above the choir.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay. But that's how where Robert's office is, is it.

**CARLTON:**

Roberts is above, to the south of the library.

**LEVY:**

Who is Robert?

**CARLTON:**

he is the custodian.

**HOFFMAN:**

When you are at the bema and facing the wall, they are up there, is where it was.

**CARLTON:**

I am not sure where you are....

**HOFFMAN:**

Okay, here is the bema.

**CARLTON:**

Okay you are standing on the bema?

**HOFFMAN:**

The library is..

**CARLTON:**

Is off to your back if you are looking at it.

**HOFFMAN:**

And as you are going straight up above, what is up there?

**CARLTON:**

Oh that's, that's a classroom for air conditioning and stuff.

**HOFFMAN:**

That was the loft where the choir was.

**CARLTON:**

Oh so it was towards the back.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**CARLTON:**

Do you remember, were your parents involved at all in the move in the decision to move?

**LEVY:**

They were involved in everything. The Bermans were, the Minovitz is, the same old gang, they did everything, all the time.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah? And what you recall about why they decided to make that move?

**HOFFMAN:**

They needed bigger facility.

**LEVY:**

They just needed a bigger place and Ben Tuffeld was a pretty aggressive and wise businessman, so they were both pretty wealthy by this time and they forced the issue and it was the right thing to do.

**CARLTON:**

At the congregation ground over the years?

**LEVY:**

Yeah and there was no parking on the streets at the Hudson and Walnut temple.

**CARLTON:**

Never had a parking lot there?

**LEVY:**

No no, we wouldn't let them, we want to have that extra for play.

**CARLTON:**

And who found that new property? Do you know?

**HOFFMAN:**

I think Ben Tuffeld.

**LEVY:**

Tuffel, I think Tuffeld found it. I think it was right, I read that. They looked at night with flashlights.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. Well that's in the history.

**CARLTON:**

Haven't read that in a while.

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

And how long did it take if you know to convert that building to the temple use?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember. I don't remember, I was busy you know with high school or working.

**CARLTON:**

I know I was just asking to see if there is anything you do remember. Now when you first moved up there, what did the facility, what did the whole property look like? I know what it's now, you got the big main sanctuary on the south, that wasn't there.

**HOFFMAN:**

All you have was the sanctuary and Wohlmann. School wasn't built.

**CARLTON:**

The school wasn't built but did that building come out farther?

**HOFFMAN:**

No it was just what it is now.

**LEVY:**

They have done no additional work on the outside or extended the end part of that building.

**CARLTON:**

What was on the ground, was there a parking lot where there is a parking lot now?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

That has always been a parking lot?

**LEVY:**

Yeah it says something about grassy area becoming a parking lot, I think it was a parking lot all the time.

**HOFFMAN:**

I thought there was too.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah I have seen an old picture this old picture showing some grass there but who knows when that disappeared. And what was Wohlmann used for in those early days?

**HOFFMAN:**

Social hall.

**CARLTON:**

Same thing, social hall?

**HOFFMAN:**

Uh huh.

**LEVY:**

Wohlmann, Kirschner whatever they call it. What is it now?

**CARLTON:**

Now is it Wohlmann.

**HOFFMAN:**

It's Wohlmann.

**LEVY:**

Yeah it was used for everything, we had AZA meetings in there.

**HOFFMAN:**

It was meeting rooms and.

**LEVY:**

They played poker after meetings in there, everything was done in there.

**CARLTON:**

And what did Wolman inside look like in those days? Now it's all that sort of Brownwood.

**LEVY:**

It was pretty much the same. Cheap ash imitation, plywood.

**CARLTON:**

Did the rabbi have offices and where were they?

**HOFFMAN:**

Yeah they had offices, rooms are....

**CARLTON:**

Those were the offices?

**HOFFMAN:**

Uh huh.

**CARLTON:**

You attended some services there before you went into military right?

**LEVY:**

Right.

**CARLTON:**

And who was the rabbi when that move was made?

**LEVY:**

Cohen

**CARLTON:**

He was still there?

**LEVY:**

Cohen.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. And who was the rabbi when you came back after the war?

**LEVY:**

Cohen I think.

**CARLTON:**

He was still there?

**LEVY:**

'46?

**HOFFMAN:**

When did you come back?

**LEVY:**

1946. It was still Cohen because Vorspan was probably hired around '46 because he was there a year or two before, because I don't remember him conducting services at the Civic Auditorium and in '47 and '48 so.

**CARLTON:**

Why were services held in Civic Auditorium and were you saying the uptown theater?

**LEVY:**

Yeah people they get more room for the holidays.

**CARLTON:**

So where the new facilities pretty quickly too?

**LEVY:**

No no that was before. No no, yeah that's right. They didn't have enough room in the alcove.

**CARLTON:**

Now when you came back from the war, did you get involved again in sort of temple life?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah we got right back into it, we formed a Jewish war veterans.

**BARBARA:**

John, your voice is wonderful when you put it all together.

**LEVY:**

It's soft. Easy to hear. I am not even wearing my hearing aids.

**Session Three March 14, 2009**

**SEVERAL:**

Okay we're ready?

**CARLTON:**

Okay back on, what time is it here? It's 1:01. So you went off to the war, you were in the army right?

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**CARLTON:**

And you were gone from 1943 until when?

**LEVY:**

1946.

**CARLTON:**

Any other temple members, we assume a lot of them went off.

**LEVY:**

Everybody that I knew except Howard Levine and my brother. And my brother, actually years ago they had like stars on flags, mom and dad would hang in the window, my folks had three stars at one time. My oldest brother, myself and my brother Lorry, he was at UCLA in an ROTC program and they called them up to go to officer's training school and went for a physical and doctor said you have Burger's disease and he said what's burger disease? He said don't worry about it. He said, but we can't take you into the army. So he called me and he was working after school at a bail bondsman's outfit downtown so I hopped the red car from Pasadena went in there and he said I have to check on what he said it's called cancer, what's cancer? We were really upset and I was about ready to go in the army and so we decided to get more than one opinion from this guy with four stripes on his arm, he didn't know anything really, my brother being very light blonde, light skin, he had purple hands when he was cold and when you look at his hand, you can see the blood underneath in the hands and that's what he took as cancer, he's going to be 86-year-old June 1st. So that's why there were two of us in that time.

**BARBARA:**

Did Harold go in or did Dan go in?

**LEVY:**

Danny went in, Don Minovitz went in the Merchant Marine, Harold went in. Harold was in the army. My father-in-law got him transferred him to Vista De La Roya Hotel.

**CARLTON:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. So Howard Levine and my brother were the only two that I knew of.

**HOFFMAN:**

Why didn't Howard go in?

**LEVY:**

Howard had lost his spleen playing football and he rolled over car and he had three bad fingers that wouldn't close. So outside of that, everybody that I knew was in. As far as casualties, Les Berman.

**CARLTON:**

What happened with Les?

**HOFFMAN:**

Frozen feet.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah Joe Kudishan and, they lived right around on Wilson street from us, he was whacked at Guadalcanel, he lost a leg at Guadalcanel. But he did very well, we saw him just a few years ago.

**HOFFMAN:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah they live in Newport Peach. And friends of George Gossett down here. Outside of that, I don't know of anybody and we had Julie Felstein was the officer in the air force, he was the only officer that I knew. Also Ray Walters.

**HOFFMAN:**

Marvin was in.

**LEVY:**

Yeah Marvin, Warsaw, they were all in except the ones who were two young like Marvin's

brother, and the Jewish war veterans after the war only lasted a year or two and disbanded, they were just wasn't enough interested in that.

**CARLTON:**

And that was the local chapter?

**LEVY:**

But started in Pasadena. Dave Press in fact was commander for a first year or two and just didn't work. Well everybody got married and was having kids, everybody was trying to struggle to get ahead, you know school or out making a living, that was our whole focus and you know other stuff with the temple, parties, holidays and all, took the rest of the time. There wasn't a lot of time for a lot of other outside activities.

**CARLTON:**

So you didn't have much involvement or any involvement as other veteran organizations?

**LEVY:**

No not until about six or seven or eight years ago, I joined American Legion, I belong to Jewish Veterans down here now. The American Legion helped me get a pension and my hearing aids.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Yes they did and a guy at the Orange County veterans, I was referred to by a VA Doctor to go see him and they would help and it was because of this I still go and volunteer at the VA, got me the little pension and my hearing aids which I am not wearing today, I don't need it in like this but...

**CARLTON:**

Like in restaurant or something like that.

**LEVY:**

And then it's terrible you definitely need it so anyway.

**CARLTON:**

We have heard of a group called the Ascalans?

**LEVY:**

No. I saw that but I don't know what that is and there was another club.

**CARLTON:**

So you came back from the war and where did you live when you got back?

**LEVY:**

I lived with my folks on Winston Street, which is now the parking lot of PJC, PCC and then we got married in '48, so I got back in '46.

**CARLTON:**

And where did you live after you were married?

**LEVY:**

Our first apartment was you know where the Altadena drive and Washington Boulevard is, the northwest corner, Seibert's building.

**CARLTON:**

Oh yeah Seibert building.

**LEVY:**

That's where we lived. 68.50\$ a month with a pull down bed and one little pissy little room whole thing was smaller than the half the size of this room in here. So Joe and I made arrangements with Joe Wiseman to move in there when it was brand new and it was supposed to be done before June 20. Well, they were still wrapping the building when we got married. Joe said you still want it? I said yeah because there was no place to rent then in those days. He said well you have to pay 68.50 until I am done, I said yeah Mr. Wiseman, I mean how can we move if you're not finished, he said paid me 68.50 a month and we did. And as close as we were with Seibert and Ruth.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah it's capitalism I guess.

**LEVY:**

He knew how to make money.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah and when did you move into the house on Galbreth Road?

**LEVY:**

1956. We built another house before that, 2179 Layton Street off of Pepper Drive, north of Webster School, not too far from the temple and there was a big three story old 1868 house next door to us and they sold this property and we built a house in 1950.

**CARLTON:**

And why did you move from there?

**LEVY:**

Anti-Semites. Next door. Boy, they got drunk one night. We came home from a party and they said that I called the cops, they put in a swimming pool in front yard and they were drunk as skunks and I called over and we had the two babies I said, "hey how about slowing down a little bit?" Okay, the next thing I know, they are letting the air out of my tires in my car, I had to throw some pants run outside, these guys started beating the hell out of me, so I kept ducking blows and Barb called the cops, so I knew we were in trouble with them and I actually the houses was in escrow, but I had no sign on the property at all, never. So two months later, we moved to Galbreth road, remodeled a house and lived for 19 years. Almost next to your house John.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah just a few down the street, same floor plan.

**LEVY:**

Yeah well you added on better than we did.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah somebody else has done a lot more with your old house. But okay so getting back to the

temple then, you came back, and did you just start going back to the services? How did you sort of re-integrated the temple life?

**LEVY:**

I think as everybody came back, we just sort of that was the place to be. That was just very natural. There was no big parties, no big salutes, they were just sort of did it. It was sort of like what you were supposed to do.

**CARLTON:**

So all your old friends came back and they all showed up at the temple.

**LEVY:**

Sure, everybody was getting married, and a lot of them moved away, because of business, school or whatever it was, a lot of them stayed like Danny Lieble, last time I saw Dan was at Harold's funeral. Did you see him in a while? It's like he's gone.

**HOFFMAN:**

He is in a condo. He has someone with him all the time and I think may go out to dinner once in a while, but other than that, he doesn't go anywhere.

**CARLTON:**

Dan Lieble?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**CARLTON:**

When was Rabbi Vorspan hired do you remember that?

**LEVY:**

I think around '47 because he was there about a year I think before Barb and I got married in '48 and he was only there another year or two, couple of years after that. He went to the University of Judaism.

**CARLTON:**

What do you remember him as a Rabbi?

**LEVY:**

Loved him. Best Rabbi ever had, I just liked the guy. Just really liked him. He was warm, he was bright, he was funny and he gave great sermons.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Really.

**CARLTON:**

What was the sort of feeling of the temple in the immediate post war years in terms of you know were they have been very conservative before the war, or same way after the war?

**LEVY:**

I think so, I pretty much so.

**CARLTON:**

You didn't notice any great changes in services or anything else?

**LEVY:**

No.

**CARLTON:**

What was attendance like, did you still go to Friday night services?

**LEVY:**

We went occasionally. I was not one of these to attend every Friday night things, I still don't do that. We attended when we felt we need to. Barbara was the advisor for the BBG Girls--also on the board of the temple for a couple of years in the early 50s. Yeah that's when we had two babies, that gave her a night out.

**CARLTON:**

Did you have any involvement in temple administration at all?

**LEVY:**

Never on administration but I was always on details. I was a good laborer.

**CARLTON:**

Uh huh. Do you have any recollection of something called the Pasadena Jewish Community Star News? Like temple newspaper something?

**LEVY:**

You want to know something? Rabbi Vorspan came back and talked to our group as an old timers thing maybe 7, 8 or 10 years ago and we were living in Newport. I wanted to see him and he said something about us Jewish Star news and I had never really understood that. You know anything about that? He said something about a star news then and his wife is still alive and he has got a son who is a rabbi so it would be easy to track him down.

**CARLTON:**

How about High Holy Day services at the temple in those early post war years?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely full house for high holidays. Joey Baker used to come from Santa Monica all the time, just like we run up there now, you want to see your whole friends so you go but a lot of people came in. It was full house. More so than now, I don't know if its all 100% full now but at times, they had the whole thing and they had on the stage, chairs on the stage.

**CARLTON:**

I can remember once in recent years when that's happened.

**LEVY:**

But I remember in those post war days on the temple. You know they rebuilt the temple twice you know.

**CARLTON:**

Why don't you tell me, what's the first time?

**LEVY:**

The first time was when we were building a pool and we just finished our remodel on Galbreth Road where the pool is, so I had the same building inspector, LA County building inspector come, I was just getting into the building business so we talked and I said do you have the temple remodeling, oh yeah I said why you say that? He said Mr. Levy, I have 14 million bosses when I go over there, all I do is turn around and walk away. He said I can't sign anything off because nobody knows what's going on there and so I know that was in '56 when the temple was dedicated.

**CARLTON:**

That's when they made the big main sanctuary.

**LEVY:**

Yeah they had the bema on the other end which I thought Jewish tradition would have to be facing east, well how come they built one facing west, and they had it right the first time and then they said no it was wrong. Oh yeah and it was on dirt floor. The first service, remember that? It was on the dirt floor and they were going to build it that way, where the stage is now, came back turn around, it's west now. Now Jewish tradition states that it should be facing one way and I don't remember which way it is now to tell you the truth.

**CARLTON:**

It should be facing east.

**LEVY:**

Is it east?

**CARLTON:**

Yeah. That's always been sort of mystery why that is.

**LEVY:**

Why backwards. And I don't know who made those decisions.

**CARLTON:**

Did you have any involvement in the construction of the?

**LEVY:**

No no no, I was just getting into it. I wouldn't handle that. When I got the building business, I didn't know a stud from a window frame believe me. I didn't want to go work for my brother because he was already in it and I didn't want to make him look bad.

**CARLTON:**

You taught yourself to business?

**LEVY:**

I went to work for a friend of mine.

**CARLTON:**

Well see your parents were involved correct in the construction of the sanctuary?

**LEVY:**

Not in the construction. Money, and labor, moved here do that. My dad did it all the time.

**CARLTON:**

How was it, do you have any idea how the construction at that sanctuary was financed?

**LEVY:**

No I don't.

**CARLTON:**

Do you remember what was there.

**LEVY:**

It wasn't well built either.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah I know. Was there like a fundraising campaign?

**LEVY:**

Oh I am sure there was always fundraising, always fundraising.

**CARLTON:**

Nothing ever changes.

**LEVY:**

Nothing changes believe me.

**CARLTON:**

And how about the pool? Did you have any involvement with the building?

**LEVY:**

No that pool wasn't there was it? It was built by the people in the temple.

**HOFFMAN:**

It was built by Joe Salah. Do you remember Joe Salah? They had no children.

**HOFFMAN:**

No Molly Sullivan, it was them.

**HOFFMAN:**

And they put the pool in.

**CARLTON:**

Just temple members who? And was there any controversy over building that did you remember?

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't remember that.

**LEVY:**

It was just used in summers, you know they had a swimming club during the summer, something like that for years. It was smart to get rid of that thing. Liabilities, terrible. Not sure.

**CARLTON:**

Took a long time and it's very expensive. Very expensive.

**LEVY:**

To get rid of the pool?

**CARLTON:**

Oh yeah it could cost \$20,000.

**LEVY:**

Taxes, geologists etc.

**CARLTON:**

Break it up, and drill through it and fill it in with the right kind of stuff, boy its complicated. But how about the Louis B. Silver religious school building. Did you have any the school building, any involvement with that at all?

**LEVY:**

My kids were already past that..

**CARLTON:**

Well lets see that was built in 1961.

**HOFFMAN:**

The person involved in building that was Max Stone.

**LEVY:**

Right. Max was the builder from back east, he came out here and did very well. He built up and down South Orange Grove all the time. Yeah he was a president on the temple too.

**CARLTON:**

I said the Louis B. Silver religious school, the Hein Wiseman building is what I meant.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually I think the building is.

**LEVY:**

Are you telling me it was building behind a building now?

**HOFFMAN:**

Sunday school, its Max Stone building.

**CARLTON:**

If you look at the temple, here is the main sanctuary on your right, Wolman straight ahead of you but Nell over on the left and then these sort of grey buildings.

**LEVY:**

Yeah right that's what his name was: nice guy, Fitzgerald.

**HOFFMAN:**

Who?

**LEVY:**

Fitzgerald. You don't remember the black guy and his wife and little girl? They were great people. They lived in little one bedroom little thing.

**HOFFMAN:**

Oh yeah I do remember.

**LEVY:**

Yeah he was a nice guy, I don't know what happened to him.

**CARLTON:**

Lived where?

**LEVY:**

In the end of the building, okay if the temple is here and the L part was here, you go to Wolman Hall, then going back this way were some classrooms, at the end where there is parking where you can park up on the next little level up there is where they had a little apartment for the caretaker?

**CARLTON:**

Where the playground area is, you can park there sometimes? It was like an old, what kind of a building was it?

**LEVY:**

It was partly original Spanish.

**CARLTON:**

But a separate building?

**LEVY:**

No.

**CARLTON:**

It was built in on to it?

**HOFFMAN:**

He was upstairs?

**LEVY:**

No no, single level at the end.

**CARLTON:**

Well gone now I guess. Now lets see, how about high holy day services? Was there a time when they had separate orthodox and conservative services?

**HOFFMAN:**

Not for high holidays but I think when rabbi Galpert came, there was a group that wanted orthodox and they met in Nell and he had the services in the main sanctuary and then he finally got them together and said this is ridiculous, we're one temple and we should be meeting together and it ended up that they came and met in the main sanctuary. It was only for a short time.

**CARLTON:**

And then they split off, the orthodox split off didn't they?

**LEVY:**

Yeah Frank Ackerman who was the president of the temple and a very bright guy, he wanted orthodox trying to go to Arcadia upstairs and it didn't work, lasted for a year or two.

**CARLTON:**

Wasn't there a group that split off and went to Sierra Madre?

**LEVY:**

Yes they did and that didn't work out either for a while, but there was a temple Sierra madre. But it didn't last.

**CARLTON:**

Was that on Lima street?

**LEVY:**

I never saw it to tell you the truth.

**CARLTON:**

Lets see, just sort of, what about rabbi Galpert? When did he come? Right after rabbi Vorspan?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, he was next in line. He was there about 36 years. Yeah I remember we went to his double chai party or something, that's right. He was there 37 or 38 years. His death was a shock.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah he stayed a long long time. And during that time, the name of the temple changed? Didn't it change from B'Nai Israel to?

**HOFFMAN:**

No it was changed.

**LEVY:**

Oh it was changed a long time ago.

**BARBARA:**

It was changed with Vorspan.

**LEVY:**

Yeah I think you spotted it, it was called Pasadena Jewish Community and they added Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center and that's what it is now and that wasn't changed, and I don't know when that happened.

**SEVERAL:**

1954.

**LEVY:**

Okay see, the man knows.

**CARLTON:**

Did you, were you ever an attendee a regular attendee at Saturday night services?

**LEVY:**

Maybe once a year. Is that regular?

**CARLTON:**

That was regular.

**LEVY:**

No I am not conservative.

**CARLTON:**

What do you think of rabbi Galpert's sermons?

**LEVY:**

I know Bob was very friendly with him. I liked rabbi Galpert, he would always say Hi Al, how you doing? We talked for a couple of minutes, I never really had in-depth conversation with the rabbi. It just never happened, oh first of all, we moved in '72 so we were going back and forth,

not very often now but his sermons were a little long, I don't like long sermons. I don't care who it is.

**CARLTON:**

Now at some point, were you every involved in B'Nai B'rith at the temple?

**LEVY:**

Not really. AZA and that was it.

**CARLTON:**

Do you have any idea or any recollection when women were first counted as part of the minion?

**LEVY:**

All I can tell you is that no women were allowed on a bema at Hudson and Walnut street. Right? None. They were not. They were not entity however it was not like orthodox or \_\_\_\_\_.

**HOFFMAN:**

I think it was more when Galpert was here.

**LEVY:**

I think so.

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't think it was before, I don't think it was with Vorspan.

**LEVY:**

I think you're right, Galpert. I think Galpert and Mickey Alpert and Marsha had a lot to do with it. Marsha, I just marvel at her education of Hebrew also Bobbie Vego, man she was a kid when we left Pasadena, here she is running the service on Saturday mornings, I just sat there and kvelt .Hy, we just loved that guy, I mean bar mitzvah Saturday. It was great.

**CARLTON:**

Lets talk about few sort of social issues and how they impacted the temple from your perspective. Was there, how did the civil rights movement get reflected in the temple community? Was it a topic of discussion, I mean were there people who were particularly involved?

**LEVY:**

We went to school with every nationality and every religion in the world. McKinley Junior High School was a hub, we had very wealthy people from Oak Knoll Circle, they came up in chauffer driven cars in junior high school, I am not kidding. Chauffer driven cars. Then we had the west side kids, all the Asians and the Blacks came from the west side and us a poor people, white

people came from the northeast. We all met at Junior high school, it was the greatest four years of my life and I am going to answer your question before the answer. I had no anti-sentiment problems in junior high, I was a student body officer, probably the first Jew in the Pasadena school district that ever held a student body office. I was invited to join the Hi Y, which is a YMCA catholic organization, I was invited to join the Demolay which is the junior Masons and I was 16 years old and at their installation, the old Masonic temple on south Euclid, beautiful. Marble on everything, it's where the dances, some of the dances used to held once a year dances and all the old masons, there are three or four mason clubs were, I look up here and here is the statue of Jesus Christ looking at me eyeball to eyeball and I recalled one guy they knelt and he did this thing and I poked the guy who asked me to join because that's the only way you can get in. I said I can't do that. I just don't feel right doing it. So they called my name, I walked up, right in front of the statue, sat down, not one person said a word to me about that ever. And when I was in Europe during the war I got packages from Demolay mothers.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Really so I didn't have yes, I know I said to him that first there was some anti-Semitism, I felt it a lot when Jewish High Holidays, and my folks \_\_\_\_\_ an old saying, please excuse Albert B. Levy because the Jewish Holidays, I took that note to the office and everybody was sneering at me, the Jew and that was really one of the only times that I ever felt that. Now I knew we couldn't go to the Pasadena Athletic Club, the Annandale Country Club and the Altadena Country Club and the Shakespeare club and what else, were all anti-Semites but I really didn't have a lot of trouble with it.

**CARLTON:**

You wouldn't have gone there anyway probably.

**LEVY:**

Who could afford it.

**CARLTON:**

Right even today.

**LEVY:**

I didn't have any trouble in the army either. Yeah three years, only one time and it wasn't too bad.

**CARLTON:**

Some other names maybe you know something better but I have heard of clubs of eminents?

**LEVY:**

No never.

**CARLTON:**

The rashi society?

**LEVY:**

Never.

**CARLTON:**

Mimonidies society?

**LEVY:**

I have heard Mimonidies but I didn't know. I wasn't a participant at all, I know nothing about it but I heard the name.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. What about school desegregation in that area, did that, was there conflict in the temple community about that that you remember?

**LEVY:**

I don't think many people in the temple, my kids were involved and you know they were starting a first bussing in Pasadena in the early 60s I guess it was.

**CARLTON:**

It was 69 I think the first bussing.

**LEVY:**

Whatever and it lasted 30 years and then finally realized after million and millions of dollars that it wasn't working anyway, my Carey had a problem one day at school, four or five black kids caught him outside by the tennis court, Pasadena High School was almost new and they were bussing from the west side to the east side and kids said bring money tomorrow. Carey said I don't have any money. They said you better have something here tomorrow because we're gonna catch you on the school grounds. Carey saw there was five or six or them, Carey got 10 or 12 guys and from then on, he didn't have any trouble. As for the Jewish community, but I don't think segregation was the big thing in Pasadena was it?

**HOFFMAN:**

You don't think it was a big thing?

**LEVY:**

Not as far as the Jewish community.

**HOFFMAN:**

No not as far as Jewish.

**LEVY:**

Well it was segregated, even though the schools were not segregated but they just had they want to what was it?

**HOFFMAN:**

Nielsen was sent to Washington and we lived in these ranch, she should have went to Jon Beneto but she was sent to Washington on a bus.

**LEVY:**

She had any trouble?

**HOFFMAN:**

Oh yeah she had trouble with quite a few of them at times I mean she was a little tiny blonde that weighed nothing and all these big black kids were there and she did have problems with them but she handled them pretty well and she feels that it was a good education for her. But we had it, I had the same as you had at McKinley I mean you were all different kinds and we never thought about it but I guess when they were bussed and these big black kids had control of the school, they would pick on the other kids that were bussed in so you know it was a problem but she handled it. The main thing she had was.

**LEVY:**

Superintendent of school?

**HOFFMAN:**

Whoever was there was also at the other school and knew her and so it was taken care of her but it was not a good deal as far as I know.

