

A TEI Project

Interview of Josh Pais

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CARLTON

We are interviewing Josh Pais at his home at 2246 Lambert Drive in Pasadena. My name is John Carlton and our videographer for this morning is Michael Several.

CARLTON

Good morning Josh.

PAIS

Good morning.

CARLTON

Thanks for speaking to us today. I would like to start with a little bit about your background. When were you born?

PAIS

July 13th, 1933.

CARLTON

And where was that?

PAIS

In the hospital.

CARLTON

Good!

PAIS

Evanston, Illinois...Evanston Hospital.

CARLTON

Who were your parents?

PAIS

Sarah and Samuel Pais.

CARLTON

Now, when did your family on each side come to the United States?

PAIS

I think the only one... Oh! You did not mean Janice's parents...No! My parents came here in around the turn of the century.

CARLTON

Okay where they come from?

PAIS

My mother from Poland...Poland, Russia whatever it was at the time and my father from Lithuania.

CARLTON

And do you know why they came. Have you have ever talked to them about that?

PAIS

I do not ever remember really talking to them about it, but it was, you know, for a better life, you know why did all the people leave Eastern Europe at that time.

CARLTON

And did they come with an extended family? Do you know how they came over here?

PAIS

They have...you know it was not a crew ship. They came over steerage and yeah they did come with some family members. I do not remember exactly who and there were some family that was already in New York and Chicago and why they ended up in Chicago...well there were some relatives in Chicago, I guess!

CARLTON

Okay. But when was it that they came over?

PAIS

The turn of century.

CARLTON

Okay...right at the beginning.

PAIS

Yeah, early 1900s and I know my father became a citizen through the Army. He was in World War II. He spent time in France.

CARLTON

Okay. He was in World War II.

PAIS

Sorry. World War I.

CARLTON

All right. So, they went to Chicago basically because there were relatives there. Right?

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

And you were born in Evanston. How did they make their way, was it just a suburb or....

PAIS

Yeah. Evanston is the first suburb north of Chicago and my father had a men's clothing store in Evanston, (John Carlton says ah!) so that is probably why we lived in Evanston because there was no Jewish community in Evanston. I think we were the only Jewish family in Evanston at that time. Now, there is a lot there. I know he lost the store during the depression that was before I was born. (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...).

CARLTON

How did all this happen, do you know?

PAIS

I am not sure how many years, it happened quite a long time ago and they had lived in the same house for over 50 years. I did not, my folks did (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...) in Evanston.

CARLTON

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

PAIS

I have one brother and two sisters.

CARLTON

Older, younger?

PAIS

I am the youngest (John Carlton says ah...okay) and they are all still around.

CARLTON

So, by the time you were born your father had lost the clothing store (Josh Haze says right) and what was he doing for a living?

PAIS

(clears his throat) During the War, he came to...ah...he went out to Mirror Island, I guess there was no work available and he worked at the Mirror Island shipyard.

CARLTON

Outside of San Francisco.

PAIS

Yes...Yes. And then after the war he had a cleaners for a while just on the border of Chicago, Evanston and then a little later he went into business with his brother-in-law and they had a dry goods store in Chicago and that is where I really grew up, him having that business.

CARLTON

The dry goods store?

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

So, when he came out to Mirror Island, you and rest of the family stayed in Evanston?

PAIS

Yes we stayed in Evanston.

CARLTON

Hmm...hmm...Did your mother work?

PAIS

Yup.

CARLTON

What did she do?

PAIS

She was a dressmaker. One of the relatives owned a women's clothing manufacturer in Chicago and she worked there. Her sister who had lived downstairs of us in Evanston, she also worked there.

CARLTON

Okay. Why don't you tell us a little bit about what it was like growing up as you said one of the two Jewish families or one of the few at least in Evanston in the 30s and 40s?

PAIS

Oh! I had, you know, there were a lot of kids in the neighborhood and one in particular. There was one house in between, his apartment and my house and we grew up together since we were 5 years old I think and we still see him when we go to Chicago or when he comes out to Palms Springs. And we did not need any guidance really...you know we would go to school, we walked home, we played in the summertime, we used to hop on our bikes and go riding around or rundown to the park, choose up sides and play ball.

CARLTON

Hmm...hmm...

PAIS

And you know we did not need the Little Leaguers or anything like that and we had a good time.

CARLTON

Your parents did not have to drive you to all of your appointments. Josh Pais No...no...no...and things were safe than.

CARLTON

Yeah (yeah). Did you go to public school in Evanston?

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

And did you have any sense as being Jewish and being different?

PAIS

Oh yeah.

CARLTON

What was your experience there? You know being Jewish?

PAIS

I grew up being the only Jewish kid in the class until high school and for the high holidays we would go to the west side of Chicago that's where the Jews lived at that time and my aunt lived there with Mike Bobby who only spoke Yiddish and there were a whole bunch of temples that I remember waking in at times and seeing things that I was just so unfamiliar with and I had no idea what they were and I could not have cared less and it was just a strange world to me.

CARLTON

Yeah. Just focusing on your experiences at school. you know...was...did you have a...did you fear you had a strong identity?

PAIS

No.

CARLTON

As a Jew?

PAIS

No...no...

CARLTON

Wasn't something that you held out there or that other people (Josh Haze says no) held out (Josh Haze says no) for you...

PAIS

No...no...I think I probably ran into a little bit of anti-Semitism, but I had my friends and you know we were a good group and we always played together.

CARLTON

Yeah. What was the ethnicity of the neighborhood you lived in?

PAIS

Gentile. (laughing)

CARLTON

Okay. Anything more specific-wise?

PAIS

Umm...working class people.

CARLTON

Were you involved in leadership at school (Josh Haze says no...not at all) or anything like that.

PAIS

Not at all. I was never a good athlete. The only sports I played was after school with the guys. (John Carlton says ah...ah...). I did go out for basketball in my first year in high school but I sprained my finger and killed that. I went out for a track one year in high school but I was a very slow runner and that was just keep my friends company. (All laughing...)

CARLTON

That is alright, a lot of people go out for sports. It is just for the social....

PAIS

But in high school it is where I met my first Jewish friends.

CARLTON

Really.

PAIS

And stared hanging around with them and...

CARLTON

What high school was this?

PAIS

Evanston Township High School.

CARLTON

And what years were you there?

PAIS

From...I guess...I graduated in '51 (John Carlton says ah ah!) I guess it would be '47 to '51 (John Carlton says okay) and the Jewish friends that I made, they came from Chicago because Evanston was one of the best schools around and one fellow in particular is proudly our closest friend in Chicago and we go there for all of his _____ and they come here for ours.

CARLTON

Was there a temple in....

PAIS

Not where I grew up

CARLTON

Did you go to temple at all when you were grown up?

PAIS

Umm...growing up...just when we went to my aunt's house in the west side of Chicago.

CARLTON

Just for the high holy days or...

PAIS

Yeah. And then I was just going in and out.

CARLTON

Yeah. Yeah.

PAIS

And I remember there was, I think just before I left for college, they started something at the junior high near our house and I think I went one time with my folks and nothing ever came of it. Now there are several temples in Evanston and a lot of Jewish people in Evanston, but there was a Haiter in the north side of Chicago and I really did not want to go and I do not know if I may have gone once or twice and that was it.

CARLTON

What is a Haiter?

PAIS

Oh! (laughing) A Jewish school (John Carlton says okay) where you become Bar Mitzah.

CARLTON

I see... Well. How did Judaism figure into your life when you were growing up?

PAIS

It did not.

CARLTON

Really?

PAIS

Not really, you know except my parents were very Yiddish. They went not very religious but it really did not until I started meeting some Jewish friends in high school and Janice was the one who had really reformed me. (All laughing)

CARLTON

Made you an honest man.

PAIS

Because she had a very Jewish upbringing.

CARLTON

So what languages did your parents speak at home?

PAIS

Ah...they spoke broken English and Yiddish and if they did not want us to understand they started speaking Polish.

CARLTON

Did you...so there was no Hebrew spoken, you never learned Hebrew as a....

PAIS

No. They never spoke Hebrew.

CARLTON

And you did not learn it?

PAIS

No...no...

CARLTON

Well did you do anything Jewish in the home.

PAIS

Not in our home, you know, Pesach we would go to my aunt's house on the west side of Chicago and have the seder there.

CARLTON

You did not observe Shavu'ot I take it?

PAIS

No...no...until I think until Janice came into picture and then I think she used to have my mom light the candles.

CARLTON

Ah...ah...not a Kosher mom?

PAIS

No...but she would not serve pork except she would make bacon for me. (All laughing)

CARLTON

But you know bacon is Kosher as far as I'm concerned. (laughing)

PAIS

But milk and meat you know that is no problem.

CARLTON

Ah...ah...and that is pretty much the way things were until you got to high school and met some Jewish friends.

PAIS

Yep

CARLTON

And did they become your friends. It is maybe hard to think back all this time now. Was their being Jewish...did that have anything to do with them becoming your friends or that was just a coincidence?

PAIS

No I think that certainly had something to do with it and that was when we started dating and my Gentile friends, I was still very much in touch with. He was not dating at all, so and I remember I was going with a Jewish girl in Chicago that we are still friendly with who happens to be a cousin of Michael Freedman who is the Medical Director of City of Hope and that is how we became friendly with Michael. But, when I started dating her that is when we started getting together with this one particular Jewish fellow in Chicago that we are extremely closely with.

CARLTON

Ah...what were your parents' political leanings. Do you know?

PAIS

Well I know they were big FDR supporters.

CARLTON

Okay. I think back to Nancy's grandparents who were very secular and very very to the left and you know as far left as you can be and not be outlawed I suppose (laughing)

PAIS

No I do not think...no...we were not a political family. I know I had an uncle that was supposed to be a member of the communist party that we used to whisper about (laughing). No we were not a political family really.

CARLTON

You were pretty young but what was your sense of World War II. Did you...were you aware of what was happening to the Jews in Europe at that time.

PAIS

Not really. Not really. I just remember we used to have the blackout practices in Evanston and my father was one of the wardens or something and he had to keep ringing the bell and tell my mom to turn the lights off and stop cooking (laughing)

CARLTON

The warden's wife. (laughing)

PAIS

Yeah. But I remember...rationing...food stamps and (the telephone is ringing).

CARLTON

We will pause.

CARLTON

So Josh at the end of the war when the revelations about the holocaust came out. Did that have an impact or how did that impact you and your family?

PAIS

Hmm...it did not affect me that much. I do not think I really felt the full force of it. I know my folks spoke at times about it because my mother lost a brother and there were some other relatives. Ah...there was a...the family got together once a month, "The Ruven Family Circle". That was my mother's maiden name. And we had a lot of relatives throughout Chicago and I remember they were discussing you know the war and problems and relatives that were there, but I was a little kid then (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...) and I was playing with the kids, so I did not really hear much or pay much attention.

CARLTON

Grown up stuff.

PAIS

Yeah...yeah...yeah. Then when they were through with their business meeting they would play poker and eat. (Laughing in the background)

CARLTON

So, while you were in high school, of course, Israel became independent and were you aware of that and if so....

PAIS

I was aware of it but not aware of it.

CARLTON

Was it a topic of much discussion amount your family?

PAIS

Not really. No I do not recall it very much.

CARLTON

Okay. So, you go at high school '47 to '51 and what did you do after graduation?

PAIS

Went to the University of Illinois.

CARLTON

Ah.

PAIS

And I limped into pan up my first semester and then I had some other friends, Jewish friends from Chicago and they were in the Sigma Alpha Mu "Sammy" Fraternity, so I joined them in my second semester and lived the rest of my college life in the Sammy house.

CARLTON

Really.

PAIS

Yes, which is a Jewish fraternity.

CARLTON

And was that because you had friends who were in it...

PAIS

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I had some friends that were in it.

CARLTON

What did that mean to be a Jewish fraternity in those days other than everyone was Jewish.

PAIS

Uh...(Laugh)...mostly just that everybody was Jewish.

CARLTON

What there any religious component to being a Jewish fraternity.

PAIS

Not that I really recall. Just I guess that everybody was more comfortable (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...) with each other that way but I do not recall really a Jewish component or other religious component of it.

CARLTON

Did you get a sense for whether any of the...your...your fraternity brothers were more or less observant.

PAIS

Oh there was one I know that, Joe Sigman, who lives out here now and he is involved in the Maccabiah games. I remember he came with his own pots and pans and he had Kosher meat sent down and...but he was only one.

CARLTON

So, it was not Kosher. Did you have your own...like kitchen and you would eat there?

PAIS

Oh yeah yeah yeah...we slept there. We ate there. We lived there. And that is where I met Arty and Kaslow Johnson, do you remember Laugh End.

CARLTON

Oh yeah!

PAIS

Yeah. Yeah. Arty Johnson...he had graduated the year before I got there but he used to come down every year for stunt show and kind of entertained us and get involved in the riding. His younger brother Kaslow who was a senior when I was a freshman was one of the writers of Laugh End.

CARLTON

Now...

PAIS

Yeah. We have seen Arty a couple of times since then.

CARLTON

Over the years. Ah...how did your fraternity integrate into the university campus? Was there any sense of being different because it was a Jewish fraternity or....

PAIS

No...no...no...no...Illinois had the largest Greek campus. They had more fraternities and sororities than in any other school in the country and we were part of intramural sports and we were pretty high up scholastically I think...but not...most of our exchanges were with the Jewish sororities.

CARLTON

Really? There were more than one?

PAIS

Oh yeah...yeah...there is where I met Janice.

CARLTON

Really? Okay. How did that happen, what sorority was she in?

PAIS

Pi Sigma Sigma and I dated one of the girls in the house there and I think it was my senior year and she was a freshman, (as I recall) I think that was right and that is when I met her and that is when we started dating.

CARLTON

Hmm...so was there any sense of anti-Semitism at the University of Illinois that you can remember?

PAIS

No I do not think so.

CARLTON

And during your time there, did you become more observant or did Judaism become more significant in your life than it had been when you were....

PAIS

It probably was more significant because all my friends were Jewish by this time.

CARLTON

Did any of your friends' go to _____ regularly?

PAIS

Not that I recall. Boy I do not remember...I do not remember anybody going to temple Saturday mornings or Friday nights. They would _____ once in a while but...

CARLTON

Did you still go home for the high holy days?

PAIS

Oh yeah! Oh. I do not remember, I do not remember going to home for that.

CARLTON

This was down in Champaign, Illinois right?

PAIS

Yeah. Yes.

CARLTON

Okay. What was your major? What were you studying?

PAIS

Chemistry.

CARLTON

Oh! And did you get your degree...

PAIS

Yes BS Chemistry.

CARLTON

Okay. Let see, that would have been in '55.

PAIS

I graduated in '55.

CARLTON

Okay. And what did you do after that?

PAIS

I got my commission at the same time because I had gone into the Air Force ROTC. You had to be in the ROTC in the Land Grant School for the first two years and...