**HOFFMAN:**

It was here again probably hundred of the minority vocal people, got that bussing put in into effect because the rest of 110,000 that lived in Pasadena sat on their hands didn't attend a school board meeting but these people, these people were really liberal and forced the issue, they forced the board change the rule and then it went up to Judge Manny Real and he upheld it and all that, God.

**CARLTON:**

Any temple members in that group?

**LEVY:**

I don't know, I don't know. And I don't so the question was, was the Jewish population involved in it, my answer then was probably no.

**CARLTON:**

I guess was there a lot of debate and discussion in the community about that subject that you know of? The meetings held or anything like that?

**LEVY:**

I know there was a lot of discussion but I don't know how much in the Jewish community, that's the question.

**HOFFMAN:**

That might have been would be Marsha, but I don't know.

**CARLTON:**

How about the Vietnam war? How did that play out in the congregation to your knowledge?

**LEVY:**

Everybody was against it. Everybody was against that war and as this Iraq and Afghanistan thing you know.

**CARLTON:**

Okay and how about Israel? How important was Israel and support for Israel during the you were in PJTC?

**LEVY:**

When we were at Hudson and Walnut street, Sundays they came around with blue box with star of David on it for pushka and we used to put our pennies and nickels and dimes in that every week.

**CARLTON:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Really.

**CARLTON:**

Who was supporting?

**LEVY:**

For Israel was, not 1948.

**CARLTON:**

And where did the money go to?

**LEVY:**

Israel.

**CARLTON:**

Even though it was before there was an Israel?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely. That money all went to Israel. My folks had trees planted in Israel way before Israel was a country.

**CARLTON:**

And what organization was sponsoring that do you know?

**LEVY:**

That I don't know. I don't know how the money was collected and how they sent it but I know that it went on for years. If you had an extra nickel, you put it in the pushka.

**CARLTON:**

And when Israel became independent, how was that recognized at the temple? Was there anything to sort of honor it you know, what was done? Or was it all just...

**LEVY:**

Do you remember Shirley, I don't remember. In 1948?

**HOFFMAN:**

I can't believe we didn't do anything but I don't remember.

**LEVY:**

Well sure yeah, we were just married in '48 you know.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember.

**CARLTON:**

Okay. Was there any particular response at the temple that you can recall in the post war years to, the only information that came about the holocaust.

**LEVY:**

I was shocked. And I fought through Munich. I was 7 miles from Dachau and didn't know a thing. My officers didn't know a thing. We knew nothing about concentration camps. Talk about being shocked.

**CARLTON:**

Was there any effort made at the temple to support holocaust survivors or to sponsor them into the country or to do anything like that?

**LEVY:**

Not that I know of.

**HOFFMAN:**

The only ones that I know would have been Lou Silver.

**LEVY:**

Morton Fuchs.

**HOFFMAN:**

Morton didn't come until later.

**CARLTON:**

After the Hungarian revolution.

**HOFFMAN:**

Right.

**LEVY:**

Yeah but I thought he might have.

**HOFFMAN:**

It might have been Max Stone but I am not sure but Lou Silver might have been the one to

sponsor some, in fact I think he did. But not as a temple. I mean just as a personal. That's all I vaguely remember.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember any big push for Israel. The only thing I remember and I want this on the record was the Normandy invasion June 6, I was home on my one and only leave in three years. I was supposed to have 15 days and during that period of time, D-day started and little did I know, my oldest brother was D-day plus 2 and we didn't know it and so we went you know to the temple and we had a service and I didn't know that, until both of us came home in '46 but yeah that was really something.

**CARLTON:**

They had a service to.

**LEVY:**

At the temple yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

On D-day.

**LEVY:**

Yeah for Normandy- D-day yeah right.

**CARLTON:**

Did they have like a big radio or was there anything at the temple that people would come to the temple to listen to news or to gather or to do anything like that?

**LEVY:**

No. In '48 and '49, everybody had little 6 inch TV with glass bubble on the front in black and white. We got three or four stations.

**CARLTON:**

In '48 and '49, people started getting their televisions?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah we were married in '1948, 49, had our first little house, very close to Muir Tech and we had little 6 inch TV with a 9 inch glass bubble in front of it.

**CARLTON:**

To make it big right? Times have changed.

**LEVY:**

Yes they have.

**CARLTON:**

Last question. When you were young, you were just married, you joined the temple, what were dues like? Was this a big sacrifice for you?

**LEVY:**

Yeah it was a sacrifice. I remember there was a couple of times that the temple was really in trouble and they sent guys on the weekends, you remember that Shirley? And they went house to house. We need the money unfortunately they picked on my father-in-law who was living in Flintridge, then it was a pretty nice house, as you know it's a pretty nice area and they said Mr. Snyder you have to. And he says stop, there is the front door. I don't have to do anything and he threw him out.

**CARLTON:**

Well that's all I have. Michael?

**SEVERAL:**

I have just a few questions.

**LEVY:**

Okay .

**SEVERAL:**

On your Hebrew training, was that a one on one training?

**LEVY:**

Yeah one on one.

**SEVERAL:**

And what did the confirmation training consist of? I mean you have completed your bar mitzvah, I wasn't confirmed so I don't know.

**LEVY:**

It wasn't much. There was about 8 of us and we went I think a few times in few classes and they said confirmation is going to be on such and such date.

**SEVERAL:**

And that's it?

**LEVY:**

I honestly don't remember.

**SEVERAL:**

Who taught it?

**HOFFMAN:**

Usually the rabbi.

**LEVY:**

The rabbi did? I don't remember. I don't remember.

**SEVERAL:**

On the Minovitz store, somebody said that usually the people who were in the store were men. Men would go there and they would gossip and so on, I mean is that your recollection or did women go in their to shop?

**HOFFMAN:**

Sure women went in too.

**LEVY:**

But I didn't spend much time there. My mom or dad did, but I didn't go in.

**SEVERAL:**

What Hebrew lettering do you remember?

**LEVY:**

Kosher.

**SEVERAL:**

And that was it? I mean was there any other?

**LEVY:**

No that was the only word in Jewish, in Hebrew.

**SEVERAL:**

Somebody said that there were notices in the store of events at the temple. Do you recall anything?

**HOFFMAN:**

Probably but I don't recall.

**LEVY:**

Yeah it would make sense I think they were like the focal point. If you guys really want to know a lot of gossip in town, the guy to talk to is Donald Minovitz. He is still alive, he lives in the valley.

**HOFFMAN:**

I never thought about him.

**LEVY:**

Oh Don is a world book encyclopedia when it comes to the history, who said what and the

people and they did help a lot of people that came in town and didn't have any money, they'd feed him and find the place for them to stay.

**HOFFMAN:**

Minovitz?

**LEVY:**

Yeah I think that would be a heck of a contact.

**HOFFMAN:**

Never thought about it.

**SEVERAL:**

Well nobody has ever mentioned him.

**LEVY:**

Well I am mentioning him.

**HOFFMAN:**

There must be a reason.

**SEVERAL:**

About how old is he?

**HOFFMAN:**

He is younger than I am.

**LEVY:**

If he is younger than me, then I think he is 78 or 79 now.

**HOFFMAN:**

No Harold was 80, Harold was same age as I and he was a year younger than Harold.

**LEVY:**

Don was a year younger? Lets call him Babe not Donald.

**HOFFMAN:**

He was a year younger than Harold. So he is about 80, 80 or 81.

**SEVERAL:**

Lets see on the dances that were held, were they fundraising dances?

**LEVY:**

For the yearly temple? Absolutely and like I said they had a big orchestra and the 30s, I know my dad and Art Berman, all the guys wore tuxedos, my mom had a long dress and it was held at the Masonic Club, Altadena Country Club, when they let us in after a while, where else were they held Shirley?

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't know.

**LEVY:**

A lot were held at the Masonic Lodge on South Los Robles or Euclid wherever it is.

**CARLTON:**

I think it is Euclid.

**LEVY:**

Yeah its Euclid I think.

**SEVERAL:**

There was one book prepared for the dance in 1929, the dance was held at the B'nai B'rith hall in downtown Los Angeles. Actually this was 1929 so you were..

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah I wouldn't remember that.

**SEVERAL:**

So they had band.

**LEVY:**

And that yearbook that you have, that's where their money was made, they sold the ads. That was the money maker and Shirley right now is in Les' house.

**HOFFMAN:**

More books sold.

**LEVY:**

Yeah he had the last time we had an old timers thing probably 20 years. How long that has Les been gone, 10 years now, 12 something like that? It had to be 15 years ago. They had tables of all stuff memorabilia and he had whole board of things that go way back that's a wealth of information so maybe Shirley can set up and you guys go through the garage.

**SEVERAL:**

David Blacher was interviewed and he said that, actually it was that event when rabbi Vorspan came in 1994.

**LEVY:**

The old timers thing?

**SEVERAL:**

Oh no this was subsequent to that. Actually it was an email that I recently received from David Blacher who said that he recalls going to a Purim festival. He was born in 1943. He recalls going to a Purim festival as the Walnut and Hudson facility in the 1940s so he was wondering whether

the temple still owned that facility you don't recall ever going to anything after probably back from the war?

**LEVY:**

No because Christian organization bought the Hudson temple.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

There was something else.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually I have a map here. VFW right?

**LEVY:**

Yeah I was going to say some veterans organization bought it and then they sold it to the church right.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. Do you remember Pearl Harbor day?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. Where was I?

**SEVERAL:**

Where were you on Pearl Harbor. I was 16 years old, sitting in Leimert Park in Los Angeles and my sister Evelyn, Evelyn then got married in Vegas in 1940, this was December '41, we had the radio on by chance. I was with my mom and myself because Lorry was at college and my dad was probably up to temple. And we had the radio on and the Pearl Harbor in Hawaii was bombed and everybody looked at and said, where is Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Who knew of, you know facts of multi million miles away. Never heard of Pearl Harbor.

**HOFFMAN:**

And you were where?

**LEVY:**

I was 16, I was at Leimert Park at Evelyn's apartment where they lived, now it's you know it's all bad shape now. But it was nice area. Leimert Park was a nice area in '40 and '41. So that's where I was 16-year-old, figure well and after they told about the war bla bla bla, I said that's going to be over before they get me. I got something just slipped in my mind, slipped out again. It will come back.

**SEVERAL:**

You went in, in 1943, what do you recall about the activities at the temple from the time the war began until you went in? did they know, Shirley mentioned dances, there were dances?

**LEVY:**

I remember they had some dances with some servicemen coming from US or other Jewish areas.

**HOFFMAN:**

You know there was a camp at San Anita.

**LEVY:**

Right I sort like old fog about that time.

**CARLTON:**

Wasn't there a Japanese internment in San Anita?

**LEVY:**

Yeah right.

**CARLTON:**

Was there any talk about that?

**LEVY:**

No. I got to relate one experience that one of my best friends was Say Shoda, Japanese. They had a florists shop on Colorado street around Catalina Mentor or some place on the north side street like an open air and they lived behind it. Bright bright guy and we were in junior high school and in 9th grade, he left school to go to Japan for a year and we didn't hear anything about him. He came back and started to talk a little bit and he was in Japanese military school but his whole attitude had changed. He became very quiet, very stern, didn't talk much to us anymore and in a year's time, they had him pretty well hooked that they were going to conquer the world and it took me a long time to figure that out but that's what happened, and so I talked to him a few years ago, met one of his sisters.

**HOFFMAN:**

One of the lunches?

**LEVY:**

Yeah the lunches, the sister walked by and had a t-shirt on that said Shoda on it, so I said hey, do you know Say Shoda, she said he is my brother. I said no kidding? How is he? Can I have his phone number? That phone number sat on my desk for years before I got up the guts to call him and sure enough the first thing I asked, were you in a service, I served in Europe. Do you know they put me in a concentration camp? I said whoa, I know it wasn't good but I have been in

concentration camps. Sure as hell you were not in a concentration camp. Yeah it was terrible, bla bla bla, they took all my civil rights away, I said I wish you well good luck, you know it took me a few minutes to say it and I hung it. Not once did he ask me about my family, that's all he wanted to talk about was concentration camp. How bad it was and I was shocked. I asked him about his wife, kids, he didn't not once asked me what I was doing, where I was living, nothing. As soon as I said say I am not going to play 20 questions, he said I remember you Al, boy they put me on concentration camp. He was indoctrinated for a full year.

**CARLTON:**

So he stayed in the camp. He didn't like join the service or anything?

**LEVY:**

No I don't think so. He was in the camp but my other Japanese friends, Takashia Rima, his American name was Johnny, we always called him Tash. Tash was bright brilliant cartoonist. He is in Chicago, he was a big wheel in the army. Difference of influence.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay I have a few questions about rabbi Vorspan. Do you recall anything about the hiring of him?

**LEVY:**

No.

**SEVERAL:**

At the events at the old timers meeting, he talked about organizing the congregation into bureau. Do you recall any of those comments?

**LEVY:**

No.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall any opposition to his changing?

**LEVY:**

I don't know what he changed to tell you the truth. I don't see any change except he left.

**SEVERAL:**

I think he mentioned of that event that there was a day school at the temple. Do you recall anything about a day school?

**LEVY:**

There was a day school.

**HOFFMAN:**

before Weisman Altadena day school? Altadena?

**LEVY:**

It was at the temple.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it the Jewish thing?

**LEVY:**

No no.

**HOFFMAN:**

They just rented the facilities and it was Weisman.

**CARLTON:**

You mean in the Weiseman Building?

**HOFFMAN:**

Before Weiseman came there, it was Altadena day school or Altadena. And nothing to do with the temple. It was just.

**CARLTON:**

Oh and it sort of faded out didn't it? I mean what happened to it?

**HOFFMAN:**

I think when Weiseman wanted to come in, they were able to make a deal to get rid of that or something that's what I think but I am not sure.

**CARLTON:**

Blacher would know.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah but I think this day school what the Vorspan was referring to, was one that existed when he was the rabbi there so you don't recall anything about that? How about speakers of the temple when rabbi Vorspan was there. Somebody have mentioned that Mordechai Kaplan ....?.

**HOFFMAN:**

Yeah his wife was active in programming along with, I can't remember her name right now, it will come to me and they brought speakers in. Did we have Jerry Lewis there one time, do you remember?

**LEVY:**

We had Eddy Cantor.

**HOFFMAN:**

I don't remember but they brought speakers and had different things like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you remember any speakers besides Eddy Cantor?

**LEVY:**

No.

**SEVERAL:**

So let's see I just want to clarify something about the location for the High Holiday services. Before World War II, all the High Holidays services were held at Walnut and Hudson facility.

**LEVY:**

Right.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean the reason I am asking is, I have the impression the congregation was actually quite large, it was too large for the facility but I guess the facility was still large enough to be able to hold the entire congregation before the war.

**LEVY:**

I think there was a combination of Ben Tuffeld and a couple of other CMYs- just felt it was time to build something bigger where they could have parking and expand that property sure did fit the building and so I don't know what came first the chicken or the egg but whatever they moved.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah but during the 30s, and up through World War II, the high holiday services.

**LEVY:**

Were all held at Hudson and Walnut and it was a full house if I remember correctly. Shirley went, it was always seemed full to me.

**SEVERAL:**

And then the after the war, that's when they started moving the congregation grew so large that they had to have high holiday services.

**LEVY:**

Frank Quitner came with Mrs. Quitner from the south, have you guys heard that name at all?

**SEVERAL:**

I think I have seen the name somewhere.

**LEVY:**

Well first of all, I want to go back to 1942. I think it was '41 and '42, Joey Baker was ——— Aleph Gadol, district 4 and they wanted, the AZA wanted to do something, Joey said I am going to get Eddy Cantor and everybody laughed at him and by God this little guy, was about 5'1", got Eddy Cantor at Pasadena City College Auditorium about 3000 seats and it was packed. It was great. Eddy Cantor showed up and he said I brought you a couple of surprises. Boom the curtain opened and here was Cookie Fairchild's 18-20 piece orchestra. He said I got another surprise for you. Here is Dina Shore and that was one of the magnificent evening and I don't know how Joey Baker, how many bonds that he sold that night but that was one thing I wanted to get on record and what was the other? I forgot.

**SEVERAL:**

The location of, actually what lead into the location of high holiday services. Where they were held.

**LEVY:**

Oh we said Civic Auditorium, I think the first one in '46 which maybe September or October of '46 was held at you know the either the Esquire or the Uptown theater on East Colorado street out by Sierra Madre Boulevard which is no longer there.

**HOFFMAN:**

No longer there but it was there.

**CARLTON:**

There was another one there too, the older one is now some sort of Christian church.

**LEVY:**

Uptown theater and Esquire I don't know which was which, I don't remember that but Lou Beskin who became a dentist, was captain during a war and he was on some island and he commanding officer of the island got killed and so Lou was next highest command and they made him a major and made him in charge of the whole damn island and so Lou and myself went out for a cigarette at the same time for the High Holidays. They forced us to smoke, they

gave us four cigarettes with every K-ration that they ever gave us and \_\_\_\_\_ 29:10 so anyway we went out and sat in his car and he told me little bit about what he went through and I told him little about me, I said are you going to be continue as scout master for the troop? He said no, he said you know I am single Al and my age, it wouldn't be good to be around young men. I thought he was pretty perceptive he didn't want any problems. Then he got married, had a kid and all that.

**SEVERAL:**

There was apparently also some high holiday services in some movie theaters maybe in the early 50s, 1950s do you...?

**LEVY:**

It could be Michael, I don't remember. I only remember I think once one year that I remember in a movie house and one or two years in Civic Auditorium with Vorspan and that's all I can remember. Everything else was held at the temple.

**SEVERAL:**

And the, after the dances those annual dances, were held off site until they moved into the new facility then they were able to be held onsite. Before, when they was in the hall.

**LEVY:**

\_\_\_\_\_ outside?

**SEVERAL:**

Out of the hall, Hudson facility, there annual dances were offsite but then they moved to North Altadena drive, they were able to hold the dances.

**LEVY:**

You want to know something that's a good question Michael because I don't remember any formal dances, once a year for money maker.

**HOFFMAN:**

I think they did. I remember Arta got married in '58, I know that there were new year's eve dances at the temple and that was when Bernice and Julie met us and wanted us to come with them so we kind of went and we were newly weds but.

**LEVY:**

You went for the temple dance?

**HOFFMAN:**

Went to the temple dance and got to meet a lot of people that I knew.

**LEVY:**

There were a lot of dances, a lot of social stuff at Wohlmann Hall but I don't specifically remember being a yearly dance like they had in the 30s or early 40s where it was sort of a formal kind of thing with orchestra. Do you remember an orchestra there? We had all kinds of parties. God it was crazy. That's where all of our social, when we were first married, we had this gang of friends and nobody had any money but we had parties every Saturday in somebody else's house and everybody brought something and we had great times. That went on for several years while all the kids were young. We just didn't have any money to do anything.

**SEVERAL:**

Those annual dances may have died out you know after World War II because you know there is a number of these annual books prepared for the \_\_\_\_ on but there is nothing after 1944, except for maybe some special things that came in you know.

**LEVY:**

Those big things, I think I don't remember those things. You know they really went after all the ads, there was a big bowl of them and after the war, I don't remember any of that.

**SEVERAL:**

I just have one question actually, there is a page in here, I want to show you, that I would like to you explain there is a page here, greetings from the younger generation. Now your name is on their, but what was the younger generation?

**LEVY:**

No no let me tell you. This is not my family. \_\_\_\_\_3:32.

**SEVERAL:**

There is an Albert Levy there.

**LEVY:**

Okay Sydney Levy was my cousin, Sydney Paul was my cousin. Oh I see, Elaine Levy, no. Joey Baker, Dan Leibel, Harrold Minovitz, Don Minovitz, Barbara Sherman with his grandchildren.

**HOFFMAN:**

If you want to get hold of Don Minovitz, I have his phone number.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you do good.

**LEVY:**

Names in the past.

**SEVERAL:**

So that Albert Levy is not you?

**LEVY:**

Yeah that Albert Levy and Lawrence Levy is myself, my brother, Bernie Fabish. Who is Raymond Sivell Fabish?

**HOFFMAN:**

Who?

**LEVY:**

Dick Tufeld, Howard, Irv Brown, Linda Brown. Those are all names.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean what prompted this page.

**LEVY:**

You want to know something? Probably the parents paid for to have the kids names put in. That's all. Levy Printing companies so that's my dad.

**HOFFMAN:**

Thelma was in there.

**LEVY:**

In here? Where?

**HOFFMAN:**

Keep going.

**LEVY:**

Ike Press is in there. See that? Boy that murderer of David and Bertha!. Yeah that's my dad. Okay now that's the picture that I am looking for, that's in the temple some place I hope that's exactly. Oh I wish my dad would have done as well for the family as he did for the temple with that cemetery and everything else he did, and your dad too spent more time he was out hustling insurance for Melvin Insurance company and that was a tough go in those days to sell insurance.

**SEVERAL:**

I think that's the back page there.

**LEVY:**

Melvin Insurance?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

When the temple ran out of money, they would come to my dad. How much money you got in the cemetery committee? He said how much you need? They'd tell and he said okay. He was the committee. He had the checkbook but he bailed them out. Here Mr. & Mrs. Beskin Lieutenant, Louis G. Beskin, well he was a lieutenant when he first went in. Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wiseman. Pasadena independent.

**CARLTON:**

The paper? Now is this the kind of a thing your dad would have printed out?.

**LEVY:**

No no my dad, no this was more than what he can handle. It is too big. He didn't print these.

**SEVERAL:**

How about this Fosselmans.

**HOFFMAN:**

Ice-cream? It's on Valley Boulevard.

**LEVY:**

Fosselmans, I didn't know that?

**CARLTON:**

You can get Fosselmans ice-cream from soda jerks on south\_\_\_\_6:46.

**LEVY:**

I have never heard of it.

**HOFFMAN:**

Oh really, because I think it's still on Valley boulevard.

**CARLTON:**

There is a pharmacy and a soda fountain on Mission.

**HOFFMAN:**

Yeah and they have it? Okay.

**LEVY:**

David\_\_\_\_\_6:59 was married to one of the Baskin girls. This guy was big. He could hardly get into one of these seats I was telling you about the movie seats, at the temple, but he was smart. He was one of the first guys in the frozen food business but he died young because of the weight. Mr. & Mrs. Charles Snyder. It says best wishes, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Snyder, Ted and Barbara. Ted is Barb's older brother. What year is that? '43?

**CARLTON:**

Yeah April of '43.

**BARBARA:**

What is this, I can't believe it.

**LEVY:**

I wanted to say that but I was shocked that your dad would do that. We both said the same thing.

**BARBARA:**

Oh Mr. & Mrs. Lipo, Myron. Yeah. And let's see who else is here. Well this is a big one.

**LEVY:**

See he volunteered that. Somebody told him he had to do it, he said screw it.

**BARBARA:**

Compliments from a friend.

**SEVERAL:**

There is also a page in there of the businesses at the farmers market.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah good. That's what we wanted, Mr. & Mrs. Chasin. This guy was really wealthy. Remember the Chasins? He had the largest furniture and appliance store in Colorado Street out around between Hill and Allen. My folks bought a refrigerator, the first refrigerator and their first washing machine my mom ever had from Mr. Chazin.

**SEVERAL:**

Was he Jewish?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah and he did come all the time high holiday and he contributed money and he had a son Jerry Chasin, ended up as one of the wealthiest builders in Southern California. He was smart.

**BARBARA:**

This is Weinstein.

**LEVY:**

Are we done?

**SEVERAL:**

Actually I happen to become a member of the congregation, how did you become a member? Did you have to pay dues? The reason I ask, I mean it may sound like a stupid question and it maybe is, there is a couple of yearbooks, there is one I think in 1940 or 39 or something in which the entire text is talking about how bad things are at the temple. We can't get a minion, we can't. Nobody is doing anything for the congregation bla bla bla and yet the list of members is about 100% higher than a list of members in a yearbook of few years later. So I was wondering could somebody just say I am the member?

**HOFFMAN:**

I was kind of saying something about that before that years ago, you didn't have the bookkeeping you had somebody would come up to Lou Silver and say I would like to be a member, he would say how much would you like to pay, and he would put it on a piece of paper and remember to bring it maybe to the secretary that maybe enter it that this is going to be a member. People do resign, they said they are going to be a member and you're taken as a member but they didn't resign and nobody was running back to see who didn't pay and who you know so it's changed I mean there was a time where they used to say we had 450 members, we didn't have 450 paying members.

**LEVY:**

That's the same thing here Shirley right now in today's dates.

**HOFFMAN:**

Well it's run different now.

**CARLTON:**

Yeah pretty good about that.

**LEVY:**

Yeah maybe in Pasadena but not here.

**HOFFMAN:**

So this is the way it was done and somebody would come in and say well I can't pay that but I can pay this and they let them do it and yet they really weren't members.

**SEVERAL:**

That's really helpful to know.

**HOFFMAN:**

You know we used to come back and say we are 450 members, I'd say you don't get 450 paying members.

**LEVY:**

How about today Shirley? Same thing?

**HOFFMAN:**

There is 400 and they are paying members. We know.

**CARLTON:**

Pretty close to 400.

**HOFFMAN:**

When I say 400, it's 388 you know something like that.

**LEVY:**

You know it's really interesting that we go back once in a great while now but I do get the Flame every month and it's interesting to see how I think with this new blood, this young rabbi and his programs and the board and everything seems to have really been growing and a lot of good things are happening up there.

**CARLTON:**

It is a ton of stuff that is going on at the temple. Temple is always jammed.

#### **Session Four (August 10, 2010)**

**SEVERAL:**

Okay I am on the speaker phone because I have a recorder here and hopefully it will pick up the conversation.

**LEVY:**

Okay.

**SEVERAL:**

Today is August 10, 2010. I am with Al Levy on the telephone and he is going to primarily talk about Jews who owned businesses in Pasadena, primarily between the Great Wars, World War I and World War II. I want to start off though by getting on the record an item about Albert Einstein. There was a book written a number of years ago about Einstein's period in Los Angeles, in Pasadena, and there was a reference to the fact that he practiced the violin at the Hudson and Walnut temple. Nobody I ever interviewed or was interviewed had ever mentioned that. Did you ever hear that story?