CARLTON

In the Land Grant School...

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

Okay explain.

PAIS

Um...I guess there were a lot of universities, State Universities that were Land Grant Schools and probably the land was owned by the government or by the State and one of their prerequisites that the men had to serve in the ROTC for two years.

CARLTON

Really?

PAIS

And I chose the Air Force ROTC because they did not march with rifles and they had nicer looking uniforms. (Laughing in the background)

CARLTON

Was that blue?

PAIS

Blue yes. (Laughing in the background) So when I became a junior, going into my junior year I did not have to take ROTC but that was during the Korean War and people were being drafted out of college unless they were in the Advanced ROTC. So, I figured out that if I signed that if I signed up for the Advanced ROTC and the only way to get into the Air Force Advanced ROTC was by signing up for flight school. I could not have cared less about flying but I figured okay...and I did (laughing) and I graduated in '55 and in '56 I went into service until '59.

CARLTON

Let see, so you were dating Janice.

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

Well let see, you were a senior when you started dating her?

PAIS

Yes. Yes.

CARLTON

And you got married on Christmas day in 1956. Is that right?

PAIS

That is right. This is right. I was in flight school at the time and that was the only day I could be assured of being able to be home.

CARLTON

And that was in Chicago? Right?

PAIS

Right.

CARLTON

And where were you going to flight school?

PAIS

The first six months was Hondo, Texas and the last six months was in England, Oklahoma.

CARLTON

Okay. So, lets see, the first six months would have been June to December of '55 is that it? Josh Pais February. No. I started in February of '56.

CARLTON

Okay. So you were just getting out of flight school when you got married at that time?

PAIS

Well a little bit later. After we got married we went to Las Vegas for a few days for a honeymoon, then get back to England, Oklahoma and we lived there. We rented a house and we lived there until I got my wings.

CARLTON

Which is when...do you remember when that was?

PAIS

Hmm...It would have been like the spring of '57.

CARLTON

hmm...hmm...

PAIS

And then we went to San Antonio to get crewed up in a KC-97 and my closest friend from Chicago was stationed at Fort Sam Houston at the time. He and his wife, so we were there for about three months I think getting trained at the KC-97 with our crew and so we had a very good time with our friends there.

CARLTON

Yeah.

PAIS

And another good friends of ours from Chicago who we are still very friendly with. He was a private...I think he was called up from the reserves and we saw him also in San Antonio.

CARLTON

And so during the time when you were in Air Force then where were you stationed?

PAIS

Then we became active later in '57 at Little Rock Air Force Base and we were stationed there for two years and we were there during the sectorial high incident with Governor Foldest and in fact I was...we were in Newfoundland at that time and Janice was...I had to leave her. We rented a little house in Little Rock. North Little Rock actually and I remember going downtown Little Rock as she went to see her gynecologist when she became pregnant and I remember the colored bathrooms, the white bathrooms, the colored fountains, drinking fountains, the white drinking fountains and...

CARLTON

Was that your first encounter with that kind of thing?

PAIS

Yes! Yeah that was really our only encounter with it and that is where Ellen was born.

CARLTON

When was Ellen born?

PAIS

In '58.

CARLTON

In Little Rock?

PAIS

Yup.

CARLTON

So you were there for a couple of years until...

PAIS

Yeah until I got discharged and actually probably the last three months just before I got discharged, we were overseas for three months based in the Azores, spent two weeks in England, two weeks in Spain and two weeks in Africa.

CARLTON

Sounds like hell.

PAIS

Foreign bases. (Laughs) It was a good experience. So, I got to visit Casablanca. We were in Morocco just after the French were driven out and we were warned, you go into town do not speak French and the French street signs were all chalked out in the Arabic names.

CARLTON

Yeah! Yeah! So, during your time in the Air Force, did your Jewishness have any particular impact on your experience.

PAIS

No...no...We did meet some Jewish friends in the Air Force that we socialized with but we also had a Catholic friend that we were very close with and we are godparent to their son but he was away when the baby was born. We sat up with the wife and they had to pick a different place for their baby to be baptized because I guess the Catholic Church would not permit Jewish godparents.

CARLTON

(Really) Yeah. Yeah. I know someone asked me to be a godparent and I said I do not think that would really work, he was shocked. Of course, when somebody reminds you of that then it all make sense but...

PAIS

Yeah! You are really responsible for the religious upbringing if something happens.

CARLTON

Yeah. Yeah. So, I think you said that Janice's family was more observant than yours.

PAIS

Oh yeah! Yes...yes...ah...well she will tell you all of this, but her mother's family, her mother's father was a real strict authoritarian. You know "you will do this" and rule with an iron fist and (John Carlton says in religious matters and other matters) in religious matters. Yeah, mostly religious matters. You know extremely orthodox. In fact, he even went to Israel but that was not religious enough for him.

CARLTON

Really! (Laughing in the background...) And without getting too personal, did this...how you fit into that world?

PAIS

When I got in, her grandfather that she really loved, he was very old right at that time and he had really mellowed out and her aunts and uncles who were raised under his thumb, by this time they were all grown and gone their own ways and...(John Carlton says yeah)

CARLTON

So did Janice want a higher level of observance in your household than you had been used to?

PAIS

Oh yeah...Oh yeah!

CARLTON

So when you got married what changed in terms of that?

PAIS

Well as soon as we...well nothing really changed until we were living in Chicago and we moved to California because I had nothing going for me in Chicago.

CARLTON

This was after your discharge?

PAIS

Yes...yeah...yeah....about six years after in '64.

CARLTON

So I take it you did not take advantage of the wide selection of _____ in Little Rock?

PAIS

(laughs) No...no...we did meet one Jewish family but when we were in San Antonio and the months I was there thorough one of my fraternity brothers his father did business with a family in San Antonio, a Jewish family that I used to go there every weekend (John Carlton says ah!) and they were like my home away from home and...ah...we saw them for many many years afterwards.

CARLTON

So while you were still in the Air Force living in Little Rock did you ever do Shavu'ot at home, did you did anything of a Jewish nature?

PAIS

We took Ellen to the temple there to be named.

CARLTON

Okay.

PAIS

And I do not think we did, I do not remember if we did candles then...we may have...I mean she was used to doing that.

CARLTON

Yeah. And did you keep a Kosher home?

PAIS

No...no we never kept a Kosher at home.

CARLTON

All right.

PAIS

No that has never been an issue.

CARLTON

Did you stay with your bacon?

PAIS

(everybody laughs) No...no Janice won't do any....any of that pork stuff, you know I only do that when I am out (everybody laughs)

CARLTON

So, you are discharged and you go back to Chicago for a while. Right?

PAIS

Yeah we were there for five years.

CARLTON

Ah. And what was your profession during that time?

PAIS

Well I went to work for this close friend of mine in Chicago, his family owned a huge manufacturing company and I was there for most of that time and then it just did not work out and...

CARLTON

What were you doing in the manufacturing company?

PAIS

Just training for management there. It was point of purchase display manufacture and still a very large company today.

CARLTON

hmm...

PAIS

In fact, my godson, the son of my close friend in Chicago is the president.

CARLTON

Oh!

PAIS

And Ellen is the goddaughter (John Carlton says Oh really!) of that same person and our son David is the...his godmother was his wife who just died earlier this year and we flew back to Chicago for that (clears his throat)...but no I ran into a job when I came out to California, actually a newspaper in the desert flew us out for a job of advertising agent and they flew both of us out. We stayed with an aunt and uncle in Pasadena. I do not think you knew the Chaplin, Ruth and Edward Chaplin who is everybody's dentist.

CARLTON

They were an uncle of whom?

PAIS

Janice.

CARLTON

Oh. Janice.

PAIS

And we did not...I did not take that job but I did run into something else through another uncle that lived in Beverly Hills. He and his son-in-law owned a small furniture manufacturing company and I had just started back in Chicago looking into the paint industry (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...) thought maybe I would use my chemistry and they spoke to their paint supplier. They called and interviewed me during the weekend and by the end of the week they offered me the job and if I remember from an aunt and uncle house in Pasadena

calling Janice Friday night, flying home tomorrow and Tuesday I am packing up the car and driving back to start working and she said if you are taking away from here we are going to join the temple (Everybody laughs)

CARLTON

Okay, so, what year was this?... (Josh Pais says 1964)... the '64... (Josh Pais says March of '64). Okay! Just to sort of filling in some of the gaps then. You had a couple of your other children born in Chicago. Right?

PAIS

Ellen was born in Little Rock. Jody and David were born in Chicago, Michael Reese Hospital and so I left her with a house and a dog and three young kids and I came here and started working and I lived first with the aunt and uncle in Beverly Hills for a couple of months and then I moved to Pasadena and lived with the aunt and uncle in Pasadena.

CARLTON

Why did you make that move? Why did you move out to Pasadena?

PAIS

Ah... because that was where we wanted to live and I was just dividing up the time between the two relatives out here (John Carlton says I see) and then in June Janice sold the house and came out with the kids.

CARLTON

Okay. Ah... when you were in Chicago did you belong to a temple?

PAIS

We never lived in Chicago.

CARLTON

Oh. Where did you live?

PAIS

We lived in North Brooke (John Carlton says okay). We lived in North Brooke. We did... I do not think we ever joined the temple when we were living there but we did to go temple and Jody was named in the temple and David was named in the temple and I joined the Mai-Brith while I was out there.

CARLTON

Ah. What caused you to do that?

PAIS

Ah... because at that time we had a lot of Jewish friends and a lot of them were members of the Mai-Brith (John Carlton says hmm...hmm...) so that was when I really first started getting involved.

CARLTON

Did you become active in it?

PAIS

Ah... somewhat. I did some programming for them.

CARLTON

hmm...hmm...Ah...so...you are out here, you decided Pasadena...you just liked Pasadena more or why did you...

PAIS

We were closest with this aunt and uncle in Pasadena. Pasadena seemed like more of a midwestern kind of town without the Hollywood influence that they still seemed to have (John Carlton says yeah yeah) and so that is why we chose.

CARLTON

Where did you live when you first moved?

PAIS

We rented a house in Altadena for a year and then after a year we bought a home in Upper Hastings.

CARLTON

Oh! Okay.

PAIS

We lived there for five or six years until we moved here.

CARLTON

So, may be '65 '66 you moved to Upper Hastings and...

PAIS

Ah...well...yeah about '66 we moved to Upper Hastings.

CARLTON

Okay and then you moved here in '71.

PAIS

34 years ago, yeah, early 70s.

CARLTON

Okay. And...and...when you first move down here what was your business then?

PAIS

I was working for a paint company, a national paint company, Reliance Universal at that time, it is now called Akzo which is the world largest paint company.

CARLTON

Akzo.

PAIS

Yeah. Akzo Nobel.

CARLTON

Really?

PAIS

Yeah! You know the name?

CARLTON

No.

PAIS

Akzo. It is a Dutch company. It is the world's...I believe it is the world's largest paint company, drawings and all kinds of things.

CARLTON

And what did you do for them?

PAIS

I was...first I was trained in the lab and I always wanted to go into sales and that is where I started selling paint.

CARLTON

Oh!

PAIS

Yeah.

CARLTON

Yeah! Where did you work from?

PAIS

Ah...there were located on Washington Boulevard in LA.

CARLTON

So that was quite a hike for you from Pasadena?

PAIS

Yeah I had to go there everyday.

CARLTON

Okay. And here in Pasadena did you join a temple?

PAIS

Yeah! We joined this temple. We joined the Pasadena temple right away.

CARLTON

Was that part of your deal with Janice. If she was going to come out here?

PAIS

Yeah she took care of that all (everybody laughing). She took care of it all and...in fact she did all the negotiating with them and how much we were going to have to pay...and...

CARLTON

This was the subject of negotiation in those days?

PAIS

Well yeah...cause I think I was 30 when I moved out here and there was a special rate if you were under 30 and we were really just started (John Carlton says yeah) and I think it was with Max Stone that he kept saying "Oh you are under 30, you are under 30, okay" (everybody laughing) such and such.

CARLTON

Ah...so was this was the first temple that you ever joined?

PAIS

Yes!

CARLTON

In your life?

PAIS
Yes.

CARLTON
So you did not have much to compare it with?

PAIS
No I had nothing to compare it with.

CARLTON
ah...ah...

PAIS
Except we made a lot of friends through the temple.

CARLTON
Yeah what was your impression of the temple when you first joined?

PAIS
It was a place to go play basketball (John Carlton says okay) and to socialize.

CARLTON
So, nothing is changed?

PAIS
(laughing) that is right. We became friendly with the Fingerhuts and the Alphars and the Hoffmanns and we lived after we moved to Upper Hastings, we moved a block away from Mickey and Marsha Alfar and the six of us, the Alphars...well...the six of us plus the kids, the pace of the Alphars and the Fingerhuts. We did a lot of camping.

CARLTON
Now you met them all through the temple?

PAIS
Through the temple yes.

CARLTON
And did you go when you joined, did you start going to services regularly or...

PAIS
Yeah! You know that we had...nobody had pools than (John Carlton says Yeah!) and this temple had the pool and Friday night you would bring you food, you ate by the temple, the kids would go swimming, we would all go swimming and we would socialize and then go to services and we did that most Friday nights.

CARLTON
And this started up right away pretty much?

PAIS
Yes. Yeah pretty much.

CARLTON
Who was the Cantor at that time?

PAIS

ah...I think that was before Michael Brea...ah...Keebler Moses
hmm...possibly. The one I really remember is Cantor Breeman who up until
this year we saw him at the Hollywood bowl every other week. He has had
some medical problems.

CARLTON

So, Rabi Galfert was there? Right!

PAIS

Yes...yes...

CARLTON

hmm...hmm...

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

And what were services like when you...you went to Friday night services?

PAIS

Yeah! Yeah!

CARLTON

Did you go to Saturday's at all?

PAIS

Only if we had to... (All laughing)

CARLTON

So, what were Friday night services like when you first joined the temple?

PAIS

Well...I remember...we would get together and socialize afterwards.

CARLTON

After the service (John Pais says Oh yeah!) before and after.

PAIS

Well...you know mostly afterwards and mutually we would go to the Red
Onion. It was the Red Onion...yeah I remember...it was called _____ Roll on
foot hill and its El Torito now.

CARLTON

Oh _____.

PAIS

Yeah! And we would go with the Alphars, Fingerhuts, the Gulpers and a few
others and we would sit there and eat chips and drink margaritas.

CARLTON

That sounds good.

PAIS

Yeah we had all these _____ Shavu'ots.

CARLTON

Ah...ah...laughing

PAIS
And our friends were involved in the temple, temple management, Bob Hoffman, Mickey Alfar, June Fingerhut.

CARLTON
Was this true when you first met them?

PAIS
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah...there were already involved.

CARLTON
And when did you start getting involved in the temple...ah...more than just going there for services?

PAIS
Well I got involved because our kids, Ellen and Jody got into the youth groups so I got involved with the youth groups.

CARLTON
What were the youth groups back then?