**LEVY:**

The answer to that question is no, and I checked with my older brother who is 21 months older than I am and I talked with him last night and he said that he did not ever hear or see that at all either. As far as we were concerned it never happened.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. I had a brief conversation with you last week about this and also you mentioned you recall when Albert Einstein did come to a Friday night service. Could you describe what you recall about that?

**LEVY:**

He was at a Friday night service and sat on the bema with his wife and his hair was very wild and sort of high collar. He walked down the aisle shaking the hands. My brother and myself

shook his hand, my brother remembers that. We talked last night about that. Mrs. Einstein looked typical just like my grandmother did with the tight hair and a full skirt all the way down to the floor with boots and a lot of jewelry.

**SEVERAL:**

Hello? Hello?

### **Session Five (August 10, 2010)**

**SEVERAL:**

You were describing Mrs. Einstein on the bema wearing her jewelry.

**LEVY:**

A long black skirt, boots, black boots and they shook our hands and I think they walked out of the temple unless they went into the where we had the social hall. I don't remember that part of it, but I remember standing and shaking his hand as he walked by, I think my brother shook his hand later.

**SEVERAL:**

Did he say anything?

**LEVY:**

Not to my knowledge. I don't remember him saying anything.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. Did he ever come to the temple to speak or anything? Do you recall?

**LEVY:**

I don't recall that.

**SEVERAL:**

This was your only recollection of him being there.

**LEVY:**

I was 8 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah okay. Let's go on now to the businesses. I sent you a list a few days ago.

**LEVY:**

I got it right here.

**SEVERAL:**

And let's go through these names.

**LEVY:**

Okay we will start with Max Hart. I remember nothing about Max Hart, but my brother remembers that the son, his name was Harold, was in the Boy Scouts with my brother between 1935 and 1938.

**SEVERAL:**

Uh huh.

**LEVY:**

That takes care of him. Whether he was a temple member or not, we don't know.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, who is your brother? You know, should I interview him?

**LEVY:**

Well they are up in Northern California. You know where Sacramento is.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. Does he ever come down?

**LEVY:**

Well he is 87 and he just had surgery. He has a 2½ inch scar yesterday from cancer. He's had colon cancer; he had surgery six months ago, and he's got to go in for major surgery August 24th for a bad prostate. Even though, his mind is as sharp as a tack. Do you want to call him?

**SEVERAL:**

Well I don't think this is a good time.

**LEVY:**

It really isn't.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Jas B. Rogers, neither one of us know anything about him.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Abe Vener, we know quite a bit about. He was a pawn broker and he was a temple member, he was a B’Nai B’Rith member, he was also member of American Legion, big in American Legion. Now I gave you all the stuff on the tape when you were down at the house. Oh yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, okay I will take a look. Was he active in the temple or B’Nai B’Rith?

**LEVY:**

He was more active in B’Nai B’Rith than the temple. His wife, Sylvia Vener was really active in

the temple. She was president at one time; also district president of women's B'Nai B'Rith for district #11 is it?

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

The one that covers Pasadena district. Oh yeah, Sylvia Vener was very, very bright and Abe Vener was a big, big, husky guy. He played trumpet and he played drums. He walked in the parades for Armistice Day and all that stuff. Oh yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Where do they live?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember where they live. William Simon?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

As far as I remember, my brother remembers, He had a cafeteria on Colorado Street by the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Weisman who was married to Joe Weisman's brother, you remember the Weisman family, you heard about them.

**SEVERAL:**

Possibly.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, they were big in the temple. She was a cashier my older brother used to date her when they were teenagers in Pasadena. Now whether he belonged to temple or B'Nai B'Rith I don't know.

**SEVERAL:**

What kind of cafeteria, was it a lunch room?

**LEVY:**

I think they served three meals a day, it was a cafeteria style.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. What kind of clients did he have, do you recall? Were they wide range or were they kind of?

**LEVY:**

It was in the Colorado area, you know couple of blocks either way, up and down Fair Oaks and east and west were loaded with Jewish stores and most of the people were all white if I remember. You know we did have some African-American and Asians and all, but as far as you know I think the whole area was all white businesses in those days. Sidney Robinson, I don't know a thing about him. Never heard of him before.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually to back up, did \_\_\_\_ or Simon hire Jews to be employees?

**LEVY:**

That's why I say, \_\_\_\_ Weinstein who my uncle married a sister of Fay Weinstein and she worked there as a teenager, as a cashier. That was the only person I remember what it looked like, I remember the face being at the counter at the cash register and my brother dated her several times and they were all teenagers you know belonged to \_\_\_\_ and all that stuff in Pasadena at that time. You know we're going back to the late 20s and 30s.

**SEVERAL:**

I know if you were to ask me about memories of growing up in La Habra when I was between 6

and 10 years old, I have very few memories about that. I mean I am asking you questions if somebody were to ask me about what I remember, I couldn't answer them.

**LEVY:**

Were you born and raised in Southern California?

**SEVERAL:**

No. I was born in New York.

**LEVY:**

Uh huh and when did you come out here?

**SEVERAL:**

I was 5.

**LEVY:**

To La Habra?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Well there was nothing out in La Habra then.

**SEVERAL:**

There is nothing in La Habra today.

**LEVY:**

Well there are horses. There's horse property.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, there are? Yeah?

**LEVY:**

Oh La Habra is a big, yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Likely the hills, not the low lands. Anyway, so let's see, Robinson, I mean he was around for a long time, but no memories?

**LEVY:**

Well I remember there was a Sid's drive-in shoe replacement guy. Whether that is the same Sid that was down on Colorado street, but I remember he had just opened a shoe repair store like a drive-in shoe repair store along Green Street I think, but and I not sure it was the same Sidney , I wouldn't vouch for that.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Okay.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it was Louis Karesh?

**LEVY:**

Louis Karesh. Me and my brother, we always used to say Mr. Karsh. Whether it's Karesh or Karsh, we think it's Karsh. Louis Karsh. And he did own a shoe store. I don't remember the one on North Fair Oaks, but certainly the one on Colorado Street and he was a temple member for sure and they had Passover dinner at our house in Pasadena, my folks house on Maple Street, and my brother was there and my whole family was there and he had just lost his wife at a very young age, so that's all I recall about him.

**SEVERAL:**

Was he active in the temple, do you recall?

**LEVY:**

I think he was active with money more than taking any kind of position.

**SEVERAL:**

It seems, one of the things that strikes me, so many people had provided services. I cannot imagine them making much money. I mean kind of surviving with a shoe store?

**LEVY:**

Well don't forget in those days, Michael there was 90,000 people. Pasadena is an old, old town. It was incorporated if I remember in 1868 or something like that, you know. It was locked. It was Glendale on the west, mountains on the north and Arcadia on the east and it was an old established town and being close to LA, that South Orange Grove, you have heard about South

Orange Grove, and mansions down there for miles, 5 or 10 acres state with you know Filipino drivers and chauffeurs and white chauffeurs and black chauffeurs and oh yeah it was wild. So there was a lot of money, all those money people brought all of the help with them from the south or back east and that county developed.

**SEVERAL:**

Were any Jews chauffeurs of the rich?

**LEVY:**

I don't think so, not that I know of. I don't think so.

**SEVERAL:**

I was also struck going through these lists of temple members, you know. There is one from 1925 and then 1931, is the high percentage of temple members who were independent business people. You know, very few seemed to work for somebody.

**LEVY:**

They were all 90% employed owners. There were some people that worked for you know, like Steinberg had salesman and Barney Aviron had her son in law and don't forget even in those days, Cal-Tech had Jewish professors and students, but at that time very few of them belonged to the temple. Gutenberg, you remember that name.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh yeah. He was really about the only one.

**LEVY:**

Huh?

**SEVERAL:**

He seemed to be about the only one.

**LEVY:**

Right because a lot of those guys were sort of non-believers. You know everything was science with them and today that's a whole different story at the temple. I saw your wife Saturday there, you were out playing hooky. Did she tell you I asked about you?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, embarrassing me.

**LEVY:**

She said, "he's playing golf" or something like that. So I didn't question that any further. But anyway, yeah, most of the people that belonged to the temple like \_\_\_\_ Press, all those people

were small shop owners. There were no chains out here, no big stores that were owned by chains. Downtown LA was a different story, but there were no chains in Pasadena until probably the 30s or 40s or something like that. Okay John Beskins?

**SEVERAL:**

Don't you talk about him before?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

But I want to get this on the record so you know, you told me quite a bit before.

**LEVY:**

Well John Beskin was, he and his wife owned the millenary shop on East Colorado street and it was a very nice millenary store. He was like the Shamus along with my dad, they did all the odd jobs and all the dirty jobs where the people did not want to do, I don't mean physically. You know, a nice guy. He could \_\_\_\_\_ like crazy. The whole family, Dr. Beskin was his son who was a dentist and Major in the Army during the war and he had a couple of daughters and one of the daughters married a guy Ed. I can't remember. He was an Israeli. In those days and he worked for Andy Scheer in the tire business on Dayton street, West Dayton street in Pasadena, so that takes care of the Beskin's.

**SEVERAL:**

I think you have mentioned that he drove a pretty good car, they seemed to be pretty wealthy, relatively wealthy.

**LEVY:**

That was Ben Touffel.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay.

**LEVY:**

I think he had a red convertible. Yeah, that was not Beskin.

**SEVERAL:**

Now what kind of customers did from the ladies shop have? Was it middle class, upper class, lower class?

**LEVY:**

I think it was probably middle class and going up. I don't think poor people went and bought a lot of hats.

**SEVERAL:**

That's right. You said that he did the dirty work.

**LEVY:**

By that I mean they took care of the things that had to be done in the temple; they also walked around getting guys to come up on the bema. They did all the little jobs that had to be done that they just did and Mr. Beskin did it all the time.

**SEVERAL:**

I think he was vice president for a long time or something wasn't he?

**LEVY:**

Vice president for a long time. As my dad was on the board of the temple for I don't know 45 years, but he was not qualified to really be a vice president or president.

**SEVERAL:**

But Beskin was?

**LEVY:**

Beskin was never president. He was vice president. They could always depend on those guys. Always that 10 or 12 in the temple that no matter what had to be done, one of them had to do it.

**SEVERAL:**

Did he hire any Jews?

**LEVY:**

He had a lot of family working there. He had his two daughters and his wife, all worked in the store.

**SEVERAL:**

So it was a real family business.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely it was.

**SEVERAL:**

Was that kind of typical of the Jewish owned business.

**LEVY:**

I think so, I really do. The families, you know, that's all they had. You know the temple wasn't built you know until 1923.

**SEVERAL:**

From what you recall, was that also typical of the other business in old town, that they were family businesses.

**LEVY:**

I think so. I really think so. In those days it was you know everybody was struggling to get started and I think the whole family pitched in. I know I had a Japanese friend and their folks had a floral store on the Colorado Street down by Lake Avenue and the whole family worked in there and they were open 7 days a week like 18 to 20 hours a day.

**SEVERAL:**

It was another era.

**LEVY:**

Yep, the good old days. They were good in a lot of respects.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. I sense kind of a sense of community and connectedness that is more difficult these days to establish.

**LEVY:**

Right. Because people are so much more mobile these days and their families are all spread out. You know, I got family up north, I got family back east. Thank goodness my immediate family is close to me right here where we live and my daughter she is 500 miles away, but it's a difficult place to get to, but you know they are here, but the rest of my family was all spread out back east, cousins and aunts and uncle and my brother lived back in Akron for years and years until he moved out to San Francisco, so yeah you know it's a different way in life.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I know. How about Morris Marks?

**LEVY:**

I don't know a thing about him. Nothing.

**SEVERAL:**

Louis Cohen?

**LEVY:**

I don't know anything about him.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. I have noticed I apparently have no record of him being a member of either the temple of the B'Nai B'Rith.

**LEVY:**

I don't know.

**SEVERAL:**

How about Morris Sender.

**LEVY:**

Morris Sender had a credit clothing store on Colorado Street. He had two boys and a girl. It was a credit store, one of the first credit stores in Pasadena.

**SEVERAL:**

Now when you say credit store?

**LEVY:**

Well you can and pay \$5 down and \$1 a week and take your clothes.

**SEVERAL:**

That's before credit cards.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. Who would have known about credit cards?

**SEVERAL:**

He was a member of the temple?

**LEVY:**

Yes.

**SEVERAL:**

Was he active?

**LEVY:**

Yes. They attended a lot of socials, he gave money and he was considered on the upper scale. Maybe not wealthy, but he had a nice home up in Altadena on New York Drive and the boys always drove nice cars. Two boys and a girl, I think 2 out of 3 have passed away already. That was a nice family.

**SEVERAL:**

The name Paris Fashion. Let's see first of all, the name Paris Fashion, which is the name that shows up in the city directory.

**LEVY:**

Who? For Morris Sender?

**SEVERAL:**

Yes.

**LEVY:**

What was the name of it?

**SEVERAL:**

Paris Fashion.

**LEVY:**

P.A.R.I.S.?

**SEVERAL:**

Yes seems to be kind of highfalutin.

**LEVY:**

That was not the name of the guy I know of, Morris Sender on Colorado Street.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really? Do you recall what the name was?

**LEVY:**

No, but I think I could find it because I know a guy whose dad's store was close by.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh I would appreciate that.

**LEVY:**

Max Mintz. You could have that down, he was a jewelry credit. His was Pasadena Credit Jewel and this guy was something about Sender's Credit Outfitting or something like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really.

**LEVY:**

Okay. I will find that out for you.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I would appreciate that because a store selling on credit sounds like it is kind of low end.

**LEVY:**

Yeah, well that's right. They were seldom millionaires in Pasadena.

**SEVERAL:**

Well of course, that and maybe the depression too.

**LEVY:**

Yeah. And they were smart enough. You know Morris Zelinka, do you have that?

**SEVERAL:**

Who?

**LEVY:**

Morris Zelinka?

**SEVERAL:**

No.

**LEVY:**

He came in the 30s.

**SEVERAL:**

The names?

**LEVY:**

Morris and Jenny Zelinka.

**SEVERAL:**

That name rings a bell.

**LEVY:**

I think when you were down here we got that on tape too.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I don't see, well what about Morris Zelinka?

**LEVY:**

Pardon?

**SEVERAL:**

What do you recall about him?

**LEVY:**

Well he and his wife had a, he started out selling \_\_\_\_ out of his yard, out of his house, house to house in the 30s and continued all that and then he opened up a store on North Raymond Street caused the Morris Shop. He was there for several years and built up the business and then he moved to Colorado Street and they were in business, because we were best friends of his son, and in fact, I just talked to his daughter two days ago.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

She is up in Watsonville, California. Oh yeah, we remain close friends. So they had a son, Irving Zelinka who changed his name to Irving Howard, he was on TV, radio and TV for ump-teen million years on NBC and ABC TV. I told you the story that I was sitting while I was in the army and my only furlough came from Fort Riley, Kansas to home and I was with Irv the next day at his studio at NBC and I got a call, and he said well that phone call is for you. I said nobody knows, I don't work here and he said the call is for you, so I went on the call and my dad called me to say you got a telegram from the army. I said don't open it. When I got home and it was to report back to camp immediately and I thought we were going to go overseas. That didn't work out, they sent half the camp up to test artillery and they needed so many guys left in camp. They called us all back to go cut grass. I told you this story.

**SEVERAL:**

No, that's new to me.

**LEVY:**

Oh Michael, you got so much in your head. That's all on tape I am sure, but anyway yeah, that's a true story. So we have been you know friends with the Zelinka's since the 30's. I was 8 or 9 years old when we used to do plays at the temple on Hudson and Walnut and this lady was sitting next to my mother, I was in the play and Mrs. Zelinka nudged my mother and said, "did you see that little boy?" and my mother said don't do that, that's my son. So we go back since I was 8 or 7 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh geez. So let's see, The Morris Shop. That thing rings a bell. I will have to...

**LEVY:**

Well mark it down because I know it was called "The Morris Shop" on North Raymond and he moved to Colorado Street.

**SEVERAL:**

This raises a question in my mind. There seem to be a movement of businesses to the east.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean what was the reason for that?

**LEVY:**

Because as they made money, they wanted to get more closer to major department stores and national department stores. The telephone company, big buildings and everything was moving, Colorado was growing on the east side, absolutely. Colorado kept growing and growing from Fair Oaks all the way out to Rose Main Boulevard.

**SEVERAL:**

And people even during the depression, during the 30s, were moving to the east.

**LEVY:**

That's right, not as much till after just before World War II and after when is the when the big movement was. It was in the early 30s, and the depression was 29 to 32, 33, 34 was really bad. Maybe another year or two, but that's when they started all to move.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. How about Max Ravin?

**LEVY:**

Don't know a thing about him and \_\_\_\_\_, don't know thing about him. George Berger owned a men's clothing store on Colorado Street and here again he was the first guy I went to when I got discharged out of the army. I had \$300 in my pocket and I went down to buy some clothes and he said yeah pick them out, and by the way, do you have coupons? I said what are you talking about, what's coupons? He said no coupons, no clothing. That's when they had, I didn't know that. We knew about gas rationing, but you know all of this other stuff happened when I was gone in Europe so we didn't know about anything of that stuff so that he had a nice men's clothing store.

**SEVERAL:**

So was it kind of upper scale?

**LEVY:**

Medium to upper yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah and did he have non-family members working for him?

**LEVY:**

I don't know.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall any of his activities with the temple or?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember him at all. I remember him the day he waited on me. I knew he was Jewish so that's why I went there.

**SEVERAL:**

How about Arthur Sigmund?

**LEVY:**

Nothing.

**SEVERAL:**

He apparently was active in the B'Nai B'Rith, but you don't remember that?

**LEVY:**

No.

**SEVERAL:**

Harry Lichtenstein?

**LEVY:**

Okay there was a discussion between my brother and myself whether the father's name was Harry Lichenstein and the son was Max or vice versa, but either one of those, either Max or Harry was a good friend of my oldest brother Earl in their teenage days in Pasadena.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Okay who is next on your list? David Pian?

**SEVERAL:**

Or Pione.

**LEVY:**

I don't know him and I don't know the next guy.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, Jacob Asia?

**LEVY:**

Yeah never heard of either one of those guys. Now Anton Roos, there were a couple of Roos brothers and the brother's married sisters who were also, there were Roos shoe stores and Rosenberg shoe stores on North Fair Oaks and we don't remember Antoine Ross whether he was one of the original guys in the shoe store or not, but one of them and Josh Rosenberg was also in the shoe business.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah right.

**LEVY:**

Zitnik and Josh Wintroub.

**SEVERAL:**

Wait I mean you're just giving some information about what the city directory say about Roos, you know he had the shoe store the address seem to preferably in the same place but by the late 1930s, he started shoe store started being defined as Roos and Son's shoe repair.

**LEVY:**

You want to know something I think that's right. But I don't remember what his father's name was or his son's name was.

**SEVERAL:**

Apparently Antoine was the father because that name shows up from the very beginning.

**LEVY:**

Well you know when we were kids, you know my mother and father knew all these people very very well they always addressed each other as Mr. & Mrs. so and so.

**SEVERAL:**

Right.

**LEVY:**

Remember Shirley Berman told you that on the tape that my mother and her mother were very

close friends and all each of them called them Mrs. Levear and Mrs. Berman, that's the way it was.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I remember as a kid doing that.

**LEVY:**

That's right. So you know that's why we probably never heard the first names of these people.

**SEVERAL:**

Interesting. Lets see how about Benjamin Zitnick?

**LEVY:**

Never and Josh Wintroub nothing, neither one.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

And Josh Rosenberg, we just said it's a shoe repair, there was two, one Roos and one Rosenberg I think both on North Fair Oaks.

**SEVERAL:**

No I was struck by the fact that the shoe repaired at two places, you know they opened in the 1920s and they continued to thrive or exist all the way through to depression.

**LEVY:**

And through World War II I think.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Yeah both in Pasadena that area is still going on up through the war years and then it started to fall apart. Then the bad element took over, boy it was murder from the mid 40s up to when they started old town in the 70s whenever it was, it was terrible there. We used to drive 2 miles around to try to bypass that whole area from Colorado South all the way down to Huntington Hospital and from North Fair Oaks all the way to where it splits to Lincoln and Fair Oaks all the way up to New York was terrible. And that's a long 2-3 miles and boy it was murder in there. It is still bad but a lot better because the freeway took a lot of junk out and the old town forced them out. Alright now Harry Steinberg?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

The economy furniture on North Fair Oaks and he employed...of course Philip Steinberg was his son that was the name and he had speech impediment but he was a nice guy and he always worked for his dad and they were in business a long time. Harry Steinberg was the Gabai of the temple in those days. He run it and he banged his fist when everybody was talking in the audience and he also had the speech impediment but not when it comes to Hebrew, never in Hebrew. It was always in English that he had a tough time.

**SEVERAL:**

Interesting.

**LEVY:**

Can we go down to Barney Aviron?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Barney also owned a furniture store very close to Harry Steinberg which was economy furniture and Barney Aviron called it something and I don't remember what it called.

**SEVERAL:**

Chicago Outfitting.

**LEVY:**

Chicago Outfitting right. Hey you got it?

**SEVERAL:**

Actually after I sent that list to you, I continued to compile this.

**LEVY:**

You know about him and you about Max Shure?

**SEVERAL:**

Well actually tell me a little bit more about Barney.

**LEVY:**

Barney was really active in the temple, very highly educated in Hebrew and Jewish, very highly educated. He had a strong accent and his wife was really nice lady and they had two daughters, we were raised with in Pasadena.

**SEVERAL:**

Now when you say he had an accent, where do you think he came from?

**LEVY:**

Europe. How's that for an answer? I don't know where he was from but he was really always friendly to us kids, he really was. He was a nice guy and his wife was also, she was a bit more quiet but Barney was really outgoing and one of his daughters married a guy by the name of Al Fish from L.A. and he came into business, he was really made that business go.

**SEVERAL:**

Now there were two furniture stores, Fair Oaks, the Steinberg's which was the Steinberg furniture store always... well the name economy furniture sounds kind of low end.

**LEVY:**

I don't think both of them were not high class stores.

**SEVERAL:**

So both Aviron's and the Steinberg's were kind of low end?

**LEVY:**

Right medium to low.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah and were they also largely family businesses, did they hire non-Jews?

**LEVY:**

They had family and I think they had drivers and all that stuff, they were gentiles.

**SEVERAL:**

Did they deliver the furniture?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah they all delivered. You know they sold big couches and you know beds, refrigerators, they had whole furniture store, furniture electric store.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. Did they also sell on credit?

**LEVY:**

I think both of them did.

**SEVERAL:**

Lets see, how about Max Shure?

**LEVY:**

Max Shure had a store similar to my father's, he had new stores and he had a son who was in the store with him, Norman Shure and Max Shure had a severe, no that was Herman. What I am spluttering about is, Max Shure had severe case of asthma and he also was a nice guy in the whole family and they had a beautiful home up on North Marengo Spanish style and they all worked in the store and we used to go up to visit and they had red velvet furniture and with plastic covers.

**SEVERAL:**

That was typical of the age.

**LEVY:**

It was but they were a nice family.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall was he active in the temple?

**LEVY:**

No they came to a lot of stuff but they were working all the time.

**SEVERAL:**

I can imagine that must have been...

**LEVY:**

It was also, he had a tailor business, you know with the other stuff he did.

**SEVERAL:**

Now were these businesses were opened on Saturday.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely. They were.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean that must have posed the problem.

**LEVY:**

Yeah it was, they used to have a hard time getting minions for Friday or Saturday morning.

**SEVERAL:**

Because you know.

**LEVY:**

Everybody had to work.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean on one hand it seems like the members of the temple, they have a strong sense of being Jews and yet the economic.

**LEVY:**

Right what are you going to do if you are on clothing stores on Saturday when everybody wants to buy.

**SEVERAL:**

Right.

**LEVY:**

Okay Joseph Edelman I don't know a thing about.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Philip Pepper. I think we talked about him I think.

**SEVERAL:**

Well a little. Lets get it on the record I mean he was in one location.

**LEVY:**

Yeah they were on North Fair Oaks and there were other produce stands, they were side by side by side under three different owners, Philip Pepper because my folks were friends with them, we did all our buying from Philip Pepper and Sadie Pepper and they hired no other Jews except they had Saturday they had 10 guys working in that fruit stand and it was opened area, they had a great challenge trying to close store at night but everything was moved out to the sidewalk and Sadie handled all the money and all the guys, you know they had regular scales, they did not have the electronic scale and man it was busy and all the other stores on Saturday afternoon were close to the shopping were as busy as heck. You know for a dollar you bought a whole load of fruits and vegetables.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah and they specialized in fruits and vegetables.

**LEVY:**

Yeah fruits and vegetables and he around 1936 he bought a big ton and a half steak truck with steaks on the side you know, used to pull kids all around in the open area and the back of the truck all the time and we used to have pitching sound on the book side park and temple picnics and they picked us up from the trucks and take all our junk down yeah it was fun days. Played ball all the time.

**SEVERAL:**

Now where do you think he got his fruits and vegetables did he go downtown?

**LEVY:**

He went downtown but he also went to the valley to get walnuts and stuff like that and he bring bags of that stuff back in his truck.

**SEVERAL:**

Was there much, when you say valley you're talking about the San Fernando Valley?

**LEVY:**

San Fernando Valley right.

**SEVERAL:**

Did he get anything from the San Gabriel Valley?

**LEVY:**

That I don't know but I am sure that he went down to produce market to buy a lot of stuff. I am sure he also went, I know he went out to like 1000 Oaks to get walnuts and stuff like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall any involvement in the temple or B'Nai B'Rith?

**LEVY:**

They were involved in the temple with here again, they worked long hours, seven days a week and they attended what they could.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. How about now you did know you mentioned Leopold Zimmerman but lets, he apparently was what the first kosher market in Pasadena?

**LEVY:**

Right he was and he had two sons. It was Harry Zimmerman the owner, you got Leopold but it was Harry Zimmerman and then he had two sons and I don't remember what the son's name was, on North Fair Oaks.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. Now what do you recall about, was it like a general groceries?

**LEVY:**

It was a small store probably maybe 15-20 feet wide, maybe 40-50 feet deep and he had meat, he had some canned goods and that was about it.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you have any idea where he got the meat, did he go into?

**LEVY:**

Well the only place he could get it was around town, it was in Boyle Heights.