PAIS
Probably the best we have ever had.

CARLTON
Well, you were involved? (Everybody laughing)

PAIS
Steve Sensor was the youth chairman, paid youth chairman and I remember...

CARLTON
So, he was paid for that position?

PAIS
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! (John Carlton says ah!). He was camp director in the summertime.

CARLTON
What camp?

PAIS
The federation had a camp at our temple.

CARLTON
Oh!

PAIS
But...okay that was the days that when there was Mickey Siegel, Howard Siegel, Richard Abtaker...

CARLTON
Those were the kids?

PAIS
Ellen, CC Freeman, the Cooperman boy, the Godfeld boy and those were great youth groups...ah...they had their camping trips that Steve would supervise

and some of us would go along as chaperons and they were really a good active group.

CARLTON

Were they specific to the temple or were they associated with...

PAIS

To the temple. They were temple youth groups.

CARLTON

ABIO...was it...(Josh Pais says separate from it). Really!

PAIS

Yes and I remember we even had fathers sons basketball games back when they were in the youth groups. Even Marshal Katz played with us once.
(Everybody laughing)

CARLTON

Well, that sure seems different than it has been in recent years. (Josh Pais says yeah!). Why do you think that might have been that was more youth activity. Recently in the last few years it has picked up again...

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

But there was a long period when...

PAIS

I think...I know we often talked about it and I think that temple groups I think during those years afterwards they just none of them were doing well then. I think there were just too many school activities, outside activities...

CARLTON

You are saying all temples not just PJC.

PAIS

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! I think all temples were hurting then as far as their youth activities.

CARLTON

So, do you think in the mid 60s...at the end of the period a fewer opportunities on the outside and so that the temple...well it sounds like the temple (Josh Pais says it is possible) was a real focal point for (Josh Pais says yes) social activity then.

PAIS

Yes. Yes.

CARLTON

And the pool was heavily used.

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

And the gym too.

PAIS

Yes...yes...yes. And I remember our group of guys came and poured cement around the pool (John Carlton says for a deck) for decks and for stuff like that, a Ed Cheslow, myself, Mickey, Jean. Eddy Collins, I think directed the whole thing and his wife was the Bruce at that time in the temple office and used to do most of the running of the plays that we put on.

CARLTON

When you did get involved in these or started getting involved?

PAIS

I was in a couple of the plays and remember them within the 70s maybe, or early 70s, late 60s.

CARLTON

Why don't you tell us about those? What were they? When were they put on? How they get started?

PAIS

Ah...what is the name...there was a temple member that lived in Upper Hastings he was a clothes manufacture, the blouse...Rita Blow. She would be the director and Marilyn and Marsha and Frank Collins would do the writing and then we tried out and put on these plays...and...

CARLTON

Put on a show?

PAIS

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Like this one here...

CARLTON

Like this one here Marsha and Mingle.

PAIS

Yeah!

CARLTON

It looks like you were a featured player (laughing) (Josh Pais says yes) and that showed after the cameras more (laughing). Were these fund raisers or?

PAIS

No. These were fun raisers.

CARLTON

So, you and every one else got together and put these on just to have a good time.

PAIS

Oh yeah...yeah...yeah. I remember Jean would start the play, come out in shorts and a big salami and a pot (laughing) you know this is a Jay Crank Production or Arthur Crank Production.

CARLTON

Yeah right. Jean Fingerhut.

PAIS
And Marilyn and Heimie did a solo that Janet McDonald Nelson had a type thing.

CARLTON
These were pretty big predictions just looking at the cast of this one which was from 1979 I think you have got like 26 or 27 parts in this.

PAIS
Yeah! There was a lot of fun.

CARLTON
Did you get good crowd of people come...

PAIS
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! We would have a performance...and it certainly did not rival what Cantor and put on last year, Fiddler.

CARLTON
That was a great experience for everybody.

PAIS
That was so professional. We were not anywhere neat that (everybody laughing).

CARLTON
But you had a great time.

PAIS
Oh yes a lot of fun. Yeah!

CARLTON
Let see...as long as I have known you, you have played basketball in the evenings but did that start way back when?

PAIS
Oh yeah! Yeah! We probably have been playing for 30 years until a Bruce died on the court and once that happened nobody else came.

CARLTON
Really, that just put an end to it.

PAIS
Yup.

CARLTON
When you started up who was playing. Was all temple members?

PAIS
Well, originally I remember we rented the gym to an All State Troupe that was playing on Monday nights.

CARLTON
All State Insurance?

PAIS

Yes. Yeah there was a temple member involved there. I do not remember who it was and then shortly thereafter we started playing and Bruce and I...I also...I was involved in federation in CSD Community Services Division and through west side Jewish Community Center JCCA and I got involved in that and I started up a basketball and softball tournament or a program.

CARLTON

What time was that?

PAIS

I think in the 70s and I remember we played softball. We had a lot of JCCA units and some temples and then we would travel to the valley to west LA, to Pasadena...I remember when I first moved out here and I was living with the aunt and uncle before Janice came to West LA. I always played softball in Chicago with the Neibart group and there was no softball out here, but I did find the game and...and..._____ going up the hill...ah...over the hills

CARLTON

Over hills?

PAIS

Blair Hills (John Carlton says Blair Hills) right across the street. I remember playing softball there when I lived there and then I moved to Pasadena and Janis came out here and nobody was playing ball. So, eventually I got a bunch of guys together and we started Sunday Morning softball in the Hamilton Park Upper Heights, they have a park there. Myself, Jean playing, Ivy, Chelo, Eddy Collins, Roger Brown, _____, Chelsea Paso, El Levy and then I started getting the Arcadia Temple to get a team together and we had some games, then later when I got involved with federation and community services JCCA I formed this league, basketball and softball and...

CARLTON

So did the temple fill its own team?

PAIS

Oh yes. Oh yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Bruce and I, and Stew and Mike Aiden...ah...I think Bill Siegel played for a while, Dave Lyon played...who else...I cannot remember...Joe _____ played for a while, Lou Friedman...he is an ENT doctor, Herman Schwartz...hmm...

CARLTON

How long did the softball team last?

PAIS

We played for several years and we played basketball with myself, Dave Arthur, Bruce...who also played basketball with us...I cannot remember now...but we played for several years and we had a bunch of games at Fairfax High, with had games at West Side Jewish Community Center and those were a lot of fun.

CARLTON

Why did they fade out?

PAIS

Ah...I don't know? I think they just died out after years.

CARLTON

People get busy.

PAIS

I don't remember.

CARLTON

But basketball didn't? That continued...

CARLTON

Well that continued but at the temple we kept playing at the temple and...ah...at first we had a lot of the pharmacists from the City of Hope who came and played and then the game evolved into young black kids from across town who used to come and we would have as many as 25 guys there a night and I ran it at first and the Bruce really took over and ran it (John Carlton says Bruce Ferguson) Bruce Ferguson, but then about two years ago it stated dropping off and started dropping off and few and fewer came until finally that last game that was Bruce and I and my grandson Julian and one of Bruce's son friend came that night. So, Julian and Bruce played against this other guy and myself. We played for about an hour and they said let's play one more game and I am guarding Bruce and Bruce is starting to drive around me, he slides to the floor, his eyes go up into his head, he quivers for about one second and then...gone...That was it.

CARLTON

Yeah. And no one else wanted to get back out there.

PAIS

No. No. But we had several years where we played softball out here with other temples and that went for several years and then that died and now there is Over the Hill Group that Mike King got me into the plays Wednesday night...at...what is the park in St. Reno?

CARLTON

Oh. Lassie Park.

PAIS

Lassie Park, And Stew, Mike Aiden and I played (John Carlton says Stew Miller) yeah and I play. Eric Mills played for a couple of years and he has dropped out for the last couple of years but he is hoping to come back next year. His brother plays and the rest of the guys you would not know.

CARLTON

Hmm...so, when you first arrived in Pasadena you were not involved in...When did you become involved in the temple governments?

PAIS

Well...with the youth group.

CARLTON

Okay.

PAIS

When our kids got involved with the youth groups and I got involved in it and...

CARLTON

Do you remember who was the temple president at the time you joined?

PAIS

Joe Erin Wright...Joe Erin Wright was the president and I think Mickey Alphonse and Bob Hoffman were the executive vice presidents.

CARLTON

And what was your impression of the way the temple was governed back then?

PAIS

Well, I thought these guys...you know I had nothing to compare it with, but I was impressed with all of them and I remember Joe Erin Wright used to talk about Board of the Governors, you know there should be somebody that is raising the money or something to that effect, which I kept at the back of the mind until I became president and started the Guardians.

CARLTON

Yeah! But what were dues when you started?

PAIS

I don't know, \$800 or \$600... don't ever remember it.

CARLTON

Okay. Yeah. So, you got involved in governance through the youth groups right and then how did you progress?

PAIS

Gideon Hoffman was the Youth Vice President at that time and I served on his committee and then there was some woman that took over as vice president and I think I didn't think she was doing much of a job so I think that is when I stepped up and I started to become vice president then I think.

CARLTON

Vice-president for youth?

PAIS

Yeah I think so.

CARLTON

About what time period are we talking about here?

PAIS

It has got to be in late 60s I think and then I hung around with Jean, Mickey, Bob.

CARLTON

And these were all men of your generation.

PAIS

Yeah. Bob was older than us.

CARLTON

When you arrived who were the older generation of people?

PAIS

The Moldof's, the Nell's, Max and Ceil, Lou Silver; who I thought the world of.

CARLTON

Okay

PAIS

Yeah those were Max Stone, Aaron Moyer, Earl Berg, Phil Friend, those were the older ones then.

CARLTON

Okay. So you and Jean Fingerhut, Mickey Elpert, Bob Hoffman, you were all involved during these years.

PAIS

Socially and at the Temple, yes.

CARLTON

So you went from Vice President of Youth to what other things?

PAIS

Then I became Executive Vice President.

CARLTON

What was the structure then. Was it pretty much the same as it is right now?

PAIS

Yes

CARLTON

So there were two executive vice presidents.

PAIS

There were two executive vice presidents and each one had three committees under three vice presidents under them.

CARLTON

So by this time we already had the 1968 constitution.

PAIS

Yeah that was in place when I got here.

CARLTON

When you became involved.

PAIS

Yes, because Joe went and Mickey, Bob and Luke Freedman I think was involved there too and Larry Kinivar I think was involved somewhat.

CARLTON

In the '68 constitution?

PAIS

Yeah I think they may have all been involved in that.

CARLTON

So you became in EVP for what management or administration?

PAIS

I think I may have held them both I mean not at the same time. I think I held them both.

CARLTON

Who was the present when you were EVP?

PAIS

I think both Bob Hoffman and I think one and Mickey Elpert and Steve Kay because I think I came in after Steve Kay.

CARLTON

And you became president when?

PAIS

Yes in 1975.

CARLTON

A meteoric rise.

PAIS

I had no idea what to do when I became president. I have never been involved in any group to that extent. I had never been a president of anything and I had no idea what to do and if you remember meeting with all the past presidents to try to get some advice because I really didn't know what to do and the thing that hit me was I remember me talking to Herb Siegel out in the parking lot and it was Herb that planted the seed in me about going to visit the Congregates. I remember I was looking at a budget deficit of \$4000 at the end of my two years and that was a lot of money then and in the past the president would call my uncle Oscar Kaplan, Luke Silver, Bentley Toufeld, Max Stone and try to get some extra money that way and those things really did not seem to work. So I picked up on Herb Siegel's idea and I went up and I would spend I do not remember if it was Wednesday nights or Thursday nights. I'd make an appointment every week and I would sit down with Maury and Riva Furman, Herb and Gloria, Barry and Marlene, Walter and Anita Pamsting and there were three questions. What do you like about the Temple? What don't you like about the Temple? Have you ever been asked personally to be involved to serve on a committee and would you give me an informal commitment for an extra \$500 for Yom Kipper appeal the next two years and with one exception there was never a refusal.

CARLTON

And this was the start of the Guardian's.

PAIS

This was the started of the Guardian's.

CARLTON

And you covered your \$4000 deficit.

PAIS

Isn't that something? Yeah. The people came through but I followed up and you know and those that were unhappy about things. The biggest complaint was about Rabbi.....

CARLTON

You know every Temple has its issues.

PAIS

Was about Rabbi Galbert that he didn't really stay for the ____ and he wasn't visiting the sick people. You know that really was not his thing and I would have lunch with rabbi once a month and I remember "Rabbi do you know what these people have said to me more than anything else, said they want more of you" and so he started staying for the ____ Shabbats and he had to now because then we would go out for the post ____ Shabbat at the Red Onion after that and I called him every time I heard of somebody being sick and made him go and that is where Rabbi Galbert and I became very close and we started socializing. It worked out well I think.

CARLTON

Now eventually I mean you were the president of the Temple when you started the Guardians right.

PAIS

Yes.

CARLTON

And eventually this sort of spun off to be an adjunct not part of the Temple structure formally.

PAIS

Well they were never really part of the Temple structure. It was always kind of on the outside.

CARLTON

Who took over after your presidency in terms of running that, do you remember?

PAIS

I do not remember now. Could have been Steve Kay, Marshal Katz, I do not remember.

CARLTON

But the entry level has always stayed the same for 33 years now?

PAIS

Yes. They have got talked about raising it but there are a few people that say that its got to really hurt them that they will have to drop out, but see now how it has not held back the upper levels.

CARLTON

So what was your experience generally as the president aside from that?

PAIS

You know you get a lot of calls and they were not complementary calls, a lot of complaints but in retrospect I think it was pretty good two years, I managed to stumble through it but you know there were a lot of good people at the Temple. It is not a one-man job.

CARLTON

How big was the congregation when you were heading it?

PAIS

Somewhere between 300 and 400 families.

CARLTON

So it sounds like we have been pretty in that range then.

PAIS

Yeah, but we dropped off when I think before he got here when Frank Anckerman had split the Temple.

CARLTON

We will talk about that. So you mentioned the split, what was that about?

PAIS

I think it was about Rabbi Galbert. That was really before my time and Frank Anckerman, who was a notorious Temple breaker broke away with a bunch of people and started the Arcadian Temple until he broke that Temple. He is gone.

CARLTON

A serial Temple breaker. Okay. Now after your period as a Temple president you remained actively involved in the Temple

PAIS

All the presidents remained active but I also was also more involved in federation. Steve Kay was after Temple president was federation president and I think, what is her name, Sibyl Roth I think was federation president after Steve and then I became Temple president and you know her son, David Lee Roth.

CARLTON

Oh really?

PAIS

Oh yeah. You know he was a Temple member. He went through our Temple school when Betty Fishman was head of the school. I remember when we first came here I used to go to the Temple during the day at times and I'd hear this God awful noise coming from the gym and I would go in there and there was

this group practicing called the Van Halen group and when you hear them on records today it sounds the same awful noise.

CARLTON

You just wish you could have charged them higher rent, boy that's funny. So what was your involvement in the federation? How did you get involve? What did you do?