**SEVERAL:**

Did he sell breads?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah and they delivered.

**SEVERAL:**

Now when you say delivered so they had like a truck, car?

**LEVY:**

They had little paneled truck and little car and the sons did the delivery.

**SEVERAL:**

The clients were who primarily the Jews who lived in the neighborhood?

**LEVY:**

We lived 11 or 12 blocks, we were in 1100 blocks of Maple Street which is now the frontage road to the 2-10 Freeway east of Lake Avenue 3 blocks and so Fair Oaks and Colorado was probably a mile and an eighth from where the stores were on Fair Oaks to where we lived in Pasadena.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you lived to the east?

**LEVY:**

Yeah 1119 Maple Street was between Lake and Allen.

**SEVERAL:**

I thought you lived in the Pasadena Avenue.

**LEVY:**

Oh that was my grandmother who lives in Vernon Street in Pasadena Avenue. My folks lived with them when they first came out here to California but when I was born, they had already moved to 1119 Maple Street, they moved there two years before because my brother was born and came from the hospital to Maple Street.

**SEVERAL:**

So the you know I had that article for the Flame in which I quote you as remembering what was that, your sister the house that was built before, 19th century house that you walked down, geez I better check that.

**LEVY:**

No we lived in an old ranch part of the ranch house in old Fair Oaks rancho on Maple Street but the whole area was old even in those days was old. Although there was very few vacant lots, those houses today are over 100 years old around Wilson \_\_\_\_ Chester going up and down in

those street south and north of Colorado all the way up to mountain, mountain up to New York, they are all 100 years old. They were old when we were kids.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Old neighborhoods already.

**SEVERAL:**

That's interesting, I hope it's not, I think I misunderstood something and I inaccurately described something in that article about Fair Oaks that I wrote for the Flame

**LEVY:**

When did you write it?

**SEVERAL:**

About three weeks ago and I sent it to Eddy about three weeks ago.

**LEVY:**

You know she called me and she had I think my grandfather's name wrong and she had something else in there I don't remember what the hell was now because we talked about other things at the same time.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh god okay I better.

**LEVY:**

Check with Eddy.

**SEVERAL:**

I will. Okay lets see now do you recall why since Zimmerman market folded?

**LEVY:**

No I don't. I think Minovitz store came in and I think that was one thing but I am not sure about that.

**SEVERAL:**

How about Julius Brown family?

**LEVY:**

The Brown family owned two furniture stores, used furniture stores on Holly Street east of Fair Oaks when I was a kid and one was Jay Dooley Brown and other was David Brown and they were next door to each other and Ida Brown I think was the sister of David Brown and then they sort of eventually disappeared the two furniture stores because David Brown moved his and around the corner on Raymond street and became Star Furniture.

**SEVERAL:**

Did David Brown's store have a name that you recalled before the move?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember the name.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah again the city directory does not give it a name, just like says furniture and gives the address and then in 1937, which was apparently the year before the move, suddenly it shows up is Star Furniture which is located on North Raymond, it's named Star Furniture.

**LEVY:**

Now what year was that do you remember?

**SEVERAL:**

1938 they moved and then Julius said Jay Dooley's and Ida Brown are identified as Brown Furniture's company.

**LEVY:**

I guess that would be right because I honestly do not remember but I do remember they were side to side and they had used furniture chairs, wood chairs hanging from around the doorway you know it was sort of like open air and they pulled drapes at night time and they had chairs to catch your eye as you drove by.

**SEVERAL:**

What was the relationship between Jay Dooley and David?

**LEVY:**

I don't know except it wasn't very good. You know you can't put that out because I am not 100% sure, you know as a kid I remember there was some problem there.

**SEVERAL:**

Were they close when they were located next to each other or you just?

**LEVY:**

I have no idea.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean it seems strange that there would be two furniture stores with different names located right next to each other from the same family, I could not take whether they were close or they.

**LEVY:**

It could be either way couldn't it.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I know.

**LEVY:**

I don't know I can't answer that.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean if they are closed why have two?

**LEVY:**

I don't know. Okay Daniel Jacobson know nothing about him.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Harry Levine, you ought to have a lot of stuff on him, last man on East Walnut Street and his wife Ida and his son Howard and Howard was a part of clan between Irv Howard and Irv Zelinka and the Weisman boy and girl and my brother myself we were along close gang.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall he was apparently active in the B'Nai B'Rith, you recalled what kind of?

**LEVY:**

He was pretty active in the temple and his wife was president of the sisterhood and you can look at that stuff on the hall on the hallway at the temple, it has got past presidents of the sisterhood and the temple.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay you know that's very interesting because I have never looked.

**LEVY:**

How long you have been going there?

**SEVERAL:**

Don't embarrass me, I mean you know it's very interesting that I never thought until you just mentioned that.

**LEVY:**

You go in, and go in the main hall and the main doorway and as you go towards the men's restroom, before you get there, you will see the past presidents of the sisterhood, I think it is also the temple but I am not sure but I know the sisterhood because I just read it a week ago Saturday when we were for Ida's 80th birthday when I met your wife, boy was it hot.

**SEVERAL:**

It's strangely cool now.

**LEVY:**

Okay Samuel Wolin don't know a thing about him.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay because he was apparently a temple member and he has a leader furniture company you don't remember anything about that?

**LEVY:**

Leader furniture in Pasadena?

**SEVERAL:**

Leader?

**LEVY:**

We have a Leader in our family who is Barb's uncle and aunt we never heard of this guy. Okay can we go onto Al Basken?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Okay Al Basken owns a furniture store across the street from Star Furniture and when DA Brown passed away, Mrs. Brown, what was her name? She was a really nice lady, married Al Basken and Al Basken and the Browns I know the father and the son DA and Irvin Brown who ran the store were unhappy you know when you're in competition, things happen and so we were all shocked when he married Mrs. Brown and they moved to Palm Spring and they retired. So that's that.

**SEVERAL:**

You know I have some notation he was active in B'Nai B'Rith.

**LEVY:**

Al Basken?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

More so than I and he was active in the temple too but I think that's right.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean to be active what does that mean?

**LEVY:**

You know you attend meetings, you get on the board, you wash dishes whatever you can.

**SEVERAL:**

Lets move on to Maurice Melvin.

**LEVY:**

Maurice Melvin insurance you have got all kinds of stuff on him. He was really active in the temple and B'Nai B'Rith and the YMCA in Pasadena, there was a room named after him that had taken ping pong tables and stuff like that why because when he came from Europe, he came by himself I think and he ended up in Chicago and he couldn't speak a word of English and Maury Melvin was tall way over 6 foot, \_\_\_\_\_ and he made a promise to himself if he ever made money that he would be active at the YMCA and he became very active in the YMCA he was a board of directors and that was big time in Pasadena in those days and they named a room after him because I was in the room years and years ago. You know the whole YMCA and YWCA,

those gorgeous buildings are no longer there I guess. They were right in front of the city hall in a big square that.

**SEVERAL:**

You know I will have to check you know I think the Y may still exist.

**LEVY:**

Well the Y exist but it's not there, it's way up I think around Eaton Canyon.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

I think so. Boy that was really, they had rooms they rented out and it was you know multistory building both the YWCA and the YMCA and he was very active because he made that promise and he kept that promise. He also used to fall asleep every Friday night in the services and his wife was in the business and the two sons were in the business.

**SEVERAL:**

He was located on North Fair Oaks. I think he was located on North Raymond.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember that or I remember what he moved to Walnut street, the first time he built a building that they owned on Walnut which is still there.

**SEVERAL:**

Where on Walnut?

**LEVY:**

Around the temple used to be, west of that, west of Hudson street, north side of street it was a two story building and had stores offices over, they drive through to get to the parking lot, you drive through to the back and then you drive underneath \_\_\_\_ they call it to get to the back and then you go upstairs, they handled the whole building and I think the offices were and the his son Don Melvin took over and he really did a hell of a job and he retired, he is on Palm Springs now.

**SEVERAL:**

So it sounds like Maurice Melvin.

**LEVY:**

He was very active.

**SEVERAL:**

It was not one of these I don't know maybe few who really did well in the non-Jewish community too.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely but he had Shirley Hoffman's worked for Melvin for years. They have a big clientele and Maurie Melvin always had big ads in all of the bulletins and leaders books and all that stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

Right. Now was he active in the temple? I got the impression that you know I saw the ads but I don't recall seeing his name showing up on any you know list of officers or directors.

**LEVY:**

I think so in the early days, I think so.

**SEVERAL:**

But later on he did?

**LEVY:**

I think so. No I think in the beginning he was more active in the beginning than when he was at the end.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Yeah as far as I remember.

**SEVERAL:**

So he did pretty well?

**LEVY:**

Yes he did.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean was he one of the richer people in the congregation you think?

**LEVY:**

It was what?

**SEVERAL:**

Was he one of the richer people in congregation?

**LEVY:**

He was probably above average.

**SEVERAL:**

Well that could be kind of low.

**LEVY:**

Well he was above average.

**SEVERAL:**

So you're not going beyond that?

**LEVY:**

Listen I did not look into he had a gorgeous home up on Mitchell Street was swing in driveways really nice, I don't know whether they built it or not but they were there for years and years.

**SEVERAL:**

What sounds that you know Jews in Pasadena before World War II actually did okay. They weren't really into the ghetto.

**LEVY:**

No everybody spread out as they made money, they all left, Walnut to west side Rosemont, Vernon Avenue and all those streets in between, they all spread out then.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah lets see Maurice Silver?

**LEVY:**

Maurice Silver was a printer in Pasadena and my brother thank god he remembered him. He said

Morris rings a bell he said Al, he was in the printing business, no our dad was in and he actually owned the mortgage on our house.

**SEVERAL:**

Did he?

**LEVY:**

He did and during the depression and my brother and I were laughing about it, I think the payment was 21 or 23\$ a month on the mortgage and my dad couldn't pay it but he made arrangements and Morris Silver accepted, he paid the interest on the first trustee and his store was out by PJC and now he really had a real big and his son neither one of us could remember the son's name. They were very good friends of my older brother and sister and he was in the business for years and years too and they were located almost across the street from PJC, PCC now were done.

**SEVERAL:**

Wait now when you say do you know if he had other properties?

**LEVY:**

Uh I think so but I am not sure.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually there was one other person here, oh I want to go back to Harry Levine, actually I am not sure, I have a notation that he had a glass store, he sold glass.

**LEVY:**

Absolutely. Car windows and house windows and mirrors all that stuff and he did it believe it or not out of a little garage, single car garage on Walnut Street and they have little house, two bedroom little houses on Walnut Street, there was part of the property where his business was and he had signs made Harry's Glass Shop, then before World War II, right before, they moved to where Walnut Street and Foothill Boulevard, the extension of Foothill Y and there is still a glass shop there now and that's when he really did, he really had a nice store and a big parking lot but for years you worked out this little single old garage.

**SEVERAL:**

God. Okay boy that's interesting. Again, the city directory says glass, you know gives the addresses and I couldn't.

**LEVY:**

Well the address had to be around 17, 1800 East Walnut or so.

**SEVERAL:**

Well actually in the late 1920s it gives somewhere you know I think it was on East Holly, just east of Fair Oaks.

**LEVY:**

That was Harry's glass company?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah something like that.

**LEVY:**

Well it wasn't Harry because it was always Harry's glass and I knew him.

**SEVERAL:**

So you remembered him after he moved out of.

**LEVY:**

Well I remember him from say 1930.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay well that's the year the last year that it shows up that he had his glass store on Holly.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember that.

**SEVERAL:**

Well your memory is when he moved on Walnut east.

**LEVY:**

These guys really saved our lives I say 5, 6 or 7 of us. We all were in the boys camp, we went up to into the hill in Arcadia there and we got snowed in and it was beautiful sunshine like today and boy during the night it started snowing and we were on the side of the hill and we had a dump all over, we were all shaken and shivering and the two oldest guy which was Art Gutenberg and Howard Levine who were the oldest and biggest, they stopped out and found a mountain what he call those guys who lived there?

**SEVERAL:**

Rangers?

**LEVY:**

Not rangers, they found the station there and they called Mr. Levine, he came up and he had a brand new 1936 Ford four door sedan and he piled us all in, we dumped everything we could, all

the food and everything and we were freezing to death and he took us down, my brother and myself took a bath and we slept 24 hours for the next day, I told you all that on tape before.

**SEVERAL:**

If you did I don't recall.

**LEVY:**

You got to review those tapes and that's a chore but I know we covered a lot of it.

**SEVERAL:**

After sending down list, I found another name I wanted to ask you about, Meyer L. Alpert.

**LEVY:**

Alpert?

**SEVERAL:**

He had a store at the Merit.

**LEVY:**

The what?

**SEVERAL:**

The Merit.

**LEVY:**

Merit? What's that.

**SEVERAL:**

Women's clothing store.

**LEVY:**

Alpert?

**SEVERAL:**

He was a temple member, he had a store briefly on North Fair Oaks and then he was located on east Colorado for a few years. That's what I have.

**LEVY:**

That rings a bell. And you know something? Alpert I am thinking of Marcia Alpert now but that's not a family but there was an Alpert but I don't remember what the hell he did.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember Michael.

**SEVERAL:**

The years that I have any information from 1929 through 1932.

**LEVY:**

On him?

**SEVERAL:**

So it's before your time.

**LEVY:**

I was there but when I was 4 or 5 years old. I do some things but not strangers like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Well that's it. I really appreciate this. You know I may go over some Donald too.

**LEVY:**

That's what I was going to say. Don on some of these business and he really not, Don is I think three years younger than I am but he might be because he was raised in that area.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

The did, but I don't know Don would remember all the businesses that were on North Fair Oaks south of him and the ones on Colorado because he didn't really say much about anything like that when we were there.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I know.

**LEVY:**

I was pretty disappointed, I thought he was gonna have the hot poop for you.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I did too, I thought it would be more information but how about Shirley?

**LEVY:**

Well Shirley Berman you know a few years younger than I am but probably would remember more you know.

**SEVERAL:**

Because I am thinking of calling her up and maybe sitting down with her for and going through these names because I feel that you are the only memory is to people who have memory of these people anymore and we better get this down.

**LEVY:**

I said this is really frightening. I am the last guy standing.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean thank god your memory is so sharp.

**LEVY:**

I tell you it really is amazing, I can't remember lot of stuff I don't but it's when you stop think of, probably the last one it is to go as far and deep as still around.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I know. I am planning in late October to give a walking tour of these Jewish owned businesses so I want to get as much information I can before I give that tour.

**LEVY:**

Question is why you are going to do that when a lot of these stores aren't there anymore.

**SEVERAL:**

Well the buildings are there.

**LEVY:**

The stores are not there.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah the stores are gone but the building still many of the building are still there I mean one of the most interesting ones that do exist is where the Milady shop was. And it still has a rather unique attractive architectural appearance.

**LEVY:**

You know what I am going to do, the next time I am in Pasadena I am going to drive at North Fair Oaks and South Fair Oaks and block east or west and few what I could remember and put the actual building, I know nothing is there as far as the business is, I want to look and right at the corner, at the north west corner of Colorado and Fair Oaks, I think the Gap is there now.

**SEVERAL:**

It could be.

**LEVY:**

If you look down to the entry to that store, there is tile white Italian tile and it says All Drug on it. All Drug was in that building when I was a kid. All the way up to the World War II and beyond, it was when old towns started that that store All Drug was a very very large chain like

thrifty and all kind of stuff in those days and if you want to see old architecture, that's the place to see.

**SEVERAL:**

I know.

**LEVY:**

Mark myself to the trip, from here to Irvine train station, we went down to the old depo in LA and we took train from the depo to old town in Pasadena and they had a \_\_\_\_ on the train and we went because Barb belongs to what they call barber's club here in the \_\_\_\_ woods and we went down so when we got down there, the train stopped right behind the memorial not the memorial.

**SEVERAL:**

Memorial Park?

**LEVY:**

Memorial Park it's right there and across the street it's the Old Raymond theater and next door used to be the parking lot which is now a 2 or 3 story building across the street from there on the same side on the west drive was a 5 or 6 story building with this real nice restaurant down from the corner now, I father in law owned that building for several years and then across the street was Star Furniture which is now a very modern office building with parking on top and those are the kinds of things I remember but who in the hell else is going to go to remember. You know what I am saying.

**SEVERAL:**

Right I do. If you come up and you do this drive I would really appreciate if you would let me know so I can join you. And I will like to I mean this building that you say your father in law owned.

**LEVY:**

It was originally Lions Van and storage because on the holly side they had a big sign that said Lion's van and storage and he only had one or two tennis in the whole five or six floors in that old damn building and he couldn't rent it out and he finally dumped it off and then when old town started it's when everything started to occupy again, by that time he was gone.

**SEVERAL:**

Well yeah I would like to go around with you.

**LEVY:**

Okay we will have to plan it because sometimes when we're not coming here for \_\_\_\_ here and Yom Kipper we are going to be up north at our oldest grandson who is getting married and so it will be sometime probably around October.

**SEVERAL:**

That would be fine.

**LEVY:**

Before we get in there.

**SEVERAL:**

In fact maybe I am planning to give this walking tour in October and perhaps we could coordinate it and make sure that there will be a time when you could be here because I think your participation will enrich the tour immensely. I mean what I am planning is basically to start a Colorado and Fair Oaks walk up Fair Oaks to Holly and then turn east on Holly and cut through maybe one of the alleys or something to Raymond and then walk down Raymond to Colorado and then from Colorado back to Fair Oaks.

**LEVY:**

Well you don't have to cut through any alley, you go up to Fair Oaks to Holly and turn east on the right on Holly and Holly would take you right to Raymond.

**SEVERAL:**

Right but I want to show the alley system because furniture stores that the \_\_\_\_ owned, you know they were there because they were immigrated into the alley system the buildings have rear and side.

**LEVY:**

Well they had to in order to load and unload.

**SEVERAL:**

Exactly.

**LEVY:**

They couldn't unload from the front.

**SEVERAL:**

I want to show people that.

**LEVY:**

All those stores including the Phillip Pepper were open market because they were all butt to butt from the wall and the front. The only way to get through stuff in was to pull it in and through the alleys in the back. There was Lincoln Furniture on North Fair Oaks that came after World War II, Irv Kaplin owned that store and he had a rear entrance, it was really interesting. They had an alley and it went behind off a street and came all the way back and into the alley dead end and into his store.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh wow. One of the unfortunate things is that the buildings on North Fair Oaks which had the highest concentration of Jewish owned businesses, they are all gone and which is unfortunate I mean the buildings were Press had a store and Minovitz, market and.

**LEVY:**

The stores are gone, the old Fair Oaks theater is gone you know where that was? Almost if you take Holly Street and dead into Fair Oaks and a little bit south of that is where Fair Oaks theater was there.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Pasadena theater was round on West Colorado street.

**SEVERAL:**

Right I have seen pictures of that.

**LEVY:**

And Tower theater was right by the railroad tracks on Colorado. Yeah I could tell you all kind of stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

Great well lets be in touch then and if I will schedule a tour in late October.

**LEVY:**

Okay Michael have a good Yantis.

**SEVERAL:**

Same to you. Thank you very much again.

**LEVY:**

The first week of September we have the youngest grandson getting married in Salt Lake City, when we come back a couple of weeks later we're heading for Oregon to the next grandson's wedding so September is going to be busy mixed in with the holidays.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah so lets plan it for something.

**LEVY:**

Okay give me a weeks or two's notice.

**SEVERAL:**

Well actually, I will check my own calendar, I will send you an e-mail and lets start talking about maybe a date in late October for this tour because I want to get something in the Flame and Flame deadline will be in three weeks.

**LEVY:**

Shirley could go but I don't know if she can walk anymore.

**SEVERAL:**

I know and that bothers me. Well we will see.

**LEVY:**

We will see what happens. Okay.

**SEVERAL:**

Thank you very much again Al and have a good day. Bye.

## **Session Six (August 3, 2011)**

### **SEVERAL:**

Today is August 3, 2011, I am Michael Several and I am with Al Levy and we are going to talk about his experiences as a Jew during World War II. Before we begin, I want to ask a question about the location of the sanctuary in the temple on Hudson and Walnut. Was it on the east side, was it on the west side, north side?

### **LEVY:**

The sanctuary, the bema was on the east side, east of Hudson Street on the south side of Walnut and Hudson, and it held probably 100 to 125 people. Originally there were hard benches and some place along the line, probably when I was 7, 8 or 9 years old, they replaced them with seats like movie seats which were a lot better, more comfortable. It had no air conditioning naturally and it was hot. They had a men's restroom and women's and it was always plugged up and running over, but anyway, we all survived.

### **SEVERAL:**

I want to ask another question. I am starting to do some research on the lawsuit I think your grandfather filed against the temple in 1923. He alleged that the services were not in the orthodox tradition. Do you know what it was that he objected to?

### **LEVY:**

I never discussed this with him. I was 2 years old 1925, he died in 1927 in Huntington Hospital where I was born. From what the letter says that Gene Fingerhut got a hold of years ago, it was because they wanted to convert it to conservatism instead of orthodox. That was the whole basis of the lawsuit, which he lost.

**SEVERAL:**

Right. I went to the courthouse and got the papers. I was hoping that he would specify what it was that he objected to, but he did not. He just said the services were supposed to be in the orthodox tradition based on filing the corporation papers, filed with the State of California, which is true, and he was complaining that they were instead of being held actually in the reform tradition or something that it was is going to involve all sorts of things. It could involve exceeding; it could involve the beginning of Friday night services say at 8 o'clock rather at sundown. I mean, unfortunately he never specified what it was and the case was thrown out because he did not specify it.

**LEVY:**

I really think that anything that he knew that was orthodox was not being done. Like just what you said, plus the fact that I am sure some of the services were being conducted in English. I think that is what really blew us up. It is all, but according to what that letter and the lawsuit said, it was because they wanted to convert it to conservative Judaism and he wanted orthodox. I do have a picture of him and my family at 266 North Vernon that was now wiped out due to the freeway there and Parsons where they had a big Jewish flag. I mean big, 4 x 8 on the porch. And he was sitting there. They were really orthodox. Now he came to Pasadena in 1919-1920, so it wasn't very long until they really started having these services at my grandmother's house and then he passed away. He was 57-58 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

He was one of the people who signed the original incorporation papers with the State of California.

**LEVY:**

I think he and my dad signed on the mortgage.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah that's something. There is something about the mortgage that is really puzzling me and I mean I won't go into it, but apparently it is not like now where you go to a bank and get a 30 year mortgage, it was like 5 year mortgage and I don't know.

**LEVY:**

If I remember correctly, that mortgage was paid off around the late 30s. It was paid off before they bought the existing temple now on Altadena Drive, which was in 1941. So they would not have bit off two mortgages.

**SEVERAL:**

There were may have been several mortgages or loans or something, you know. To briefly state it, when I went to the courthouse to look at the lawsuits that your grandfather filed, I found another case in the records dealing with a mortgage and they, apparently the temple or the elders, the important people, went to the court to get approval of a mortgage that people in the congregation were putting up the money for or something. It was like a 5 year thing.

**LEVY:**

I think C.M. Widess and Steinberg and Beskin and my dad, he should not have but he did, I am sure they all signed that document and paid it off. I was too young, I cannot remember.

**SEVERAL:**

Lets go on now to the war. Let's see, first of all could you tell me about how you entered the armed forces. What were you, did you enlist or were you drafted?

**LEVY:**

I was drafted. Let me step back. I tried to enlist in the navy and what they call and STPA or SPAT. It was to stay in college and since I was taking business courses, I thought that might give me an education.

**SEVERAL:**

Where were you taking the business courses?

**LEVY:**

At Muir Tech, at their west campus in Pasadena, which was east and west campus then, and so I went down to the navy and tried to enlist and the doctor said jump on the deck and I am in a four story office building, I looked around and said what deck? He said the floor, stupid. I'll never forget that. I said oh okay, so I jumped up and down and he with a stethoscope said you have a heart murmur. I said I do, what's that? So they rejected me. So then I got my draft notice and let's see, what happens, so I go down there and the guy said yeah we will send you to the Sawtell Veterans Hospital and have an EKG done. In those days it was with the old sticky stuff, you know they put them all around with sticky stuff to hold them on. So when I was down there he said your heart is normal. You are born with that kind of little defect and he said we are going to take you. So after the physical and I got dressed, they had air force, marine corps, army and navy all sitting together and some guy says strike those sleeves and make your choice right now, make a decision. I looked at those guys, well the navy doesn't want me, I don't know anything about flying and I don't want to go into the marines I knew that, so I said I am going to into the army and that's how it started.

**SEVERAL:**

When did you try to get into the navy, how long after Pearl Harbor?

**LEVY:**

I was 17. Pearl Harbor was when I was 16 years old, so it was a year after they bombed Pearl Harbor.

**SEVERAL:**

Now when you tried to get into the navy, did you want to serve in the Atlantic or the Pacific or it did not really matter.

**LEVY:**

Oh it didn't matter. It was just the idea that I was going to go to school and that's all I thought about it. It was no big deal that they rejected me, I didn't feel bad you know as long as I knew what was going on with my ticker and needless to say I did everything the army wanted more so.

**SEVERAL:**

So you got drafted in 1942.

**LEVY:**

1943.

**SEVERAL:**

1943 and where were you first stationed?

**LEVY:**

First we were inducted at 6th and Main Street, I think Ben Tufeld owned the building, but I am not sure, but he owned a lot of buildings downtown.

**SEVERAL:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. We were there and then we were shipped by bus to Arlington, California which was down by Riverside and it was nothing there except barracks and I remember Jane Falkenberg, the movie star and tennis player, she was great and beautiful, she came there to see us. We were there three days and they brought us back to Union Station, which was almost new in those days and we boarded the train for Camp Roberts, which was 225 miles north of LA and that's where we got basic training.

**SEVERAL:**

And how old were you in basic training?

**LEVY:**

18. I was 18 on March 1st and on June 10th or 12th something like that I was in the army.

**SEVERAL:**

Then the basic training was toughening you up I suppose, marching and drilling and cleaning and how to make your bed.

**LEVY:**

Yea, but it was more than that Michael. It was a lot of learning. We were in a 105 training Howitzer battalion, which is a big canyon on two big wheels.

**SEVERAL:**

Even in basic training?

**LEVY:**

Yes. Oh yeah. My address was a Training Battalion for 105 Howitzers and that's what we learned on in basic. You had to learn how to shoot that thing and had to learn how to take it all apart, breach boxes about this big and you had 7 components and you had to learn to take those apart blindfolded and put them back together blindfolded or you stayed up day and night until you learned. And then we did naturally marching and speed marches in full packs. It was unreal. It was 17 weeks and boy it was tough. The worst thing we went through was the infiltration course. They take you out on dirt, they built barbwire about 18 inches off the ground and flooded it with water and you had to go underneath that thing with your helmet and your gun and the gun had to be where the guys at the end could look in it to see if you got any dirt in it and you do that by opening up the breach block of the gun and putting a fingernail in and let the light reflex of the fingernail and if they can't see how clean it is, you're in trouble. They were using 35 mm shells shooting out of a machine gun, a water cooled machine gun. It was about 110 degrees, just normal during the summer, the nights were cold, the days were blistering and we were there from June till September. And so the machine gun, the barrel got so hot the bullets started to stray and they started to clip the wires above our head, pretty close, so they stopped and I was almost at the end so I finished it so I didn't have to go through it again. Some of the guys who were halfway through when they stopped, once they got the barrels cooled off they brought in other machine guns and they had to start all over again. That was really scary for an 18 year old.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh I can imagine. Were there any, now this unit that you were in, was that the unit you stayed in all the way through this?

**LEVY:**

No that was a training battalion.

**SEVERAL:**

In that unit, were there any Jews that you know of?

## LEVY:

Not that I know of. I was the only one probably. We had four barracks, two stories, each barrack had about 60 guys in it and so you know 300 to 400 guys in this training battalion and the one thing you didn't want to know about is the anti-Semitism about being a Jew. I was almost through basic in September with High Holidays coming, since I was so close to home, I wanted to get home for a 2 or 3 days pass for the holidays. So the first sergeant says you got to see the captain, so he says go change into your dress uniform and then come back and I will let you in to see him. So I did that and he said be sure you salute, stand at attention until he says at ease. Okay, I did all that. So this guy is sitting at his desk, he is bald-headed, deep southern, he didn't show up too much because it was too early for him to get up and come to the line and we got up at 5:30 in the morning, and so he really ran the show from his office because he had all these guys, lieutenants, sergeants, doing the dirty work. So he said what do you want soldier? I said, I would like to have a three day pass for the Jewish High Holidays and he stopped, he sat back in his chair and he looked at me and he called me every dirty name he could think of, but he never said Jew or dirty Jew, he just called me the F word and SOB, and he said get out of here, I never want to hear about this stuff again. And so you take one step back, you salute him, when he says get out you turn around and you leave. So I went to the chaplain, there was about 100,000 guys at Camp Roberts, better than 100,000 and so they said to go see the chaplain and see what he can do. I went there, I talked to a Jewish chaplain who was a major. He listened to me and said young man, he said I would suggest you go to High Holiday services on camp at nighttime. Don't take any time because I've heard about this guy and he will make your life miserable for all the time you are in the army, there's no telling what he will do, he was that kind of guy. He was a deep southern bigot SOB, that's right. That was the worst thing that happened to me. The other thing at Camp Roberts, we were having, we had dinner and we had a dress parade. It was summertime so it was about 6 - 6:30, it was right after dinner, we had to dress in our uniforms and go out on the parade ground and you stand attention for hour and a half in this heat and after a while your legs, they lock on you and it cuts the blood. Guys were passing out. That's par for the course. All of a sudden, I got a tremendous cramp in my stomach and I went down on my knee. So by this time, guys were passed out. They had ambulances, they filled them up so fast they brought two half-ton trucks to take us to the hospital. So everybody was throwing up, vomiting, it was terrible. So I finally got into the hospital and they assigned me a bunk and about an hour or two later I was sick to my stomach again I couldn't get to the latrine fast enough so they had a porches in the hospital that were enclosed with screens on so you can go out to get some fresh air and so on. That's where I headed for and I just let it fly right through the screen. So the next morning, I am feeling okay by this time and so the guys with stars and full colonels came walking through and they started at the front of my bed area. I was about the 7th, 8th or 9th guy down the road and they interviewed these guys. What did you eat, when did you eat it? And all the guys said well I had pork chops, you know this and that, and bread pudding and vegetables, I kept hearing as they got closer and every guy said the same thing. Well we got to take the bull by the horns and tell them so when they started interviewing me, I said sir I am of the Jewish faith and do not eat pork. What? And they said what did you have? I said bread pudding and that's what I was throwing up, bread pudding. The guy high tailed it back over and oh yeah, we had 2-3 helpings of bread pudding right down the line to me and that was the end of

that, so it wasn't the pork. I did not eat pork at that time. Those were the two main incidences that I had at Camp Roberts. I have never had bread putting since.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you go to Friday night services when you were at Camp Roberts?

**LEVY:**

I think I went to one. But by Friday night I was so tired I couldn't move. But I did get home a couple 2 , 3 times too.

**SEVERAL:**

So when you went in, how did your parents feel?

**LEVY:**

Terrible. Don't forget they already had my oldest brother in, my other brother was at UCLA ready to go into officers training, and here is the kid brother going. My mother was broken hearted. She was really upset.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, I can imagine. So what did you do about eating non-kosher food? You grew up in a kosher home?

**LEVY:**

Yes I did.

**SEVERAL:**

So you're now in the military and they are not serving kosher.

**LEVY:**

They were not cooperating for a Jewish guy, I'll tell you that. I used to go through and they had these big white plates and I did not know they guys in basic training. You know, it takes a few weeks before you start being able to talk to the other guys. So when we first go through, I am asking the guys, hey what's that stuff? Oh that's pork chops, this or that, or liver or veal. I don't eat that stuff, so I got bread and margarine, it wasn't butter it was margarine, and fruit, canned goods and milk. That was it. For breakfast you go through and they would make this big pot, and I said what is that, cereal or oatmeal? No, no, no, it's shit on a shingle. What is that? Well it's chipped beef and pork with gravy and piece of toast and slopping it on there. Not for me. That went on all the time until I got to Europe.

**SEVERAL:**

Did they serve eggs?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, powdered eggs, sure.

**SEVERAL:**

You ate those.

**LEVY:**

Oh sure. Powdered eggs were manufactured, but we did have fresh eggs once in a while too.

**SEVERAL:**

So how did you feel about, well you didn't have plates, it was paper?

**LEVY:**

Oh no, it was plates. At Camp Roberts, it was plates. I never had those tin things. Wherever I was, it was plates.

**SEVERAL:**

Not kosher plates.

**LEVY:**

Not hardly.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean that didn't bother you?

**LEVY:**

No. What are you going to do?

**SEVERAL:**

So there weren't others Jews there. How did the other people in the unit, they knew you were Jewish didn't they?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I never walked around with a sign on my back. My dog tag with an H. And you know those were always on. It's not like the army today where you can take off the uniform out in the cities. Once we went in, I was not out of uniform for 3 years. Constantly, I mean the dog tags had to be on you all the time.

**SEVERAL:**

How did the other people in the unit react to you being Jewish?

**LEVY:**

I had no trouble in basic training at all. I played ball. In all honesty, I am saying I was good at what I did and you lead by example and they respected that. If you are good at something, my older brother, he went in 3 or 4 months before I did in North Carolina. He said, Al, keep your mouth shut and don't volunteer for anything. Just listen and learn. He was 12 years older and it was a big difference between 18 and 30, and he was married. So I had no trouble. You know it didn't take them long to find out that I could play ball better than they could. It didn't take them long to figure out that I could soldier better than they could, and I could observe stuff better than they could and I never said anything. I really had a lot of fun sort of.

**SEVERAL:**

How would you describe the people in the unit? Were they, I mean obviously there were no blacks in these units or perhaps Hispanics.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah sure, we did. It was California, you know, but no blacks. In fact, at Camp Roberts, I never saw a black. Over 100,000 guys and I didn't see blacks. They had segregated units until I got to Fort Riley, Kansas

**SEVERAL:**

The people in your unit were they primarily from California?

**LEVY:**

Some from California, some from Oklahoma, Tennessee, the deep south, very few from the east coast, but a lot from Pennsylvania. We had a lot of young guys that were in ROTC from Penn State, Pennsylvania University, and Easton College. Our master sergeant in Kansas was with (3 stripes up 3 down) the highest you can go as non-commissioned officer, he was a graduate engineer at Rutgers University, and that is the kind of outfit that were in. And these guys that were at basic training were from Nebraska. The ones from Penn State were when we hit Fort Riley Kansas, but these young guys were smart guys. They were all trained in Howitzers already in ROTC, so it was a little easier for them than for the guys who didn't have that background.

**SEVERAL:**

How did you get into this unit? Did you have to take some kind of a test?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, and Michael, honestly I don't remember. It was typical of like a high school exam, mathematics and history. I don't think it was too difficult. I was B average student I guess in high school, but I was not into mathematics or science or law.

**SEVERAL:**

But maybe in comparison to most people you stood out and they saw that, you know?

**LEVY:**

I didn't try to stand out. I just wanted to be, you know. But we had a lot of guys in basic training that were you know just keep asking stupid questions, and the sergeants, they really gave him them a hard time. I tried to learn as quick as I could, keep my mouth shut and not ask questions and answer with common sense and that's what my mom said, common sense. My mom couldn't read or write. She just said use your head, use your common sense.

**SEVERAL:**

During your basic training what rank did you have? Were you a private?

**LEVY:**

No. You have no rank.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

No. No, the guys who were our cadre they call teachers or instructors, these guys were PFC 1 stripe, corporals 2 stripes, sergeant 3 stripes. The sergeants lived with you in the barracks, one downstairs and one upstairs, and they were the teachers, they were the disciplinarians. You better listen to those guys because they are going to keep you alive. They are going to teach you how to stay alive and they both were from the CCCs.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really?

**LEVY:**

Sergeant Coller and Sergeant Aluie. I still remember their names, because, boy they made an impression on us. They really were tough, nice guys. They were nice guys if you just listened to them and didn't mouth off.

**SEVERAL:**

So you went through basic, you have no rank, you were in this unit and then in September of 1943 you were at Fort Riley, Kansas and how long were you there?

**LEVY:**

September to September, a full year.

**SEVERAL:**

Full year?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

And what did you do there?

**LEVY:**

More training. We were in a very unique, different kind of an outfit.

**SEVERAL:**

So it was no longer 105th?

**LEVY:**

That's right. Yes and no. Our daily training with the 105 Howitzers were over because we were in what they called a sound flash observation battalion, but we were considered field artillery. We had the cross cannons on our uniforms. We knew how to do all that stuff, and I have got to tell you how this operated to make any sense. We had the oscillograph that was always behind the observers and we had 5, 6 7 guys that knew how to run this oscillograph. The oscillograph was probably 2 feet wide, 4 foot long and 3 feet high, give or take. In this machine, had a viewing screen and they could adjust the number of lines which represented a microphone that was installed, it could be it a quarter mile or 8 miles in front of where this oscillograph was. The engineering crew with transits actually surveyed those right to the nth degree into the ground. The wire crews dug them in, hooked up wire to each one of these microphones and ran telephone lines all the way back to this oscillograph, and if it was 8 miles, 2 miles, they had had to run that wire in all kinds of weather; hot, rain, snow and these guys were big and tough. These guys were the strong guys of the outfit. We had 8 of these microphones, either in a straight line or what you

call a curve base and as enemy artillery was fired the shell passes over these microphones and there is a little filament in there that changed as the shell was going over would make this little filament waiver and go from mechanical energy into electrical energy into the telephone line and show up on the screen in squiggles. So if there are 8 microphones, there would be 8 lines with squiggles on them, there was a lot of mathematics, log rhythms, calculus, geometry was all involved in figuring out how and where these guns were fired. We were involved with weather, changes in the atmosphere and I had to learn all this stuff. It just so happens that my brother just sent me a book last week, I don't know how he got it, of what I learned in these classes, I don't understand it. So these guys would read the squiggles. They would develop this tape and by reading the squiggles they could determine the coordinates of where those guns were fired from. When we had the coordinates of those, we call it gun batteries, the 105 gun batteries, 155 gun batteries and tank batteries that have 105 hooked on the tanks then fired and covered this whole area that we gave them. As we moved forward, our engineers, the survey crews would go to these coordinates and see what we hit or didn't hit and we got a lot of them, yes. So in order to start this whole process, they had to have somebody start this process right? Al Levy and another Jewish guy, Mell Friedman, he had four guys, I had four guys, we were both corporals by this time and we went out in front of these microphones and laid in the holes or beat up buildings and when we were getting shelled or we heard shells going over or we could mainly sometimes see the flashing of the cans go up, we'd start this machine and so we were what they called forward observers.

**SEVERAL:**

So you were the cutting edge of this whole.

**LEVY:**

I worked with the infantry a lot of times.

**SEVERAL:**

You think you and what's the other guy's name?

**LEVY:**

Mell Friedman.

**SEVERAL:**

Mell and you were sent out there were because you are Jewish?

**LEVY:**

I never thought about that until maybe 25 years after the war was over, as I got older. We had a reunion in outside of Chicago called Star Rock, it's where the Indians fought the Americans, and they had a flat top hill where they were all killed. During the depression, the CCC built this beautiful camp and it was gorgeous. One of the guys who became a Baptist minister by the name of Jerry Shannon, said Al, I've got to talk to you. It was the first night I was there. We hadn't seen each other in 25 to 35 years and I said God, Jerry what did I do now, I have not seen you in years? He said I've got to talk to you outside, get in the hallway. He says you know I am a minister now. I said yeah, I know. He said do you think you and Friedman were sent to the outpost because you were Jewish? I said well I thought about it, but not then, I didn't think about it at all. We had no trouble in our outfit. I did have trouble with one guy whose name was Herman so we called him Herman the German, he was about 6'2" and I was about 5'6" or 5'7" and he really got me to where I said lets go outside, and the guy said no, no. You were always Levy, always by last name, it was never first names. He said no no, he will kill you, he said just cool so I did and finally he got transferred. That was the only time I had in the next two years outside of Camp Roberts.

**SEVERAL:**

When you were in Fort Riley, did you go to Friday night services? What was your contact?

**LEVY:**

Once in a while, like I said by Friday nights you had enough, you wanted to just walk around outside. I did go after the war was over, I think I told you about this cousin, a girl cousin who was in the USO show, I met her in Regensburg and we went to the temple there. Not on the base, it was an old Jewish temple. I got a picture of that.

**SEVERAL:**

So you were there in September, it could have been time of the High Holiday services. So what did you do then? Did you go to the services?

**LEVY:**

I don't think I went to High Holiday services at Fort Riley at all, no. And don't forget, a lot of times were gone for 2 to 3 weeks in the field or overnight, but you had no choice. You had to do what they told you to do.

**SEVERAL:**

Besides Mell Friedman, were there other Jews in there?

**LEVY:**

Yes, we had one upstairs by the name of Muel Felder and he was from Germany. Came over here, he was bar mitzvahed in German because we saw a film that he did at a reunion. He has

passed away since and he came over here when he was 14 or 15. When he was 18, he enlisted in the army.

**SEVERAL:**

To fight the Germans?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, and he spoke with a heavy German accent, but he was a bright guy. He was studying engineering already in college when he entered, and I do remember him saying that if I ever get to this German town that I am from, he said I know the traitors and I am going to kill them. So we got pretty close to where he was from. I hadn't seen him in 50 years, I called him aside like this other guy called me aside and I said, did you ever go back and kill them? And he said, I couldn't do it.

**SEVERAL:**

There was a very moving experience that somebody similar had which was reported in that book GI Jews, a similar type thing where a Jewish soldier had a chance to get even and didn't.

**LEVY:**

I have often been asked all these years, did you kill any of the Germans, and my answer to that is, "directly or indirectly," because of what I told you how we operated, we were an observation battalion. We were instructed the only time you made contact is if you're being attacked yourself, but you don't look for trouble, not in your position. And so as we went forward. The survey crew checked to see what we hit. We got credit for hitting a lot of tanks--etc.

**SEVERAL:**

Were there other Jews in the unit besides the immigrant from Germany?

**LEVY:**

No that was the only one that I knew in all of the 450 guys that made up our battalion. There were three headquarters, A and B batteries which were independent, we did not know the guys even next door to us at Fort Riley, it was so concentrated. You were so locked in, we had 28 guys in our section, we didn't even know the guys upstairs except to say hi to them and we were trained a little bit in there just so in case, and they were trained in our outfit just enough to get by if you had to, but there were not many Jews.

**SEVERAL:**

Or there may have been but you weren't aware.

**LEVY:**

Yeah, but the names didn't tell me. I got to tell you a quick story though.

**SEVERAL:**

Sure.

**LEVY:**

I was dating a girl before Barb; we started dating when we were 17, from Culver City which is about 20-25 miles from Pasadena before freeways. And so we go out Friday night and Saturday night, and as the letters started to come in at Camp Roberts and Fort Riley, her name was Donna Gartenschwartz, and boy if you didn't think these guys didn't catch onto that quick and they would make my life miserable joking about black garden, so take it however you want. Boy did they rib me.

**SEVERAL:**

That was all good natured?

**LEVY:**

Oh sure, oh yeah. If you can't be ribbed in the service, you're in trouble. You got to learn how to take it and how to dish it out.

**SEVERAL:**

After your training at Fort Reilly in September 1944, were you immediately then sent overseas or did you get a leave and come back to Los Angeles?

**LEVY:**

I had one leave in almost three years in the service. I had 15 days leave in July, August of '44 for

15 days plus travel time. Boy, Fort Reilly had its train station, it was a big fort, a permanent fort. I got in that train and there were no seats, just guys all over going home, all over the place. It took me three days and four nights I think from Fort Reilly, Kansas to Los Angeles, Union Station and I was home five days and I was in NBC studios, radio studios in LA, Hollywood when the guy I was sitting with in a tiny little booth, he was an announcer for NBC and said Al, the phone call is for you. I said what, I didn't hear anything. He said, I'm telling you it's for you, go pick it up in the hallway. So I go out and pick it up and it was my dad. He said Al, you got a telegram from the US Army here. I said, God don't open it. I said I know what's it for, we will probably be going overseas but I wanted some more time home. I knew it wouldn't be immediate, they don't work that fast. So I said don't open it. So when I got home I opened it, now I said I can go and if they ever catch me or when I get back late I can say I went to camping at Mount Wilson with friends for 4 to 5 days. How could they check that? Then I started thinking, well if we are going to go after what I have been through, I want to stay with the guys I know and the job I know. I had my stripes and to go some place else would be starting all over again. So I said I am going to go back. We get down to Salt Lake City and some guy walking through the train and it's my buddy Kelly; Kelly and Levy, we were always together. He was 6 years older, 6'2" a blonde Irishman, Kelly and Levy. We were transferred, we did everything together except, he came out with six stripes, a master sergeant, after the first master sergeant was sent home.

**SEVERAL:**

Kelly Levy?

**LEVY:**

I almost named my daughter Kelly.

**SEVERAL:**

Levy and he is Irish?

**LEVY:**

With the name Kelly?

**SEVERAL:**

No Levy?

**LEVY:**

Well we were always together.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you, Kelly and Levy.

**LEVY:**

Of course. We're close friends, he is 92 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

So he is Kelly and you are Levy. Oh okay.

**LEVY:**

So he comes, so we sat and talked and we got back to camp and I said I assume we got the telegram, and he says sure. So we go up to gate and the guys started laughing at the gate and we kept walking to the first sergeant's office and they start laughing when we walk in the door, so I said what's so funny? Well, you guys change into fatigues, get your rakes, they will issue you knives and you are going to go up and cut grass. We said, what did you say? He said the rest of the outfit was sent to Colorado to test artillery with this observation battalion with microphones and all that stuff and we are required to keep so many guys in camp. So we, Kelly and myself, went back to the gate and as our guys we knew came in the gate, we said don't come in, go to Fort Riley Kansas is only 10 miles away and come back in 4 or 5 days and they did. Nothing ever happened to them so that was, that's another story.

**SEVERAL:**

So you ended up cutting grass.

**LEVY:**

And it was hot. 110 degrees. Boy, Kansas summer time, like Kansas in the winter, both of them are bad. You've been there, huh?

**SEVERAL:**

Been there, unforgettable.

**LEVY:**

We are living in these bunks with tar paper, you know, thin and not much air, no air conditioning, and oh man it was worse in the field. We were in an outfit, the colonel addressed us one day, lieutenant colonel a big tall guy and he said there is only two ways out of this outfit. He said we are a frontline outfit, two ways either you join, right now and we will ship you to the paratroopers or you stay here and you might come home in a box, but that's the only two ways, either in a box or in the paratroopers, paratroopers is right now, and he said I mean right now, step forward. Only one guy out of 450 stepped forward.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. So in September you were sent overseas?

**LEVY:**

Yeah we got on our train, they sent us up to Canada with blinds on the train at nighttime and we could not open the blinds and we ended up in Camp Shanks, New York.

**SEVERAL:**

I guess it's up state?

**LEVY:**

It's right by the Washington Bridge on the one side. I don't know if it's still there or not. And we were there for about two weeks. During this time I pulled guard duty as corporal of the guard. We had a prison camp for our crazy soldiers. These were not Germans, these were our prisoners. These guys would jump off of a boat in the harbor as it started to sail because they didn't want to go overseas. A bunch of nuts. And they had a fence, about 15 feet of no man's land, another

fence with machine gun towers around this camp and it was a big camp, must have had 500-1000 guys, and the orders were if you caught them in no man's land, you've got to shoot them. So at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning, I am posting the guard and we went off to go to the next guard station, finally I got back to my bed but you couldn't go to bed you had to sit at the desk for two hours and the next guy will take out for two hours, four guys come back. So I felt something running in front of me and I was ready to shoot. I realized it wasn't a man, so I didn't think much about it and all of a sudden I wake up after my four hours of sleeping and 15 to 20 guys I never saw before looking at me and they said it's you. What are you talking about it's me? You stink. I said I don't stink. I took a couple whiffs and I did stink. A skunk hit me full blast. I ran and I went back to where my barracks was, I ripped off my clothes and everybody said get the hell out of here, you stink. So finally I had to go to the sergeant and told him what happened. He said give us all your clothes, we will take gloves and we got to burn this stuff, including my shoes, my gun, everything I had or wearing that night. So they got me new clothes, except shoes. No shoes, no go to Europe. I couldn't go without shoes, high top boots. So they said you might not go. I said I got to find shoes. I wore size 6.5 shoes. On your steel helmets, the day we were shipping out they had 1690F which was the number they issued us and we went to see Gene Crupa, the drummer. Boy, a great band. They said as soon as we hear the number, you guys got to get up, fall out, pick up your duffle bags and everything was set outside. Everything you owned was in that duffle bag and we had to carry it one way or the other and so they stopped the music and said 1690F, everybody on your steel helmets and go outside. Our whole outfit went outside, we marched about two hours, two miles to the boat. Went on this gangplank. It was steep like this. It wasn't big, and I had to schlep all that stuff up the gangplank. We get up on the thing and as we walked through the ship, we see the officers dressed in their pink pants and green uniforms, looked in as we walked by and thought it would be a nice trip. We get to a guy who says one go one down, one down, another down, another down. We were below the water line when we got to where we stayed. We said where's the bunks? Where is the hammocks? And you would hook up a hammock here and a hammock here and you crawled in because the tables you ate on were right underneath you and during night it hit somebody butt, butt to butt as the ship rock back and forth. And we went over on an English freighter. What did they call them? Not USS, the English whatever. AMS Aurora, and it was a cattle freighter and we had so many guys on board, they had different places where you ate and each station had their cooks and a stove or whatever. After dinner one night I see these guys throwing out the food nobody ate and we stopped. They were washing their feed in these tubs. The food was so bad Michael, it was meat, green corn beef and rolls were like dough. We would throw them against the wall and they'd bounce back to us like a softball. Finally, I couldn't take it, so I went up and I saw my first lieutenant. I said, lieutenant you got to come down and try to eat this food. I wasn't eating the meat anyway, just the rest of the stuff. And he came down and he took some bars off, came down and said you guys eat this stuff? I said, hell no, we're not eating it, we're throwing it away. He said what are you living on? I said Hershey bars. We had Hershey bars and that's what we ate. So finally he threw out the line cooks and put our cooks in and they were not good, but they were better than the line cooks.

**SEVERAL:**

How long were you at Camp Shanks?

**LEVY:**

Camp Shanks, about two weeks.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually you weren't far from where I was living at the time. I lived in Westchester County, which is just north of New York City, not far from the George Washington Bridge.

**LEVY:**

When we were there, everything was blacked out naturally, and so we decided one night we did have this. They said before you go overseas you get one or two nights to go to New York. So we hopped on a bus and we went over the bridge and we went to the Empire State Building. We went up and everything was pitch black, really scary. So about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning we said we don't want to go back to camp, what are we going to do? There was 4 or 5 of us. Let's go to Coney Island. So you know we didn't know about stuff, but we figured out how to get on the subway, we looked at Coney Island, we saw Nathan's Deli there. Looked at some of the rides, but nothing was going at 2 or 3 in the morning so we went back to camp.

**SEVERAL:**

Now that was the first time you were in New York City?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely.

**SEVERAL:**

There were a lot of Jews in New York.

**LEVY:**

Didn't see any Jews in New York at nighttime.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean, did you think when you were there, Gee, there are a lot of Jews?

**LEVY:**

No. I tell you, that was not one of my important things to do.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah right. I have memories of going into New York City during the war and the harbor was jammed with ships.

**LEVY:**

I don't remember that. The night we shipped out, by the time we got on board and found our deluxe sleeping accommodations. We were up on deck when we sailed out of the harbor and we saw the Statue of Liberty and man everybody got quiet. That was first time we saw it. At nighttime it was blacked out. Barb and myself about 10 or 12 years ago, longer than that I mean it's been 10 years since they have been gone, we went to New York. It was 1993 in fact, and we took a trip to New York and we stayed at the Waldorf and we when we came back from the Statue of Liberty. No, before we went, on the way to the Statue of Liberty, I looked back and I saw the Twin Towers and we went into the Twin Towers a day or so before, and so I had my camera and I got the most gorgeous shots. It was one of those clear blue sunny days. I looked at the Statue of Liberty and Barbara said are you sick? And I said why? She said you just turned white. I said I think it's 50 years to the day that we sailed out of this harbor. That's right, because we were married in '63 or so, it was 50 years. I came home and the first thing I did was check my book and we missed it by one day.