PAIS

Well. I had been involved before. I helped with the campaign, the welfare fund campaign, and some of my friends from the Temple were involved there especially when Steve Kay was president.

CARLTON

This was before the San Gabriel Valley broke off?

PAIS

Yes long before that. Bob Shelly, former member of our Temple, was president there, who is a relative of Rabbi Galbert's and Stan Weinstein from the Alhambra Temple was past president there, a good guy, in fact I had him as one of my installing officers at the Temple one year when I was the president and I became involved with JCCA Community Services Division and mostly because of the youth programs and the day camp, they ran a day camp at our Temple that Steve Sensor was in charge of.

CARLTON

During what time period?

PAIS

60s and 70s in that area I think and they used our pool and eventually I became president of the federation.

CARLTON

How did the Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley Jewish communities you know figure into the federation in those days? What was the relationship?

PAIS

We were kind of an outside group that we really did not raise as much money as they put into our area and that is why they eventually broke off from us or we broke off from them.

CARLTON

That would have been in the late 90s? Have you been involved in federations since the break off?

PAIS

Yeah late 90s I believe.

CARLTON

Have you been involved in the federations since the break off?

PAIS

Not very much up until about a year ago and I am now on the board again of the federation. Gary Shaffer is the president. He is doing an excellent job and Paul Dietz is involved and he is doing an excellent job.

CARLTON

I did not realize Paul was involved. Aside from your involvement in the Temple and in the federation, have you been involved in any other Jewish organizations over the years?

PAIS

_____ to a lesser extent. They leaned on me to be president one time but I was able to evade that.

CARLTON

Lets see, let's sort of go back and just talk about sort of the Temple facilities, sounds like the pool was very heavily used in the 60s and 70s and that sort of faded away I guess.

PAIS

That faded away as the congregation became more affluent I think, pools became more prevalent, everybody has a pool now so just the day camp wasn't here anymore or wasn't that much here, so there was no need for the pool more really.

CARLTON

You think that impacted the social life at the Temple?

PAIS

Well also something else. Wives weren't working then. Janice wasn't working, Marsha wasn't working, Marilyn wasn't working you know so they could come to the Temple pool with the kids, but now whose wife is not working. So you know it is a different time.

PAIS

Different times.

CARLTON

One thing I remember as president. This older gentleman, small gentleman, came up to me one time and was pointing out all the things that needed repairing. His name was Abe Katzman and he proceeded to fix mostly by himself all these things that needed to be fix. Abe Katzman was the first recipient of the Congregant of the Year but he did so much work at the Temple, I cannot say enough about Abe Katzman.

CARLTON

When you were president what kind of staff was there at the Temple?

PAIS

Frank Collins was in the office.

CARLTON

These were office manager or what would you call them?

PAIS

I think it's before Robert. Caretakers were not that good at the time. I do not remember who else we had in the office really.

CARLTON

Pretty lightly staffed? How about a bookkeeper, did we have a full-time bookkeeper?

PAIS

I do not think there was, I want to think that Edna Kopp may have been working in the office at the time, I just do not remember.

CARLTON

We had the Rabbi, Rabbi Galbert. We had a cantor, was it a part-time or full-time cantor?

PAIS

No I think he was full-time. I do not believe he was full-time.

CARLTON

Didn't David Julian have another job as a computer consultant or something down in Orange County?

PAIS

That I do not know. I know nothing about this.

CARLTON

All right. So we had just a couple of people in the office. Did we have a full-time custodian?

PAIS

Yeah. There was a full-time custodian. I think a Hispanic guy but we never had anybody as good as Robert.

CARLTON

Robert lives at the Temple and do you know how that came about?

PAIS

I think before that the custodians lived up there.

CARLTON

I see okay. How did the congregate of the year honor come up? Were you involved doing that?

PAIS

Yeah that was through the Guardian's I got to thinking that you know there are these people that have done so much for the Temple, Joe Aaron, Kauffman, Mickey Elpert, Jean Fingerhut and they do not get honored at all and so I think Barry Siegel and I put together some ground rules. Actually it came out of when I started the Guardians what I thought we should do is I am asking these people to come forth with some money. We're not going to ask you to do anything, you know work with Temple or anything like that but I think you are entitled to once a year come to a meeting to at least here how the Temple is

doing. So that was supposed to be the once a year business meeting you know thank you for your money here is the status of the Temple and you know any suggestions. Congregate of the year came out of one of those meetings, BMAC Committee came out of one of those meetings.

CARLTON

Really?

PAIS

Yes and Barry Siegel and I one day got together and we put together some ground rules for congregate of the year and I figured this will be a good way to start catching up on honoring some people that deserve it.

CARLTON

And those are pretty much the ground rules that we have today. Over your time at the Temple what have you seen in the way of sort of fundraising activities, have there been a change in all of that?

PAIS

Yeah. I would say more than anyone else Mickey Siegel and maybe to a little lesser extent Alan Whitman are responsible for the big rise in the fundraising because I remember before we had what we did Nell Chapel and I think _____ hall was not part of the major thing. Marshal Katz and I made presentations every week and started raising funds but it was during the major renovation of the main building.

CARLTON

In the 90s?

PAIS

Yeah. Where this congregant, what is her name, you might remember her name, that headed up the project, Nancy something, they asked me to head up the fund raising on that and I said I do not want to do it alone and I thought you know what I am going to ask Ellen Nell to work with me on that so I called her and Ellen said let me think about it for a few days and she calls me back, yes I will do it but you know what, Harvey would like to be involved also. I said that is right. So the three of us started and Steve Kay jumped aboard shortly thereafter but I remember a Monday night football game out at Anaheim, I went to the Ram game and there was a meeting, a congregational meeting or board meeting or something and I came back to find out that Mickey Siegel had jumped in with both feet on this fundraising and since then he has really set by example what people should be giving and how to give and I remember we were talking about one of the community dinners we were going to have and we were going to have a program and how much can we charge for adds in the program. I remember working with Stew on this and Stew really brought the Guardians up to a larger level. We were talking I don't know, can we go to \$5000, can we ask \$5000 dollar and I said Stew lets go ask Mickey Siegel and I

remember we got together with Mickey one night, \$5000 no, \$10,000 and I think we had like three \$10,000 adds that year. He has really set the stage for us on this and Allen _____ also. You know there are a lot of others also but I give them the credit on this.

CARLTON

Of course over the years I mean there have been among Temple members some real success stories in terms of you know their financial well being?

PAIS

But we had some rich people before but I don't think people really knew how to give.

CARLTON

Now were you involved in improvements to Nell Chapel at all?

PAIS

Just in the fundraising.

CARLTON

Okay that was when in the late 70s?

PAIS

I think it was in the 80s.

CARLTON

Okay and then the big thing that you just mentioned was in the mid 90s.

PAIS

Yeah I do believe so.

CARLTON

Well, why don't you tell us a little bit about that. How did that come about? Why was it done the big renovation in the mid 90s?

PAIS

I do not know that I am the one that can really tell you why it came about you know other than I think there were a bunch of repairs and things that needed to be done and I just got involved in the fundraising part of it, not in the aesthetic part of it.

CARLTON

What was your experience? Back up a little bit. Did you kids go to the religious school at the Temple?

PAIS

Oh yeah, all four were Bar Mitzvah'd. Alan and Jody had to have a Friday night Bar Mitzvah.

CARLTON

Because the times had not changed by then.

PAIS

Right. It was just after Jody that it is changed so Bonnie had a Saturday morning and David of course had a Saturday morning. They weren't as fancy then.