**SEVERAL:**

Where did you, when you landed, where did you stop?

**LEVY:**

We landed in Glasgow, Scotland at nighttime. We boarded a train, blacked out and went 24 hours by train to the southern England to Wimbledon England, which is not too far from the English channel and we got off the next morning and carried all of our stuff for a couple of miles and as we were walking down this little beautiful English road, we see this little convertible on the wrong side of the street coming straight at us. We said, oh man, look at that police dog. The police dog is driving the car. It was on the wrong side, and that was our first time we saw that too. And so we stayed at a 3 story boy's prep school. It was beautiful, old, they had three rugby fields that were gorgeous. We were waiting for all of our equipment. We had 100 trucks for the 450 guys in this outfit. We had a lot of heavy stuff and they had to ship all these trucks over so we waited for that which was about 2 to 2.5 months and then we got the trucks then we went across.

**SEVERAL:**

So you were in England from September to when?

**LEVY:**

September to about December or the tail end of November, because we went into the Bulge on December 16th.

**SEVERAL:**

So you took went by ship to France?

**LEVY:**

No. We took a ship to Glasgow on a train.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, but from Branton.

**LEVY:**

Oh then we got an what they call LSTs where you drove the trucks right out and chain them down and the front doors open up. Yeah we did that. We chained everything down and thank goodness our truck was right next to where the door to the galley was and we stole gallons of fruit cocktail and stewed tomatoes and we took them into our truck and we ate them in the truck.

**SEVERAL:**

So when you got, the LST went to where in La Havre, France?

**LEVY:**

Yeah we were in south England, we went to Weymouth from Bournemouth to Weymouth by truck, drove the trucks on the LST and in 3 to 4 days we didn't move so we said what is going on. So after 3 or 4 days, he said unchain the trucks, this ship is going back to the States, drive your trucks and stuff on the next LST. Soon as we locked them down, we left. It was a nice sunny day. Crossing the channel was smooth, everybody was happy, we had chow up on the deck of the LST. Some guys were throwing up but it was so smooth, it was unbelievable. Then we pulled in La Havre just before dark and the next morning, they anchored in La Havre, the next morning they had guys out on the bow of the ship with microphones to the wheelhouse and we said, as we started up the river, we said, what are you looking for? We're the second LST up here. The first one we're trying to find the conning tower that was sunk. The ship was sunk and they didn't want to hit the conning tower which you know, and then you should've seen this all run to the ass end of that ship. [Break]

**SEVERAL:**

So let's see, you were voiding the conning tower.

**LEVY:**

And we got up the same, we sailed up from same river to Roen, France. When the drove the trucks off, it just rained like heck in France and the first couple two to three trucks went off the LST and sank up to their hubcaps in the mud, so we finally got one off with a winch and we had to pull all the other trucks off. And then we stayed in a very large wooden area for a few days. It was raining and then all of a sudden, they said pack up we're going. We didn't know where we were going. We drove up into where the Battle of the Bulge started.

**SEVERAL:**

The Battle had already started or?

**LEVY:**

No. They knew something was going to happen because they had a lot of guys, a lot of trucks, a lot of stuff on tanks, stuff on the road already, so we actually entered the first day but the first day really wasn't where the heavy fighting was. A few days later we got into the heavy stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

Now one of the things is, it is my understanding that what made it so awful was the weather got extremely cold.

**LEVY:**

The worst winter they ever had in Europe. Absolutely, I just showed you picture with the snow. It was absolutely bitter cold especially when you got to be outside in the snow or in a fox hole. It was terrible.

**SEVERAL:**

During the Battle you were doing this forward operations and setting up the. I suppose you saw combat or maybe you don't want to I remember, but this is my understanding that after I don't know about three weeks, the weather then cleared up and the Air Force was finally able to get in there.

**LEVY:**

Right, thank goodness. The Battle of the Bulge as they call it lasted between 5 to 6 weeks. From my understanding, it was about 20,000 guys killed and 80,000 to 100,000 and there are no specifics, you talk to or you research it on the computer, one thing it will say, 80,000 injured and others say 100,000, and my frostbite feet and hands were not one counted because I never got it on my service record. So there were a lot of guys like that and a lot of injuries never got reported so who knows. But one of the main things that really I will never forget is the fact that our sister outfit, we were what they called 288th field artillery observation, the 285th was our sister outfit and they were in front of us and their command decided to take a little road this way and our command said no we're going to go straight and while we were doing that other guys in tanks and trucks are coming this way and it is narrow roads you know, it was not like downtown Los Angeles or a freeway, it was all narrow lanes and we are all yelling and swearing at each other, you guys are going the wrong way and they said no, the sign says this way and our sign said no go this way. What the Germans did, they caught the 285th field artillery observation battalion and they had them blocked in. They dropped the backends of their truck and machine gunned them and killed them, 130 out of 150 of them, and they let them lay in the snow until we got further ahead and our cemetery guys came by and started pulling dog tags and when they picked them up, they've got film of this stuff, they've got hard film of it where the guys were frozen stiff. And we picked up, I don't know, 15 or 20 of them and put them in our outfit temporarily. And I really don't know what happened to those guys later on down, I lost track of them.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. It's mind boggling.

**LEVY:**

There is a movie out, it's not a movie but it's on DVD, it's called "The Massacre of Malmedy," and you can actually buy that thing and it shows the trial of the 50 or 60 of the German high command and enlisted guys that they caught and put them on trial after the Nuremberg war trials. They had the trials for the massacre of Malmedy and of the 50 or 60 that were convicted; some were sentenced to death, life imprisonment, 10 or 20 years. Not one of them served more than 5 years and we let them go.

**SEVERAL:**

The Battle of the Bulge was fought in the Netherlands wasn't it?

**LEVY:**

It was North Germany into Belgium.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay. So once that Battle was over, you pushed the Germans back, you now were in Northern Germany, then what?

**LEVY:**

We were sent down into southern, Regensburg, Munich, Frankfurt and that area, and as we went forward we captured thousands of Germans that came out of the woods with their hands up and I

have got pictures of those guys like this and once we got out of the Bulge, probably another 2 or 3 weeks, things really calmed down and I don't think we set up once or twice after that because they were on the run and we had them running and we were so, they were so outmanned. Now during the Bulge, we saw young kids 15 or 16 year old dressed in their white, they had real snow stuff, they had real nice mittens and nice parkas and pants and snow shoes, but they were kids, 14 or 15 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

Did your unit suffer many casualties?

**LEVY:**

No. We only had one death.

**SEVERAL:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

One death and that was a guy who was in a building. He went out to relieve himself and a shell came in and whacked him. We had several casualties, but that was the only death out of 450 guys. We were very, very fortunate.

**SEVERAL:**

So you in Munich, in southern Germany, did you hear about the holocaust and the extermination camps?

**LEVY:**

Never heard a thing about it. We didn't know about Dachau or Treblinka or the rest of them until about two or three weeks after the war was over. We fought through Munich; Dachau was 7 miles to Munich, and when we heard about it, in fact Anne Chaslow's husband, Abraham, they call him Chez, you know Chez don't you?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I do.

**LEVY:**

He was on the second tank that broke the gates down at Dachau. And he spoke, (he was a salesman), a natural speaker. He was funny, he spoke all over Pasadena to high schools about what he saw.

**SEVERAL:**

So did you ever see any of the people who were in the extermination camps?

**LEVY:**

In some of the camps?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. I mean, how did you hear about the holocaust three weeks after the war?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean by that time actually.

**LEVY:**

Well we had the news, we had Stars and Stripes. We had radios, we had Armed Forces radio service. We stole radios from people's houses. I stole a couple of cushions for my bunk.

**SEVERAL:**

You didn't see any of the inmates at these?

**LEVY:**

No, I didn't see any of those. After the war in Nuremberg, remember you have seen that's where Hitler had all these big rallies and you know big flags and thousands of guys marching. We took over that camp and in the camp next to this parade ground, they had two or three story buildings. Right after the war, we were stationed there to try to help get all the Russians to the Russian people, Czechs to here, the Hungarians there. And we. I lost my train of thought here.

**SEVERAL:**

How did you feel as a Jew being in Germany?

**LEVY:**

I hated them. Once we got out of the Bulge, I worked for farmyard to farmyard, moved a few miles to another farmyard. We used that for our observation and always tried to get to high ground. I was so young, I didn't understand jewelry and beer mugs and plates, silverware, old stuff probably worth a fortune today, and I said I didn't want any of this stuff. I did pick up an automatic off of a dead German, but it was Spanish, a little 32 automatic. How he got it, I don't know, but I took it from him.

**SEVERAL:**

Maybe it was from the Spanish civil war.

**LEVY:**

So anyway, I passed all the stuff. I could have had anything I wanted in these houses. You know,

in Europe in the farmland, you know the houses are thick, they are 100 years old and there was fancy stuff in every houses. We asked theses people, are you Nazi? No Nazi; and you know damn well they were, but on the other side of the coin, hey listen they were forced in.

**SEVERAL:**

Did they know you were Jewish? See this H? Take it out and show it to them?

**LEVY:**

No. We also, before we got to our permanent station in Granphenworg, Germany in Southern Bavaria, they detoured us to a large field and in this field, which was about a half a mile off of road, was barbwire, machine gun towers that they threw up real quick and they had 1500 SS guys in there from high ranking down to the lowly privates. SS guys were always big, strong and nasty, you know. And as we said, what can we do to get back at these guys. So we said okay, we're going to open up the gates and tell them to leave as they are looking up to machine gun towers at us with our fingers on the trigger. Not one person left and we left the gate open for hours. Keep going, go on, go. They didn't want to go.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you encounter any. To kind of back up a little bit, as a Jew, during Christmas or the Christian holidays, did you pitch in? I mean did they have, did any of the Christian say you know I want to go to services on this day.

**LEVY:**

Not during the war. After the war was over in May, because I was very young, they kepted me. They sent all the old guys home. The sergeant I was telling you about, he was married and had twins while we were in Memphis, Tennessee. He had 135 or 140 points, I had 56 or something

like that and they took you by points. You had to have so many points to get out quick. So as they got down my age was against me. I was not married, I had three battle stars but not enough points, so all the older guys got out quicker. So they kept 5 of us out of the 28 as cadre to bring in new guys to teach them what we do in our outfit, and where did these guys come from? They came out of safe quarters, Eisenhower headquarters in England and Paris and they came in with shined shoes, loafers, nice clean beautiful uniforms and they are now in a frontline outfit. The whistle blew after the war at 5:30 in the morning. You had to hit the line and so these guys, we come out there five of us of the 28 and the rest of the guys were sleeping and they didn't know what the whistle was for. So sooner or later our captain came and said where are the rest of the guys? I said, well captain they are sleeping and he said oh yeah. So he goes in and he puts his foot up there and he tips over the bed and he said this is the last time you guys are sleeping. 5:30 in the morning you hit the line and he said I am going to be sure you do it. He said if you don't, your hands are going to be blistered raw digging 6x6 trenches and when you're done and you will fill them up and you are going next door and you will dig another one. Well that sort of cured them.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. Now there was a war in the pacific was still going. Was there any talk of sending your unit to the pacific?

**LEVY:**

Yes there was. One of our last outpost, I had four guys with me and we were overlooking a canyon into a big what you call a pillbox, it was a massive load of concrete and steel and we could see the Germans walking in and out of this thing and so we kept calling the gun battery and gave them orders and they kept firing and there wouldn't even make a dent in this thing. So we were there for about a week and a half, two weeks and I am thinking ahead of myself.

**SEVERAL:**

So the question was, was there any talk of sending you to the pacific?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. So I had these four guys now I get a call on the old crank phone, you are in charge, take four straws, break them in different lengths and the one with the shorter straw comes back, goes to state for 30 days and then goes to the south pacific. I said oh God, I can't live through that, never could live through that. I break them up, I got them in my hand and I will never forget his name, his name was Ludman, a kid from Iowa from the farm, he said I will volunteer. I said yeah, I got a volunteer and sent him back. He got home six months before I did because when he was in the states they gave him 30 day leave, south pacific was over and they discharged him.

**SEVERAL:**

Good for him.

**LEVY:**

Good for him, bad for me.

**SEVERAL:**

What a patriotic thrill.

**LEVY:**

Michael, I could sit here and tell you stories.

**SEVERAL:**

So now the war is over, how long were you in Europe after that?

**LEVY:**

The war was over in May, I didn't leave Germany till January of 1946.

**SEVERAL:**

There are some questions.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, I know the questions, did I participate in Christmas holidays?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Christmas between 1945 and 46, I am in the barracks about 10 or 12 of us in this, it was one of the barracks our guys bombed just before the war ended, it was very nice. I see they are getting class A uniforms, khaki pants, ETO jackets, a tie, and a hat and I said where are you guys going? We're going to high mass. I said, guys you're drunk. They said, yeah but they said we're going to high mass. I said when is high mass. They said midnight, so I said I am going too. I got dressed and I went with them. I was the only one sober out of 12, so it reminded me of going to an orthodox schull where the women went upstairs. But we went upstairs and it was a very small catholic church, not too many miles from our camp and the guys were crocked and they are talking loud and they are making jokes and it remind me of when I was a kid in Pasadena, at Hudson & Walnut street where the old guys on Saturday morning and we were laughing and joking and they would be banging the bema and saying shush. And I am here, I see here this priest is doing the same thing with these guys, shush shuwh. It was really funny it brought me back. And that was the only time I really participated. I didn't participate I just sat.

**SEVERAL:**

You were then in Germany during the High Holiday services in September.

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I did go to September. I went with my cousin. I could show you pictures.

**SEVERAL:**

In Germany?

**LEVY:**

Yeah Germany. I got to show you a picture, Mike. Turn that thing off. It won't take me long to find it.

**SEVERAL:**

So this was in a German synagogue?

**LEVY:**

A German synagogue.

**SEVERAL:**

Were there any German Jews still there?

**LEVY:**

It was mostly GIs really. It was nothing but railroad track. That is camp \_\_\_\_\_. This was all busy stuff, millions of guys, this is one of the movie houses, this is the barracks, this is Fort Riley, Kansas. This is all that is left. This is one of my guys bought the thing for the VA, something about the ball so he swears to it. This is me here right here, this is our section and 90% of the guys are gone. This is the big berth thing these guys had. This is Campfield School; this is where we spent 2½ months. This is my cousin, the one in Regensburg. This was \_\_\_\_\_, she was beautiful. She was a great dancer. They teamed her with Rita Haywarth.

**SEVERAL:**

Really? You don't have a picture of the synagogue you went to,

**LEVY:**

Who had a camera? Here is the guy who was the head of the USO. This is right outside the schul in Regensburg. This was \_\_\_\_ this was after the war.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it a big schul?

**LEVY:**

No small. This is my Jeep.

**SEVERAL:**

Who conducted the services?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember. I honestly don't remember, Michael.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you go to both Rosh Hashanahs?

**LEVY:**

No, because we were 30 or 35 miles away and Regensburg was 30 to 35 miles away. The only reason I could get out of the camp, I had a change of command. They transferred me from A battery to B battery. The captain of our A battery knew that I had been in trouble with the colonel a couple of times and I was on his black list.

**SEVERAL:**

That's because you were Jewish?

**LEVY:**

No. That had nothing to do with it. He said no, he wouldn't approve it. So when I got the transfer to this other captain's B battery, he was a fun loving guy, a big guy 6'4", 250, captain Rooley and he said yeah I heard about what you did a couple of times and he said make me a promise, you get on the food truck and go to Regensburg, check into this place. It was a high class house of prostitution run by the American government, to tell you the truth. So he said come back in 3 days, get back in the truck and come back. He said you promise? I said captain, I promise and I did. So I checked into this thing, check it out. Regensburg was right outside of town and I met my cousin.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it your idea to go to the High Holiday services or your cousin's?

**LEVY:**

Oh no. We knew, we found out where they were going to have the services in Regensburg so we went to schul.

**SEVERAL:**

So how come the, somebody must have organized that to have services in a Germany.

**LEVY:**

Listen, you know, when we moved in, the Germans became second class citizens. We took control, the government took control.

**SEVERAL:**

Did the synagogue show any damage from the war?

**LEVY:**

No. I didn't see any damage there at all.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have any contact with the Germans when you were there?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I had a lot of contact with them. We stayed in there houses during the war. They moved out and we moved in. They had to move out.

**SEVERAL:**

Let me make sure I got all the.

**LEVY:**

You got more than enough.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see, one last question about the war, or maybe two questions. Do you have any memories about hearing the atomic bombs that were dropped?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I remember. It came on the Armed Forces Radio service. I do want to tell you one thing about President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was just a week or so before the war ended, it was

around the middle of April or something like that. I am on an outpost and some guy on my outpost through the phone connection heard that FDR had died. As I came off the outpost, I woke up some guys who were sleeping because that must have been 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning and I told them that FDR had died and you should've seen the reaction. It was from crying to what happens to us now? What happens to the war? What is going to happen? And we were all pretty upset about that. That was really, I will never forget that.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see, how would you say that the war changed you?

**LEVY:**

Without a two hour dissertation? I think the war had a very big impact on my life. I know a lot of guys came out of the war drunks, did not do anything with their life, but because of my background at our house from the sisters and brothers that I had and the Boy Scouts, the AZA, the band and being an officer of the student body, and all of that kind of stuff molded me and I think the army strengthened all that.

**SEVERAL:**

How about in terms of your relationships to non-Jews?

**LEVY:**

I have never had any trouble with non-Jews.

**SEVERAL:**

Even before the war?

**LEVY:**

No. We in junior high school, which was McKinley High which is down where the old Robinson building used to be on South Lake, right behind is McKinley Junior High. It's still there, they have changed the grades and all of the stuff that they do there. We had the very wealthy coming up from the Huntington Hotel area, San Marino. We had the blacks, Asians and Hispanics coming from the west side from the Fair Oaks area to McKinley, and we had the wealthy that came up in chauffer driven cars with Filipino drivers, white drivers, African-American drivers in their putty, their uniforms, very wealthy. Then they had us white kids who come from the north and east, us poorer whites and we met in there for four years and that was the greatest education, better than the army. Really we had everybody; it was the best four years of my educational life in junior high school.

**SEVERAL:**

So the end of the war in early 1946 January, you come back to the United States, came back to Pasadena, you were discharged. I am going to ask some questions about the Jewish war veterans now. Do you know how that group in Pasadena started?

**LEVY:**

I think it was the older guys like Lou Press, Dave Press, Julie Feldstein, I think some of the older guys. They were a lot older than I was.

**SEVERAL:**

These were people who served?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. Lou Press was an officer and Dave Press, his next brother up was a first sergeant. By this time, Lou is in the car business in Pasadena and Dave was an attorney already, he was deputy city prosecutor, but he was still in private practice then before he went to the city. The older guys and like I said, it didn't last more than a year or two if I remember right. Everybody was busy raising kids and family. I had a job, I detested, and so.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall about what year it was formed? 1946, you think?

**LEVY:**

I think it was formed in 1946.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have to get a charter from National?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I wasn't involved in all that stuff. I didn't do it. Don't forget, Dave Press was the attorney, he probably did it all.

**SEVERAL:**

I would like to get his records.

**LEVY:**

Dave passed away several years ago.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have a women's auxiliary?

**LEVY:**

To Jewish war vets?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Not that I remember. Don't forget I wasn't married until 1948 and this was '46 or '47.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see. This is something High Vigo mentioned, something about the Crown City Four.

**LEVY:**

What was it?

**SEVERAL:**

The Crown City Four. Apparently it was like a barbershop quartet. He mentioned that the group would go to VA facilities. Do you recall any activities?

**LEVY:**

I think there was one dance that I can remember, but I am not sure Michael. I really don't remember. It didn't last long.

**SEVERAL:**

It doesn't sound like you were too involved

**LEVY:**

I wasn't. I was just trying to make a living the first couple of years I was out of the service I was sort of lost because all the guys were going back to school or they were going to work for their parents, and I was working for my brother in-law in a deli and we were going belly up so it was not fun for the first couple of years until I got into a full time job.

**SEVERAL:**

How about your dad's printing?

**LEVY:**

I went there and I was there 2 or 3 hours and I didn't even open my mouth to suggest to him to try to come in to the business. Everything had to be his way. My oldest brother went through the same thing when he was 18 years old during the depression. Earl ended up as a draftsman out of Muir Tech west campus and couldn't get a job and went to work for WPA up on the mountains of Mount Wilson and some guy called him a dirty Jew and my brother went after him with a pick. The guy hit him in the shoulder with a pick and Earl got a pick and went after the guy and it was bad news. That was anti-Semitism.

**SEVERAL:**

So you don't recall, do you recall meetings or?

**LEVY:**

I remember I think one or two meetings and like I said, I went but I wasn't ready to go into it full on.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall where they were held?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. Kirschner Hall.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall how many people were there?

**LEVY:**

Not many, maybe 8, 9 or 10. I think the Minovitz's were in it, Les Berman was in it, the same guys who were doing everything else was in the same thing.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you personally have any relationship or had any relationship with the VFW and the American Legion.

**LEVY:**

I belong to the American Legion.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you do. So that's been your involvement as a veteran. I mean, the Jewish War Veterans I believe still exist.

**LEVY:**

In Pasadena?

**SEVERAL:**

Not in Pasadena.

**LEVY:**

I belong to the Jewish War Veterans here.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you do?

**LEVY:**

Sure, I've been a member 5 years I have been a member of American Legion in Newport for about 10.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh this is kind of recent.

**LEVY:**

Well, you know they are all young guys. All the old vets are gone, so the Jewish War Veterans is really struggling here. They have about 20, 25 or 30 members. Probably 10, 12 or 15 come to meetings, but the spouses help.

**SEVERAL:**

Where do you meet?

**LEVY:**

At a clubhouse here.

**SEVERAL:**

About how often do you meet?

**LEVY:**

Once a month. They have lox and bagels, sweets and coffee. Everything for 5 bucks.

**SEVERAL:**

Are there, I mean 20, 25 people doesn't represent all the wars we fought since World War II, or is it primarily veterans from World War II?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. There might be one or two from Korea, maybe one from Vietnam and none from the latest 10 years. However, in Newport Beach, I am really amazed at the American Legion. They are getting young people to join the American Legion. It is the largest post in the country. It's the only post in the country that has its own American Legion yacht club. They got docks there, boats. They are really, they got about 3000 members.

**SEVERAL:**

What do they do?

**LEVY:**

I just got the magazine today from the post. I will show it to you later.

**SEVERAL:**

Now with the Jewish War Veterans, is it pretty much just a social group now?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, they do two great things. Once a month they go to the VA Hospital to the spinal wards in Long Beach and once a month they go to Camp Pendleton and the women's axillary which is very active in Jewish work, in fact the girl who runs the Jewish axillary, she gives her whole life to the Jewish war veterans and she really makes it go. They all go to Camp Pendleton, they crochet and knit, there are 100 babies born a month down in Camp Pendleton here and so they don't have the money and the government does not have the money and so they give money and a lot of time to crocheting and knitting baby stuff and they bring money for diapers. So that club really does good stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

So when they go to the VA, is that something you personally do too?

**LEVY:**

I volunteered for almost 8 years every week at the VA for 4 or 5 hours every Monday. I will

show you my buttons; I got 300 hours for all that stuff, yeah. But once I moved miles one way from here and to fight that traffic, I'd leave at 5:30-6. I'd leave Newport at 5:30 or 6 in the morning, get there and have coffee and went up to the 7th floor, so I did my volunteer duty. I did that.

**SEVERAL:**

Well I think this is it. I really appreciate it, I can't tell you. You are a godsend.

**LEVY:**

See the trouble is, one story leads to another and I got hundreds of stories.

**SEVERAL:**

I know. That's why I wanted to do it my way.

**Session Seven (August 3, 2011)**

**SEVERAL:**

So let's see, you were voiding the conning tower.

**LEVY:**

And we got up the same, we sailed up from same river to Roen, France. When the drove the

trucks off, it just rained like heck in France and the first couple two to three trucks went off the LST and sank up to their hubcaps in the mud, so we finally got one off with a winch and we had to pull all the other trucks off. And then we stayed in a very large wooden area for a few days. It was raining and then all of a sudden, they said pack up we're going. We didn't know where we were going. We drove up into where the Battle of the Bulge started.

**SEVERAL:**

The Battle had already started or?

**LEVY:**

No. They knew something was going to happen because they had a lot of guys, a lot of trucks, a lot of stuff on tanks, stuff on the road already, so we actually entered the first day but the first day really wasn't where the heavy fighting was. A few days later we got into the heavy stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

Now one of the things is, it is my understanding that what made it so awful was the weather got extremely cold.

**LEVY:**

The worst winter they ever had in Europe. Absolutely, I just showed you picture with the snow. It was absolutely bitter cold especially when you got to be outside in the snow or in a fox hole. It was terrible.

**SEVERAL:**

During the Battle you were doing this forward operations and setting up the. I suppose you saw combat or maybe you don't want to I remember, but this is my understanding that after I don't know about three weeks, the weather then cleared up and the Air Force was finally able to get in there.

**LEVY:**

Right, thank goodness. The Battle of the Bulge as they call it lasted between 5 to 6 weeks. From my understanding, it was about 20,000 guys killed and 80,000 to 100,000 and there are no specifics, you talk to or you research it on the computer, one thing it will say, 80,000 injured and others say 100,000, and my frostbite feet and hands were not one counted because I never got it on my service record. So there were a lot of guys like that and a lot of injuries never got reported so who knows. But one of the main things that really I will never forget is the fact that our sister outfit, we were what they called 288th field artillery observation, the 285th was our sister outfit and they were in front of us and their command decided to take a little road this way and our command said no we're going to go straight and while we were doing that other guys in tanks and trucks are coming this way and it is narrow roads you know, it was not like downtown Los Angeles or a freeway, it was all narrow lanes and we are all yelling and swearing at each other, you guys are going the wrong way and they said no, the sign says this way and our sign said no go this way. What the Germans did, they caught the 285th field artillery observation battalion and they had them blocked in. They dropped the backends of their truck and machine gunned them and killed them, 130 out of 150 of them, and they let them lay in the snow until we got further ahead and our cemetery guys came by and started pulling dog tags and when they picked them up, they've got film of this stuff, they've got hard film of it where the guys were frozen stiff. And we picked up, I don't know, 15 or 20 of them and put them in our outfit temporarily. And I really don't know what happened to those guys later on down, I lost track of them.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. It's mind boggling.

**LEVY:**

There is a movie out, it's not a movie but it's on DVD, it's called "The Massacre of Malmedy," and you can actually buy that thing and it shows the trial of the 50 or 60 of the German high command and enlisted guys that they caught and put them on trial after the Nuremberg war trials. They had the trials for the massacre of Malmedy and of the 50 or 60 that were convicted; some were sentenced to death, life imprisonment, 10 or 20 years. Not one of them served more than 5 years and we let them go.

**SEVERAL:**

The Battle of the Bulge was fought in the Netherlands wasn't it?

**LEVY:**

It was North Germany into Belgium.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay. So once that Battle was over, you pushed the Germans back, you now were in Northern Germany, then what?

**LEVY:**

We were sent down into southern, Regensburg, Munich, Frankfurt and that area, and as we went forward we captured thousands of Germans that came out of the woods with their hands up and I have got pictures of those guys like this and once we got out of the Bulge, probably another 2 or 3 weeks, things really calmed down and I don't think we set up once or twice after that because they were on the run and we had them running and we were so, they were so outmanned. Now during the Bulge, we saw young kids 15 or 16 year old dressed in their white, they had real snow

stuff, they had real nice mittens and nice parkas and pants and snow shoes, but they were kids, 14 or 15 years old.

**SEVERAL:**

Did your unit suffer many casualties?

**LEVY:**

No. We only had one death.

**SEVERAL:**

Really?

**LEVY:**

One death and that was a guy who was in a building. He went out to relieve himself and a shell came in and whacked him. We had several casualties, but that was the only death out of 450 guys. We were very, very fortunate.

**SEVERAL:**

So you in Munich, in southern Germany, did you hear about the holocaust and the extermination camps?

**LEVY:**

Never heard a thing about it. We didn't know about Dachau or Treblinka or the rest of them until about two or three weeks after the war was over. We fought through Munich; Dachau was 7 miles to Munich, and when we heard about it, in fact Anne Chaslow's husband, Abraham, they call him Chez, you know Chez don't you?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah I do.

**LEVY:**

He was on the second tank that broke the gates down at Dachau. And he spoke, (he was a salesman), a natural speaker. He was funny, he spoke all over Pasadena to high schools about what he saw.

**SEVERAL:**

So did you ever see any of the people who were in the extermination camps?

**LEVY:**

In some of the camps?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. I mean, how did you hear about the holocaust three weeks after the war?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean by that time actually.

**LEVY:**

Well we had the news, we had Stars and Stripes. We had radios, we had Armed Forces radio service. We stole radios from people's houses. I stole a couple of cushions for my bunk.

**SEVERAL:**

You didn't see any of the inmates at these?

**LEVY:**

No, I didn't see any of those. After the war in Nuremberg, remember you have seen that's where Hitler had all these big rallies and you know big flags and thousands of guys marching. We took over that camp and in the camp next to this parade ground, they had two or three story buildings. Right after the war, we were stationed there to try to help get all the Russians to the Russian people, Czechs to here, the Hungarians there. And we. I lost my train of thought here.

**SEVERAL:**

How did you feel as a Jew being in Germany?

**LEVY:**

I hated them. Once we got out of the Bulge, I worked for farmyard to farmyard, moved a few miles to another farmyard. We used that for our observation and always tried to get to high ground. I was so young, I didn't understand jewelry and beer mugs and plates, silverware, old stuff probably worth a fortune today, and I said I didn't want any of this stuff. I did pick up an automatic off of a dead German, but it was Spanish, a little 32 automatic. How he got it, I don't know, but I took it from him.

**SEVERAL:**

Maybe it was from the Spanish civil war.

**LEVY:**

So anyway, I passed all the stuff. I could have had anything I wanted in these houses. You know, in Europe in the farmland, you know the houses are thick, they are 100 years old and there was fancy stuff in every houses. We asked theses people, are you Nazi? No Nazi; and you know damn well they were, but on the other side of the coin, hey listen they were forced in.

**SEVERAL:**

Did they know you were Jewish? See this H? Take it out and show it to them?

**LEVY:**

No. We also, before we got to our permanent station in Granphenworg, Germany in Southern Bavaria, they detoured us to a large field and in this field, which was about a half a mile off of road, was barbwire, machine gun towers that they threw up real quick and they had 1500 SS guys in there from high ranking down to the lowly privates. SS guys were always big, strong and nasty, you know. And as we said, what can we do to get back at these guys. So we said okay, we're going to open up the gates and tell them to leave as they are looking up to machine gun towers at us with our fingers on the trigger. Not one person left and we left the gate open for hours. Keep going, go on, go. They didn't want to go.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you encounter any. To kind of back up a little bit, as a Jew, during Christmas or the Christian holidays, did you pitch in? I mean did they have, did any of the Christian say you know I want to go to services on this day.

**LEVY:**

Not during the war. After the war was over in May, because I was very young, they kept me. They sent all the old guys home. The sergeant I was telling you about, he was married and had twins while we were in Memphis, Tennessee. He had 135 or 140 points, I had 56 or something like that and they took you by points. You had to have so many points to get out quick. So as they got down my age was against me. I was not married, I had three battle stars but not enough points, so all the older guys got out quicker. So they kept 5 of us out of the 28 as cadre to bring in new guys to teach them what we do in our outfit, and where did these guys come from? They

came out of safe quarters, Eisenhower headquarters in England and Paris and they came in with shined shoes, loafers, nice clean beautiful uniforms and they are now in a frontline outfit. The whistle blew after the war at 5:30 in the morning. You had to hit the line and so these guys, we come out there five of us of the 28 and the rest of the guys were sleeping and they didn't know what the whistle was for. So sooner or later our captain came and said where are the rest of the guys? I said, well captain they are sleeping and he said oh yeah. So he goes in and he puts his foot up there and he tips over the bed and he said this is the last time you guys are sleeping. 5:30 in the morning you hit the line and he said I am going to be sure you do it. He said if you don't, your hands are going to be blistered raw digging 6x6 trenches and when you're done and you will fill them up and you are going next door and you will dig another one. Well that sort of cured them.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. Now there was a war in the pacific was still going. Was there any talk of sending your unit to the pacific?

**LEVY:**

Yes there was. One of our last outpost, I had four guys with me and we were overlooking a canyon into a big what you call a pillbox, it was a massive load of concrete and steel and we could see the Germans walking in and out of this thing and so we kept calling the gun battery and gave them orders and they kept firing and there wouldn't even make a dent in this thing. So we were there for about a week and a half, two weeks and I am thinking ahead of myself.

**SEVERAL:**

So the question was, was there any talk of sending you to the pacific?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. So I had these four guys now I get a call on the old crank phone, you are in charge, take four straws, break them in different lengths and the one with the shorter straw comes back, goes to state for 30 days and then goes to the south pacific. I said oh God, I can't live through that, never could live through that. I break them up, I got them in my hand and I will never forget his name, his name was Ludman, a kid from Iowa from the farm, he said I will volunteer. I said yeah, I got a volunteer and sent him back. He got home six months before I did because when he was in the states they gave him 30 day leave, south pacific was over and they discharged him.

**SEVERAL:**

Good for him.

**LEVY:**

Good for him, bad for me.

**SEVERAL:**

What a patriotic thrill.

**LEVY:**

Michael, I could sit here and tell you stories.

**SEVERAL:**

So now the war is over, how long were you in Europe after that?

**LEVY:**

The war was over in May, I didn't leave Germany till January of 1946.

**SEVERAL:**

There are some questions.

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, I know the questions, did I participate in Christmas holidays?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Christmas between 1945 and 46, I am in the barracks about 10 or 12 of us in this, it was one of the barracks our guys bombed just before the war ended, it was very nice. I see they are getting class A uniforms, khaki pants, ETO jackets, a tie, and a hat and I said where are you guys going? We're going to high mass. I said, guys you're drunk. They said, yeah but they said we're going to high mass. I said when is high mass. They said midnight, so I said I am going too. I got

dressed and I went with them. I was the only one sober out of 12, so it reminded me of going to an orthodox schull where the women went upstairs. But we went upstairs and it was a very small catholic church, not too many miles from our camp and the guys were crocked and they are talking loud and they are making jokes and it remind me of when I was a kid in Pasadena, at Hudson & Walnut street where the old guys on Saturday morning and we were laughing and joking and they would be banging the bema and saying shush. And I am here, I see here this priest is doing the same thing with these guys, shush shuw. It was really funny it brought me back. And that was the only time I really participated. I didn't participate I just sat.

**SEVERAL:**

You were then in Germany during the High Holiday services in September.

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I did go to September. I went with my cousin. I could show you pictures.

**SEVERAL:**

In Germany?

**LEVY:**

Yeah Germany. I got to show you a picture, Mike. Turn that thing off. It won't take me long to find it.

**SEVERAL:**

So this was in a German synagogue?

**LEVY:**

A German synagogue.

**SEVERAL:**

Were there any German Jews still there?

**LEVY:**

It was mostly GIs really. It was nothing but railroad track. That is camp \_\_\_\_\_. This was all busy stuff, millions of guys, this is one of the movie houses, this is the barracks, this is Fort Riley, Kansas. This is all that is left. This is one of my guys bought the thing for the VA, something about the ball so he swears to it. This is me here right here, this is our section and 90% of the guys are gone. This is the big berth thing these guys had. This is Campfield School; this is where we spent 2½ months. This is my cousin, the one in Regensburg. This was \_\_\_\_\_, she was beautiful. She was a great dancer. They teamed her with Rita Haywarth.

**SEVERAL:**

Really? You don't have a picture of the synagogue you went to,

**LEVY:**

Who had a camera? Here is the guy who was the head of the USO. This is right outside the schul in Regensburg. This was \_\_\_\_ this was after the war.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it a big schul?

**LEVY:**

No small. This is my Jeep.

**SEVERAL:**

Who conducted the services?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember. I honestly don't remember, Michael.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you go to both Rosh Hashanahs?

**LEVY:**

No, because we were 30 or 35 miles away and Regensburg was 30 to 35 miles away. The only reason I could get out of the camp, I had a change of command. They transferred me from A battery to B battery. The captain of our A battery knew that I had been in trouble with the colonel a couple of times and I was on his black list.

**SEVERAL:**

That's because you were Jewish?

**LEVY:**

No. That had nothing to do with it. He said no, he wouldn't approve it. So when I got the transfer to this other captain's B battery, he was a fun loving guy, a big guy 6'4", 250, captain Rooley and he said yeah I heard about what you did a couple of times and he said make me a promise, you get on the food truck and go to Regensburg, check into this place. It was a high class house of prostitution run by the American government, to tell you the truth. So he said come back in 3 days, get back in the truck and come back. He said you promise? I said captain, I promise and I did. So I checked into this thing, check it out. Regensburg was right outside of town and I met my cousin.

**SEVERAL:**

Was it your idea to go to the High Holiday services or your cousin's?

**LEVY:**

Oh no. We knew, we found out where they were going to have the services in Regensburg so we went to schul.

**SEVERAL:**

So how come the, somebody must have organized that to have services in a Germany.

**LEVY:**

Listen, you know, when we moved in, the Germans became second class citizens. We took control, the government took control.

**SEVERAL:**

Did the synagogue show any damage from the war?

**LEVY:**

No. I didn't see any damage there at all.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have any contact with the Germans when you were there?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I had a lot of contact with them. We stayed in there houses during the war. They moved out and we moved in. They had to move out.

**SEVERAL:**

Let me make sure I got all the.

**LEVY:**

You got more than enough.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see, one last question about the war, or maybe two questions. Do you have any memories about hearing the atomic bombs that were dropped?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I remember. It came on the Armed Forces Radio service. I do want to tell you one thing about President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was just a week or so before the war ended, it was around the middle of April or something like that. I am on an outpost and some guy on my outpost through the phone connection heard that FDR had died. As I came off the outpost, I woke up some guys who were sleeping because that must have been 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning and I told them that FDR had died and you should've seen the reaction. It was from

crying to what happens to us now? What happens to the war? What is going to happen? And we were all pretty upset about that. That was really, I will never forget that.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see, how would you say that the war changed you?

**LEVY:**

Without a two hour dissertation? I think the war had a very big impact on my life. I know a lot of guys came out of the war drunks, did not do anything with their life, but because of my background at our house from the sisters and brothers that I had and the Boy Scouts, the AZA, the band and being an officer of the student body, and all of that kind of stuff molded me and I think the army strengthened all that.

**SEVERAL:**

How about in terms of your relationships to non-Jews?

**LEVY:**

I have never had any trouble with non-Jews.

**SEVERAL:**

Even before the war?

**LEVY:**

No. We in junior high school, which was McKinley High which is down where the old Robinson building used to be on South Lake, right behind is McKinley Junior High. It's still there, they have changed the grades and all of the stuff that they do there. We had the very wealthy coming up from the Huntington Hotel area, San Marino. We had the blacks, Asians and Hispanics coming from the west side from the Fair Oaks area to McKinley, and we had the wealthy that came up in chauffer driven cars with Filipino drivers, white drivers, African-American drivers in their putty, their uniforms, very wealthy. Then they had us white kids who come from the north and east, us poorer whites and we met in there for four years and that was the greatest education, better than the army. Really we had everybody; it was the best four years of my educational life in junior high school.

**SEVERAL:**

So the end of the war in early 1946 January, you come back to the United States, came back to Pasadena, you were discharged. I am going to ask some questions about the Jewish war veterans now. Do you know how that group in Pasadena started?

**LEVY:**

I think it was the older guys like Lou Press, Dave Press, Julie Feldstein, I think some of the older guys. They were a lot older than I was.

**SEVERAL:**

These were people who served?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. Lou Press was an officer and Dave Press, his next brother up was a first sergeant. By this time, Lou is in the car business in Pasadena and Dave was an attorney already, he was deputy city prosecutor, but he was still in private practice then before he went to the city. The older guys and like I said, it didn't last more than a year or two if I remember right. Everybody was busy raising kids and family. I had a job, I detested, and so.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall about what year it was formed? 1946, you think?

**LEVY:**

I think it was formed in 1946.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have to get a charter from National?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I wasn't involved in all that stuff. I didn't do it. Don't forget, Dave Press was the attorney, he probably did it all.

**SEVERAL:**

I would like to get his records.

**LEVY:**

Dave passed away several years ago.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you have a women's auxiliary?

**LEVY:**

To Jewish war vets?

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah.

**LEVY:**

Not that I remember. Don't forget I wasn't married until 1948 and this was '46 or '47.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see. This is something High Vigo mentioned, something about the Crown City Four.

**LEVY:**

What was it?

**SEVERAL:**

The Crown City Four. Apparently it was like a barbershop quartet. He mentioned that the group would go to VA facilities. Do you recall any activities?

**LEVY:**

I think there was one dance that I can remember, but I am not sure Michael. I really don't remember. It didn't last long.

**SEVERAL:**

It doesn't sound like you were too involved

**LEVY:**

I wasn't. I was just trying to make a living the first couple of years I was out of the service I was sort of lost because all the guys were going back to school or they were going to work for their parents, and I was working for my brother in-law in a deli and we were going belly up so it was not fun for the first couple of years until I got into a full time job.

**SEVERAL:**

How about your dad's printing?

**LEVY:**

I went there and I was there 2 or 3 hours and I didn't even open my mouth to suggest to him to try to come in to the business. Everything had to be his way. My oldest brother went through the same thing when he was 18 years old during the depression. Earl ended up as a draftsman out of Muir Tech west campus and couldn't get a job and went to work for WPA up on the mountains of Mount Wilson and some guy called him a dirty Jew and my brother went after him with a pick. The guy hit him in the shoulder with a pick and Earl got a pick and went after the guy and it was bad news. That was anti-Semitism.

**SEVERAL:**

So you don't recall, do you recall meetings or?

**LEVY:**

I remember I think one or two meetings and like I said, I went but I wasn't ready to go into it full on.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall where they were held?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. Kirschner Hall.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you recall how many people were there?

**LEVY:**

Not many, maybe 8, 9 or 10. I think the Minovitz's were in it, Les Berman was in it, the same guys who were doing everything else was in the same thing.

**SEVERAL:**

Do you personally have any relationship or had any relationship with the VFW and the American Legion.

**LEVY:**

I belong to the American Legion.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you do. So that's been your involvement as a veteran. I mean, the Jewish War Veterans I believe still exist.

**LEVY:**

In Pasadena?

**SEVERAL:**

Not in Pasadena.

**LEVY:**

I belong to the Jewish War Veterans here.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you do?

**LEVY:**

Sure, I've been a member 5 years I have been a member of American Legion in Newport for about 10.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh this is kind of recent.

**LEVY:**

Well, you know they are all young guys. All the old vets are gone, so the Jewish War Veterans is really struggling here. They have about 20, 25 or 30 members. Probably 10, 12 or 15 come to meetings, but the spouses help.

**SEVERAL:**

Where do you meet?

**LEVY:**

At a clubhouse here.

**SEVERAL:**

About how often do you meet?

**LEVY:**

Once a month. They have lox and bagels, sweets and coffee. Everything for 5 bucks.

**SEVERAL:**

Are there, I mean 20, 25 people doesn't represent all the wars we fought since World War II, or is it primarily veterans from World War II?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. There might be one or two from Korea, maybe one from Vietnam and none from the latest 10 years. However, in Newport Beach, I am really amazed at the American Legion. They are getting young people to join the American Legion. It is the largest post in the country. It's the only post in the country that has its own American Legion yacht club. They got docks there, boats. They are really, they got about 3000 members.

**SEVERAL:**

What do they do?

**LEVY:**

I just got the magazine today from the post. I will show it to you later.

**SEVERAL:**

Now with the Jewish War Veterans, is it pretty much just a social group now?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, they do two great things. Once a month they go to the VA Hospital to the spinal wards in Long Beach and once a month they go to Camp Pendleton and the women's axillary which is very active in Jewish work, in fact the girl who runs the Jewish axillary, she gives her whole life to the Jewish war veterans and she really makes it go. They all go to Camp Pendleton, they crochet and knit, there are 100 babies born a month down in Camp Pendleton here and so they don't have the money and the government does not have the money and so they give money and a lot of time to crocheting and knitting baby stuff and they bring money for diapers. So that club really does good stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

So when they go to the VA, is that something you personally do too?

**LEVY:**

I volunteered for almost 8 years every week at the VA for 4 or 5 hours every Monday. I will show you my buttons; I got 300 hours for all that stuff, yeah. But once I moved miles one way from here and to fight that traffic, I'd leave at 5:30-6. I'd leave Newport at 5:30 or 6 in the morning, get there and have coffee and went up to the 7th floor, so I did my volunteer duty. I did that.

**SEVERAL:**

Well I think this is it. I really appreciate it, I can't tell you. You are a godsend.

**LEVY:**

See the trouble is, one story leads to another and I got hundreds of stories.

**SEVERAL:**

I know. That's why I wanted to do it my way.

**Session Eight (March 24, 2012)**

**SEVERAL:**

Today is March 24, 2012. This is Michael Several and I am with Al Levy for another oral history interview. I want to first ask about Frank Ackerman, your memories of Frank Ackerman.

**LEVY:**

Sure.

**SEVERAL:**

What do you remember about Frank Ackerman?

**LEVY:**

A very bright guy in business, in Hebrew, running a business, likeable, strong willed and a strong mind. What he wanted to do, he got it done.

**SEVERAL:**

What did he do for a living, do you know?

**LEVY:**

He was in publications or something, I think. I am not sure anymore.

**SEVERAL:**

The reason I ask is, in other interviews not too many people, when they were asked, nobody seemed to know.

**LEVY:**

I think he published magazines or articles or something like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah. One of things, you talk about his personality. Do you recall what his accomplishments were when he was with the temple?

**LEVY:**

With at temple? He was the president for more than one term, I remember that. Several terms and that is why I said he was very strong willed. When he wanted something, he got it. Any specific things, I cannot remember now. It has been 30-35 years I think since he left the temple. Easily 35 years, maybe longer and then he opened up an orthodox shul I think for a while it was in a second story building on Main Drive in Arcadia and it did not go and I don't remember when he got involved with the Arcadia Temple, I don't remember that.

**SEVERAL:**

There was some testimony that he was very instrumental in completing the main sanctuary or the main buildings. I mean, do you have recollections of that?

**LEVY:**

Yes, I am sure that is right, and I can tell you when that was roughly because I was building a swimming pool at our property on Galbreth Road in 1956, and the temple was completed because I had a building inspector, I think I told you this before, I had the same inspector on my pool for inspection as the temple did. He would go to the temple first and then come to me, and I said, how is it going out there. He smiled, he said too many bosses, he said nothing is right.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really,

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah, you know, I said in one of the reviews that they actually built the bema going east and then ended up going west, so somebody made a change there and I don't know why. I think it is backwards really, going east,

**SEVERAL:**

Right, right.

**LEVY:**

But it is not.

**SEVERAL:**

Somebody said that he, I don't know, he dealt with the contractors and you know, do you recall specifically some of the things?

**LEVY:**

I cannot remember, you know that was what 55 years, 57 years already.

**SEVERAL:**

Now, he was president, well liked, so what happened? As I understand it, he did not like Rabbi Galpert.

**LEVY:**

I don't know that for a fact. In the 50s, I was in the middle of struggling to make a living. I had a wife, two kids, a house and a pool, a dog. We went, but I was not that involved at the time. There was a period Barb was involved. She was on the board at the temple in the early 50s, but she wouldn't...

**SEVERAL:**

The dispute took place, I think in the second renewal of Rabbi Galpert's contract, which would have been in 1962. Do you recall if there was a community meeting, a congregational meeting concerning the renewal of the contract or?

**LEVY:**

I don't remember that. If my father was here he could tell you all of these things. He knew everything about it.

**SEVERAL:**

I mean the story that I have been able to piece together was, I think it was David, not Goldman, the one who had the delicatessen.

**LEVY:**

Minowitz

**SEVERAL:**

Minowitz, yeah. No, it was the older son, Harold, who said that Ackerman kind of controlled the board. He picked people to be on the board who were following him and he had the board; the board did not renew Galpert's contract, voted not to renew it and they gave the assignment to inform Rabbi Galpert to Max Stone, maybe. I cannot remember.

**LEVY:**

Another strong willed man.

**SEVERAL:**

Was he? Well, whoever it was, instead he apparently talked to Galpert about the problems and so on and I don't know, perhaps Galpert agreed to make some changes and then there was a push back to not get rid of Galpert. There was subsequently a congregational meeting as I understand it and at this meeting Ackerman said, either you get rid of Galpert or I am leaving, either or. The congregation voted to keep Galpert, so Ackerman left. I mean, is this story reading?

**LEVY:**

I don't know anything about that really. I really don't know.

**SEVERAL:**

So let's go on to El Monte.

**LEVY:**

El Monte, the big city of El Monte.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, you came back from the war and you established a business in El Monte.

**LEVY:**

Right.

**SEVERAL:**

What kind of business was it?

**LEVY:**

I had a partner we both in the house-to-house business.

**SEVERAL:**

Which means what?

**LEVY:**

The cities where you got licensed called your itinerant salesmen. Schematics. A dollar down, a dollar week. The most miserable, dirty, filthy business I could have gone into, but I had to make a living. We had lost our delicatessen business and I was married with two babies and I needed to do something and this came along real quick. I was out of work maybe a week, so I jumped in and I did not really know what I was getting into. I was young. I was only 25, 26, 27 years old, something like that. I met this guy and he said our routes run close together, why don't we form a partnership and we will continue the routes, the house-to-house business and we will open up a store.

**SEVERAL:**

When you say house-to-house, I am still confused on what that is. What is it?

**LEVY:**

We sold anything they wanted, but we carried a lot of stuff in the car.

**SEVERAL:**

And you would go to a house...

**LEVY:**

I worked for company that had an established route and I went to work for them.

**SEVERAL:**

And what was the name of that company?

**LEVY:**

They probably ended up millionaires. They bought old houses off of Sunset Boulevard, old Sunset Boulevard. They probably had 15, 20, 30 houses and they bought them for practically nothing. It was rather a very poor area, but their intention was to you know, lease out the property, so you know, I was only there not quite two years.

**SEVERAL:**

But what...

**LEVY:**

I will get to that. They had cards and each card represented a house. So you would drive to the house and you collect, you were a collector of money, but also sold and that is where you made the commission. You did not make any commission on collecting money for the company but if person wanted to something you did not have, you'd find out what they wanted and you'd tell the bosses. They had a big warehouse and you'd go in. If they wanted blankets and you did not have it with you or a certain color, or tea sets or silverware, toasters, irons, we carried all that stuff and a lot of it in the car. So then you would take the new merchandise and you'd add a longer contract and tried to increase their weekly payment. Of course you are dealing with some pretty tough people that would beat you to death, financially. They would not pay and we had a full time credit manager, whose name was Garvin or something like that. He signed all the letters, Rob Steel. It was a dirty business, but you worked on a good profit margin. So after a year or so, when I was there, I said I could do this for myself.

**SEVERAL:**

So let me see. This is something I have never experienced, so I am little puzzled. This company owned a house, so I am a tenant of that house?

**LEVY:**

No, no, no. I was telling you about these guys who owned the company. You asked me what were they doing, you know, how did they end up, what did they do to continue the business. They ended up probably millionaires off their property, not so much the business.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. So they had these houses.

**LEVY:**

No. They had nothing to do with the houses. That was just for themselves. It had nothing to do with the business they were running. The business was you took merchandise, you had these cards, and it was existing when I got there and you tried to pick up new accounts through friends and relatives of the account that you had and that is how you grew the business.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. So I'm living in the house and I contacted this company...

**LEVY:**

Or the company contacted you.

**SEVERAL:**

And said we have...

**LEVY:**

All this stuff to sell.

**SEVERAL:**

All of this stuff to sell.

**LEVY:**

A dollar down, a dollar a week.

**SEVERAL:**

So then you would come and ...

**LEVY:**

Collect the money that they owed on a weekly basis.

**SEVERAL:**

And try to sell them some more, but you would not get a commission on what you collected,

**LEVY:**

No

**SEVERAL:**

You got the money from what you sold.

**LEVY:**

Right.

**SEVERAL:**

So I may owe \$100 for you know pots and pans or whatever and you come in there and say you want to buy a lamp and you would then get your income based on that sale of that lamp.

**LEVY:**

Okay right. After doing it for a year and burning up two automobiles in year and a half I guess because you drove, you lived in the car and that was before freeways and I collected from Pasadena all way out through Foothill Boulevard, all way out to old Cucamonga, and I would hit Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Glendora, San Dimas, Lavern, Pomona, Ontario, but not all on the same day. We had different routes for different days. I disliked it because the clientele that you had, the doorknobs were dirty, houses you had to go in, sit down and talk to people that were dirty, the kids were dirty, it couldn't have been more dirty. It was terrible, but I was making a living. So I went to my bosses and I said, Look, instead of doing this behind your back, I would like to go into business for myself.

**SEVERAL:**

Let's see, actually before you get to that, how did you get into that?

**LEVY:**

We lost our delicatessen business. If you remember on the tape, when I first got out of the service, I went to work with my brother-in-law and his brother that owned two delis at that time. They wanted to expand into a very large chain and they started. We ended up with four stores and then the supermarkets that we were in started self-service delis. Pre-wrapped this and pre-cut that, and all of a sudden we realized our business was going down, down, down. We had the delis that were in the center of the store, we had 6,7,8 people and pretty soon we were down to 4 or 5 and we weren't doing any business. So after a year or so, that was the end of that. So during that time, as soon as I could see, you know, we started talking about getting out. I happened to contact somebody who said why did you talk to this guy about this house, the house business. So I was like you, I did not know anything about it, never heard about it, and so I contacted this guy and he said go see this company. So I went to see this company, they hired me and the first couple of weeks I was the hero there, you know. They had 10-12 salesman out on the road because I made all the stops, I did not know any better. I went to find the address, I had to find the street, I had the city, I went and by gosh I ended up with good week's collection, so they were really happy about that. So after I would like to say year and year and a half or so, I thought this was right up my alley, I can do it myself. So I went to them and they said sure go ahead. If you need help, if you want to buy something from us, we will give you a deal, the same deal that you got right now, so I said great. So I started and the first 3-4 months I had enough accounts to keep me busy for all week, but you had to have one day a week to go to downtown LA to buy, LA Street, all the wholesaler, the jobbers, manufacturers. You walked from place to place to place. When I was in for myself, I walked in and a guy said, Hey, you need a suit for a graduation or a bar mitzvah or something. No Jews, a Christian, so I would say yeah okay, 42 long. So he would bring out 2 or 3 suits from Academy Award downtown between 7th and 8th Street on LA Street and you can take out suits as you want, sign for them, if you sold them, fine, if not bring it back and no charge. So naturally I had clothes, my relatives had clothes, my doctor had clothes, so I did that for a few years and I just could not take it any longer and that is when I got into the building business.

**SEVERAL:**

So you started, you mentioned there was a friend of yours, somebody you knew who was doing the same thing and you decided...

**LEVY:**

Oh, about going to stores. Yeah. So we met actually on the road, because a lot of people had more than one company doing the same thing in the same house, so you would bump in these guys. Oh yeah, sure. So one week they would pay them and the next week they would pay me, and some weeks they wouldn't pay either one of us. It depended on how much beer and stuff they did. It was a filthy business, filthy. So we decided that since he was in Alhambra and I was in Pasadena, we'd go into El Monte because it was a working man's town. We rented this little store. I remember the address was 125 South Lexington in El Monte. We remodeled the store and we put in furniture, appliances, and built a corner for clothing. We called it El Monte Department Store (laughing). So what is a Department Store? Well in this case, a few clothes, a few appliances, and we had a grand opening on a Sunday and we went to some place which I don't remember and we had salt and pepper shakers with our names put on them. One said Al and one said Paul, who was my partner. They were about yea high and they were so cute. So we gave each person a salt and pepper shaker so every time they look around they see Al and Paul, then they'd know who we were. We got so busy on that Sunday. We had representatives of the appliance companies come and they stayed there all day with us. We had myself, my partner, my father in law, and one or two other guys who were helping us sell, but we had so many people in the store because what we did, we each went to our old clients and they said, Oh yeah, yeah sure they would be glad to come, and they did. So many at one time we could not handle it. We sold \$10,000 worth of stuff on one Sunday and in the late afternoon we just threw the books away and said we will see you during the week, you know, if you want to come back, you know, so we did get a few lock-ins, but not many. So it was based on our house to house business and we were doing really great. Then we opened up a little clothing store just right across the street from the post office...

**SEVERAL:**

Just one thing, do you recall what year this was?

**LEVY:**

Oh, I know what year, 1950.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay

**LEVY:**

I used to work seven days a week and I'd come home at 10, 11 o'clock at night from the road because I was delivering. I worked during the day on the road, come back to pick up the truck we bought, put the appliances on the truck with the kid next door to where I lived and we delivered till 10-11 o'clock at night. In fact, one night I just said to the young guy, wouldn't it be funny if somebody thinks we're stealing or robbing the store. Well, in comes a squad car with bright lights, the sirens, their guns drawn. I almost died. So, I had to prove that I was the owner of the store, which I did and they put their guns away. So, I've had enough of guns.

**SEVERAL:**

So your store at this time was drawing in the same people you sold to on the road? Did you stop that? Now they were driving to your store?

**LEVY:**

Well, we still kept our routes.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, you did?

**LEVY:**

Oh yeah. That is why we were working so hard. One of us would go on the route, one stay in the store and then the next day... Well, we were only working 3-4 days a week on the road and one day to buy, so we sort of staggered it and then we had a very competent book keeper that we hired and so we knew that was... She was an elderly lady who was really sharp. She didn't get involved with anything except running the books. We were doing well, so we opened up the second store across from the old post office. I doubt it is still there. And then we had a chance to move into a very large store.

**SEVERAL:**

Was this all in El Monte?

**LEVY:**

All in El Monte on Garvey Boulevard. We moved in the store. The guy who was there for years and years had retired and we put everything in the one store on the main street and we were doing very well until one morning. At about 6 o'clock in the morning, I got a call from two separate guys from LA. We belong to LA credit merchants association. They said, Al you know your partner was at the credit meeting last night. I said yeah, so? Well, he lost a lot of money. I said, really. He said, yeah, he wrote a check. Well, I knew that was the end of the business, because I knew he did not have a dime. I had a few bucks, my father-in-law signed from Bank of America on Colorado Street in Pasadena for \$5000, so we could get into business right and I could see that going down the drain. So I went to the store and I said let's go across the street and have breakfast. I will tell you about the Jewish deli across the street later. And he said, are you going to go on the road today, so I said no, let's go across the street and have breakfast. So we had breakfast and I said, Paul I said, you and I are through. He was shocked. I said, you lost money, you wrote a check that was no good and you wanted me to sign checks this morning to cover your ass. He looked at me and he turned white. I said, we're through. I went home and called Barb's cousins who were attorneys in Beverly Hills, very sharp, and they recommended one of their lower echelon guys, it was not a big deal. And so I got out with my car and my original routes. That was all I wanted. He had the business, the stores, and stole from himself. He was doing well, but he had cash he never had before. Six months later he declared bankruptcy and he was out.

**SEVERAL:**

So what year was that?

**LEVY:**

1951. All the stores only lasted a year, a year and a half. Once I knew I could not control it.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, yeah. During this time you had the two small stores and then the large store. I want to see if I can understand how the operation worked. I almost get the impression that these stores were almost like warehouses in which you had all the products there, but you were basically still going out on the road, from house to house to you know the get orders and then you would come back and take it out. It was not as if people came into your store,

**LEVY:**

No. Very few came in the store. We hoped the little clothing store across from the post office, because of the post office we would get the walk ins. We had a little bit and then we saw the chance to get in and combine into a bigger and better spot, we would think we were doing pretty good.

**SEVERAL:**

Did you get a lot of walk in with that?

**LEVY:**

No, not a lot of walk in, but you know in the furniture business you don't have to have twenty people at a time. It's nice, but it does not happen. But when you made a sale you had a pretty good day's pay.

**SEVERAL:**

What kind of furniture was it? Was it high end?

**LEVY:**

No, low end. Borax with ugly colors, grey and green, it was terrible stuff (laughing). But it did not look bad, but you know you had to gear the quality to who you were dealing with.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah (laughing). You know going into furniture was one of the things that some of the early merchants, the Jewish merchants in Pasadena did and it was, you know, very low end.

**LEVY:**

Sure. There was only one quality furniture store and that was Chase's on Colorado Street. Appliances, and that was nice stuff. Of course in Pasadena then you had Bullock's. There are a couple of stores still on Colorado Street. I don't remember the names now, but I know they are still there.

**SEVERAL:**

Actually, as a little digression, Star Furniture ...

**LEVY:**

Yes, Irwin Brown, the Brown family. DA Brown and Irwin Brown.

**SEVERAL:**

I got the impression that it started off kind of low end, but in time it became higher end.

**LEVY:**

Right. It became medium low price (laughing). I should say, \_\_\_\_\_ price, low quality. You know what I am saying. It was much better than what I sold, much better than what Lincoln Furniture Economy sold, Bernie Everon, those were the three competitors of Star Furniture right there, plus Al Baskin. Al Baskin was still sort of Boraxy.

**SEVERAL:**

So after the operation, you went back on the road after this business?

**LEVY:**

Yes, for about 5 more years,

**SEVERAL:**

Wow.

**LEVY:**

Yeah. I hated every minute, it was terrible. But it did give me flexibility to spend some time with the family and we did take some trips and I paid my bills, you know, but it was getting to a point where we really hated it so much and an ex-partner, ex-friend was in the building business in \_\_\_\_\_ and I asked him for a job when we had boat, we were down in Balboa, in Newport Harbor. He said no, I don't hire friends or relatives anymore because we did have a friend that went to work for him, it did not work out and he had to fire him. He said I don't want to go through that again. So I finally convinced him, being the salesman that I was supposed to be, that let him talk to his wife, I will talk to Barb to see if it can work it out. A couple of weeks later he said okay, let's do it. So that is how I got back into the building. My brother, as I said, you got this on tape already, my brother had a big business going already, but I did not know a window frame from a door frame, believe me, and I did not want to go be the kid brother, just working, did not know anything about the business. So this guy trained me and I worked hard and I learned a lot quick and after 2-3 years I went to work for my brother, so that is how I got into it.

**SEVERAL:**

So during those five years you went back on the road, did you go back to that company you used to work for?

**LEVY:**

No, no, no. I had my accounts that I started. Oh, they were mine. And I had my dad, I had the copies of contracts and the payment books, and my dad was in the printing business so he did the printing for me and I called it Thrifty Home Supply. His printing shop was Thrifty Printers, so that is where I got the name from.

**SEVERAL:**

Did the nature of this business shrink during those 5 years? I mean, I have never heard of this.

**LEVY:**

Well, it is big back east

**SEVERAL:**

Still?

**LEVY:**

Oh no, no. I doubt, I could not believe it. Don't forget, Michael, this was before strip malls, before big malls, outside and indoor malls, there was none of that here. It was downtown, little stuff, little country store here or there, so that is why the people would, you know, go out to the outlying areas of city, East LA, you know, they did not have large department stores in East LA. We mainly dealt with Hispanics and African Americans and a few white.

**SEVERAL:**

During those five years did things start to change? Did it start shrinking, the business? Or at the end you were pretty much, I mean, you hated the work, but was the business itself pretty much at the same level?

**LEVY:**

Yeah, it was still going pretty strong then. Don't forget, gas was 35 cents, 40 cents a gallon.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, I remember when it was 25 cents of gallon.

**LEVY:**

Okay (laughing). I remember when it was 10 gallons for a dollar in Highland Springs, in Highland Park.

**SEVERAL:**

(Laughing) Ok, you got me with that.

**LEVY:**

That was quite a few years, No, at that time I left which was 1958, I think I got out of the business, it was still going. Of course, once the shopping malls and all that stuff got cranked up then I doubt that you could find anybody in that business today.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, I have never heard of it. I have never heard of it.

**LEVY:**

Where are you from?

**SEVERAL:**

Whittier and La Habra.

**LEVY:**

No, no, no,

**SEVERAL:**

Originally it was New York. Mount Kisco, which is a suburb north of New York City. About 40 miles north of New York City.

**LEVY:**

Oh, well, there were peddlers.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, I remember peddlers,

**LEVY:**

Well, that's what we were. We were peddlers, but we didn't have stands in the streets.

**SEVERAL:**

Well I remember a horse-drawn peddler going down Moore Avenue.

**LEVY:**

That started of it, really. That is what it was.

**SEVERAL:**

Wow,

**LEVY:**

It was a filthy, dirty business.

**SEVERAL:**

I can imagine. So when you had these stores, what were the other businesses in the area? Particularly, in the Jewish area.

**LEVY:**

Oh sure, okay. We were at 520 I think, West Garvey Boulevard.

**SEVERAL:**

And that was the big store?

**LEVY:**

That was the big store, okay. Directly across the street was a Jewish delicatessen that opened up after we started in the mid 1950s, whenever it was, and next door to him was Irv Kaufman, Dandy Auto Supply, and these were all Jewish owned. To the east of those stores was Slaven's Jewelry, all on the same side of the street, on the south side of the street going east, and in that

same block was Walter's Men's Store, owned by the Walter's family. Ray Walters married Muriel Silver, which is Lou Silver's daughter. I want to be sure you made that connection, because after all, Lou Silver was really a main part of the temple for years. The Jewish school still named after him. So, that is the tie there. Ray Walters, I used to play golf with him. I got to tell you, Ray Walters died first, Harold Minovitz died next, Sever Weismann died next, and Dave Hellman died. Now, that was a foursome every week. Once in a while they would let me play with them if one of the guys didn't show up. They would call me, Al, drive 40 miles. Okay, I will be there, because I knew them all so well. Stop and think about it. They all went down, boom, boom, boom, boom. Dave Hellman was the last one.

**SEVERAL:**

So what was the clientele in El Monte?

**LEVY:**

I still got more Jewish stores.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh! Oh, yeah.

**LEVY:**

So I want to be sure about Walter's Men's Store. That store started I am sure in the 1930s and we were not in business until I would say 1951 or 1952 in the store on Garvey Boulevard. And his son continued that store for years after that. The son that married Muriel Silver. And then across the street on the side we were, probably a block and a half away from my store was Harley Shoes, Jewish owned by Sam Dressner. His son in law was Seymour Holtzmann and he had a son whose name was Harley, Harley Dressner. They called it Harley's Shoe Store. All three

worked in the store, all funny. Seymour Holtzmann babysat for Barb when she was a baby. That's how far it goes back. Seymour died many years ago. His wife just died rather recently. She was very elderly. As far as Jewish stores, that's about the best I can give you.

**SEVERAL:**

Were the owners of these stores members of the Pasadena temple, do you recall?

**LEVY:**

Yeah. The Walter's; Ray Walters was a member. Sam Dressner was a member. The others were not because they basically were from El Monte, Alhambra

**SEVERAL:**

There were temples there?

**LEVY:**

Yes, at that time sure

**SEVERAL:**

To your knowledge they were members of those?

**LEVY:**

I don't know if they were members of anything, but I know they were not members of the Pasadena Temple.

**SEVERAL:**

The Jewish owned businesses were small though, right?

**LEVY:**

Yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

Did they primarily employ members of their family or did they?

**LEVY:**

Yes. All of them in fact employed, except the deli, I think the deli was co-owned. They opened up, like I said, we opened up the store, which was probably the tail end of 1950 and I was out of the store probably 3-4 months after they opened. They didn't last long, but the Dandy Auto Store was there for years. In 1960-1961, Joey Baker who is a relative of the Kaufman's who owned the Dandy Auto Store, you know Joey Baker.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, yeah I do

**LEVY:**

We took the kids on a trip to Lake Havasu and Joey had a boat. He's always had a boat. Now he has a big boat. We rented overnight campers where you sleep up, you know they had a thing on the top. It was as cute as a bug's ear. So, Joey drove his camper and boat, we met at Kaufman's parking lot. Joey lived in Venice at that time. So we went and we spent three days at Lake Havasu and had a ball. We both woke up 2-3 o'clock in the morning and our camper was rocking like this, windy. We were sitting about 2 feet from the edge of the cliff, so I got up and moved mine and Joey's camper was the same type and he was moving his. We had a great time. In fact, Joey's son Norm had the boat and he lost a rudder. He spent all day diving for the rudder. They had a spare, but he wanted that one. We had a great time. We had a lot of fun together. We had a lot of great times with all our friends.

**SEVERAL:**

Did the owner of these stores, to your knowledge, did they live in El Monte or did they, do you know where any of them lived?

**LEVY:**

I don't know. Ray Walters lived in Arcadia, which isn't too far from El Monte. I drove from Pasadena to El Monte, 12 miles, maybe some like that.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, yeah. Why did you open up your store in El Monte or why do you think the others did? I mean, why El Monte?

**LEVY:**

Working class and growing. You see, El Monte had a lot of small farms and stuff like that and after World War II everything started to grow. Lakewood was nothing, nothing but farms between Temple City to North Long Beach, it was nothing, I mean nothing.

**SEVERAL:**

I remember.

**LEVY:**

You remember that so you know I am telling the truth. There was a single road each way. Now, El Monte had something rather unique called Five Points. Five streets came to one central station, one corner, and from that everything grew. It was sort of a hub. You're going to ask me if there were Jewish people there, and I don't know. I know there was one. I just met one a couple of weeks ago at lunch with a bunch of people from the temple. And well, you don't know the \_\_\_\_\_ down here, but it's a common meeting place. The guy sitting across from me said, you know, what you do... It was the first time I met some of these people. Well, I had a store at Five Points. I said, you did, really? Did you know this one or that? He didn't. He stayed right around Five Points. I don't remember what kind of business it was, but I remember asking if he knew the people the people I just mentioned to you, but he said no. So I sort of removed him out of my mind.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, interesting. You don't know what year he was there or anything?

**LEVY:**

He said he was there for 20 years, about from '50-'70.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh really, wow. What is his name, do you know?

**LEVY:**

I can find out for you.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, I would be interested. I don't know I will follow up, but I might as well get his name in case. How old is he?

**LEVY:**

My age, maybe year or two younger.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay. Is he as sharp as you? Well, no, that is unfair. Is he close to as sharp as you? (laughing)

**LEVY:**

I only met him. I had a sandwich, he had a sandwich and I left. there were 7 or 8 other guys. You know, everybody is a war hero, you know.

**SEVERAL:**

I know. I would appreciate it if you could get his name.

**LEVY:**

Okay, I will try to find out, I know one guy, if he does not know then I cannot help you. But the one guy is sort of the ring-leader there. Every Wednesday we meet for lunch.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh okay and you have never seen him before?

**LEVY:**

No.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, let's see. When you had your business, who did the books? Did you have an accountant or did Barbara?

**LEVY:**

At store we hired this lady, an elderly lady that was really sharp. She did not get involved with anything. She worked 8 hours a day, and she had, you see, when you collected, you had a sheet with numbers that corresponded to the numbers on your card, so when you collected 2 dollars or a dollar, you'd write it down and you'd put the date and she went through and counted the money to be sure that all the money was there that was listed on the sheet. So well we learned that from our previous experience with the other companies there.

**SEVERAL:**

How did you hire her, I mean, do you remember?

**LEVY:**

She was a friend of friend of my partner. In fact, her son-in-law made our furniture for our house in 1950, the most gorgeous furniture. It was just so classy. It was nice stuff.

**SEVERAL:**

Wow.

**LEVY:**

That was nice.

**SEVERAL:**

You don't have any of that left?

**LEVY:**

Oh no.

**SEVERAL:**

Was she is Jewish?

**LEVY:**

No, no.

**SEVERAL:**

What was your partner Jewish?

**LEVY:**

Yes.

A real \_\_\_\_\_ I got involved with I am really lucky I got out with what I did.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah, yeah. Let's see. I just want to take a quick look. I think that might be pretty much... I feel like I am not asking something, but I cannot, you know...

**LEVY:**

You don't know what it is (laughing).

**SEVERAL:**

I don't what it is. We touched on all the things that I had written down before I was going to talk to you about.

**LEVY:**

Yeah, I told you before , there is not much I can tell you about El Monte in such a short time. But the stores, I kept thinking about some names, like Irv Kauffman came up and the tie between him and Joey Baker and Harley's Shoe Store. Harley's son died at a very young age, age 37 from a massive brain tumor. He had constant headaches. Funny; he was the funniest guy on two feet, bright. But he kept complaining of headaches. He was in a barber shop on South Marengo, we all had hair cuts there together. It was on a workday, he came home and he had a tremendous headache and he and Marlene, Marlene Dresner. You see, there is the tie again. Marlene was a relative of Seymour Holtzmann, so again this one family to another, that is how we knew everybody. He passed out in his house and died. Marlene's brother was a doctor in LA, she called him immediately but by the time he got out, he was dead. 37 years old. That happened in 1967.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, wow.

**LEVY:**

That was terrible.

**SEVERAL:**

When you cut your ties with Paul, that pretty much ended your contact with businesses in El Monte?

**LEVY:**

Absolutely, yeah.

**SEVERAL:**

So basically your connection, you are really speaking of a very narrow few year period.

**LEVY:**

Right, not more than 2-2½ years, that is it. Starting in 1950, I remember of that very clearly because I'd come home at 9, 10, 11 o'clock at night and I had not seen Peggy for a few days. She was always sleeping when I got in. I used to wake her up. She would get so mad, but it was great.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, because you know this is a foundation, I mean of the things that I am now hoping to do is start seriously interviewing people from Arcadia, which you know is a result of merger from Alhambra and I think there is even some people who were part of the El Monte congregation.

**LEVY:**

Oh, Yeah. I would think so.

**SEVERAL:**

I want to get ...

**LEVY:**

Let me tip you off to person in Arcadia

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

Ralph and Molly Wolveck. Molly is old friend of ours dating back to when we are all kids in Pasadena. I've known Molly since she was 10 years old. She is six months or a year older than I am now. They just celebrated the 21st which is what, yesterday, what is today?

**SEVERAL:**

Today is 24th

**LEVY:**

Okay, the 21st or 22nd of this month we went to their 65th wedding anniversary and that has been 2-3 years ago. Ralph is 90, he is still to his office. And you know who he is business with? The two brothers, they are from Europe. What is the name?

**SEVERAL:**

Sam and Isaac.

**LEVY:**

Yeah, he is partners with that. They share the same office. I think the building is owned by Ralph. It's right by, very close to behind the Civic Auditorium.

**SEVERAL:**

How do you spell the last name?

**LEVY:**

Wolveck. I can give you the address, phone number, anything you want.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay, what is his...

**LEVY:**

He has been the CPA for umpteen million theaters.

**SEVERAL:**

So he was in El Monte, or what?

**LEVY:**

No, he has always been in, they have lived in Arcadia I think since they have been married.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, so they were part of the Arcadia Temple?

**LEVY:**

Yeah and also the Pasadena Temple. Now don't ask me if they were members of each, I don't know. I know Molly and Ralph are members now of the Pasadena Temple.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh right, right.

**LEVY:**

Okay,

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah okay,

**LEVY:**

Wolveck, right there.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay,

**LEVY:**

Hay baby, you want a doughnut? Barbara: A doughnut?

**LEVY:**

Yeah

**SEVERAL:**

Hi Barbara. Barbara: Hi there.

**LEVY:**

I got another chocolate if you want it.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh you have, they lived in San Diego?

**LEVY:**

No, no, no, no. Who?

**SEVERAL:**

Oh.

**LEVY:**

You are in trouble now boy, in trouble with the boss.

**SEVERAL:**

Okay.

**LEVY:**

I just gave him Molly and Ralph's number. You know they lived in Arcadia so many years.

**SEVERAL:**

Good, good, good, good. Do you have any other names that you would recommend?

**LEVY:**

Are you done with Len Farris?

**SEVERAL:**

Well how is Len? I mean you told me that...

**LEVY:**

Oh, he has been really sick.

**SEVERAL:**

I have not gone back to him because I feel it ...

**LEVY:**

I would wait, if you feel he has any more to talk about, you know?

**SEVERAL:**

Well actually I was hoping to talk to him about, mainly talk about his experiences as a Jew during World War II. Actually, he made a comment which unfortunately I did not follow up on when I did...

**LEVY:**

He made statement about anti-Semitism because he did not get his extra bar. He was supposed to be a Captain, but because his name was Feinstein at that time

**SEVERAL:**

So you know, I followed up with you. I followed up with Hy Vigo, dealing with your experiences and so I was hoping to talk to him about his experience because apparently, I mean neither you or Hy experienced any overt...

**LEVY:**

I did not. I told you about this one guy we called Herman the German. Outside of that and that did not last long, it was not that bad. Really, I had no problems. There was one other Jew out of the 28 guys in our section. In fact, I can show you the motley crew. Coming up. Now if I can just find everything quick for a change. Yeah, here is our section that we trained with all the way through, right here.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, where are you?

**LEVY:**

Where am I? I am right here.

**SEVERAL:**

Oh, you haven't changed at all. I should have been able to recognize you.

**LEVY:**

Have not changed at all. Now, I'm going to go this way. Birkwood is dead. He is 93 years old now, my buddy. He's Kelly, talk to him all the time. We don't know what happened to these guys. He is dead. Here was our master sergeant, three stripes up, that's as high as you can go. He really outranks the first sergeant. These guys, master sergeants are always the technical end. The first sergeant is the boss and he runs everything. He is gone and he's gone. I am still here. That guy here just had a heart attack. So that was our basic crew.

**SEVERAL:**

Where was that photo taken?

**LEVY:**

Fort Riley, Kansas. That was before we went overseas and everybody came back.

**SEVERAL:**

Yeah? Oh, you are lucky. Well, I will close this now.