CARLTON

Nothing was.

PAIS

We all baked for everybody, everybody helped everybody with the Bar Mitzvah's.

CARLTON

How did PJTC and your experience fit into the larger community in Pasadena over the years?

PAIS

I think it became more so through Rabbi Conlan and Rabbi Grater.

CARLTON

Would you say that during Rabbi Galbert's years PJTC was more sort of insular?

PAIS

Yeah I think so. There were still some things. I remember going to an inter-denominational breakfast when I was president.

CARLTON

Oh, so that's over 30 years ago then. What kind of social action involvement have you seen at the Temple over the years?

PAIS

I have never been involved in the social action other than I remember during the bussing I've never as liberal as my friends, the Fingerhut's or the Elpert's and I remember when I think Mickey was president and I was on the executive community and we had bussing and they were talking, the Temple should take a stance on the bussing and I remember saying "are you willing to jeopardize like up to 40% of your congregation on this?" There's a lot of people that are not in favor of the bussing. There were a lot of conservatives in the Temple.

CARLTON

This is back in the late 60s or 70s?

PAIS

Yeah I think that is when it was and Mickey Elpert is one that really listens to both sides and so they never took a formal position.

CARLTON

How do you think the school desegregation affected the Temple congregation, do you have any sense of that?

PAIS

It may have divided the liberals and conservatives a little bit more but I don't think it did a lot. But there were a lot of people that were not in favor of the bussing.

CARLTON

Educational activities at the Temple, have you been involved in those at all aside from the religious school. Sort of the bagel breakfasts and various programs?

PAIS

No, I let whoever was in charge of that.

CARLTON

You have attended over the years I take it?

PAIS

You know not everything, I was not there for every bar mitzvah or every Saturday, you know, we rotated.

CARLTON

Over the years since you came to Pasadena and joined the Temple have you become more observant in your home than you used to be?

PAIS

Well James you know does not like to light the candles and especially if we have got the grandkids here we will go through. It or when we are up at San Cruz at my son's house and he is married to a Born Again Christian and every Friday night they all observe Shabbats including the dog that waits by word of the girls place at the Temple for her piece of _____. They observe the Shabbats more than we do I mean he blesses the kids every Friday night.

CARLTON

Over the time you have lived out here in Pasadena have you ever encountered any anti-Semitism or anything you perceive that way anyway?

PAIS

No not really, it is more integrated. There was an incident in our Wednesday night softball games. Julian plays with us playoff and he is a great outfielder and one of the guys that a friend of ours plays who's his wife is currently dying of cancer. He hit a ball and Julian just robbed him twice of it and he said that is why I do not like the Jews but really I have not really run into it.

CARLTON

Did you have any involvement in the Day School at the Temple on Wisemen.

PAIS

No other than like I said just sitting in on some of the contract talks and I am probably one of the very few at the Temple that somehow or other wishes that it could be part of this Temple.

CARLTON

Formally. That building was here when you arrived.

PAIS

Oh yeah. We always said that is the Max Stone Building of the Louis B. Silver Religious School. You look at the plaque.

CARLTON

Where is the plaque?

PAIS

It is on the wall facing the parking lot; it's the Max Stone building. Do you know who Max Stone was? One of the past presidents of the Temple, an active member of the Temple, he is the one that really developed West Orange Grove.

CARLTON

Really?

PAIS

Yes he started building all the condos.

CARLTON

And converted it from millionaires row. I think the building of that structure is still sort of a mystery, isn't of the day school?

PAIS

I know nothing about that. Obviously we know it was done, about when it was done but how it came to happen and why and all the design work I am not so sure we have much information on it.

PAIS

Well you know you can ask Max Stone or Lou Silver or Mickey Elpert or Bob Hoffman. I do not know if Shirley would know or if Mickey Minovitz would know or Julie Feldstein. I do not know if any of them would know.

CARLTON

Okay. Any other Jewish organization that you have been members of besides the Temple and the federation and Bnai Brith.

PAIS

No I have been involved somewhat in the Westside Jewish Community Center through JCA but I cannot think any other organization really.

CARLTON

Okay. Of course Janice and Alan and Ed and other members of your family have been deeply involved in the Temple over the years.

PAIS

You know Bonnie is a member and you have a workday at the Temple and Raul, who is do here shortly will be the first one to volunteer.

SEVERAL

I have just a few follow-up questions. What did your dad do between 1933 and when he came to Merrill Island. I think he said that he lost the store around 1933.

PAIS

Well I do not know that he lost it in 1933. I do not remember if he had the store when I was an infant, I am just not sure. You would have to ask my older sisters.

SEVERAL

Did you have a Bar mitzvah?

PAIS

No. I was part of the adult Bar mitzvah at the Temple here but I do not consider that really a Bar mitzvah

SEVERAL

The pool, somebody suggested that one of the reasons it was a center for Jews is because they could not get into the Altadena Country Club.

PAIS

I have never heard that. You know we established a tradition at the pool, on Labor Day we used to throw Hi Begal into the pool because you know he was an entrepreneur, and owner of a business and the 4th of July we used to throw Steve Kay into the pool because he was British.

SEVERAL

Did Rabbi Galbert give any sermons or discussions about some of the political issues of the day.

PAIS

He had the best sermons because he was really a teacher not a Rabbi really a teacher. He had a very good sermon I remember one year regarding Israel but not the kind of stuff that Rabbi Grater does.

SEVERAL

I mean did he talk about the Vietnam War, do you recall any sermons about the Vietnam War?

PAIS

I do not recall any.

SEVERAL

Desegregation issues, civil rights

PAIS

But bussing I do not recall any.

SEVERAL

What years were you president of the federation?

PAIS

I think early 80s.

SEVERAL

Ok

CARLTON

I am looking here at your flame from November of 1975 and it appears in those days I am looking at how the Temple serves you written by Josh Pais,

President, and you talked about you are bouncing USY Seniors, what was that? USY seniors, those were seniors in the USY Group?

PAIS

You know I do not remember. I didn't think that we were part of USY at that time maybe they were. You know Janice might be able to enlighten you on that.

CARLTON

Okay then it says "Come on over to Kershner."

PAIS

Yeah Wolman Holly used to be called Kershner that was the guy that was supposed to come up with the money for that and never did but the name was never lost but that was before my time.

CARLTON

All right and I see there is a long article from Roberta Weinberg about the PJTC Social Action Community that is quite long, a page and a half here and it said what appeared that the dominant social issue in the Pasadena Jewish Community is the lack of awareness, the prevalence of timidity in displaying a vibrant social conscience. What is your reaction to that in terms of the way things were in 1975?

PAIS

I was against taking a stand on things that you know I thought we should only take a stand on anti-Semitism and Israel because I think you do not want to jeopardize conservative liberal issues, you know.

CARLTON

How did the 1967 and 1973 wars in the Middle East affect people here at PJTC, do you remember?

PAIS

I remember we had a rally at the Temple for Israel and we took some money out of our savings to give to Israel. I remember Mickey Elpert, who planned on this walked up to the Bema and he said I have \$1000, whatever it was set aside for furniture, we are not going to buy the furniture that money is going to Israel and with that a lot more money came in.

CARLTON

Was this in 1967 or one or the two?

PAIS

I do not know. Marsha can probably tell you but I remember how he really extemporaneously just step forward.

CARLTON

How have Holy Day services changed over the years if they have?

PAIS

Well the main thing, which I think is terrible, is I cannot leave the Bema and go count the pledges anymore.

CARLTON

Okay that is right.

PAIS

So I have to sit through the whole service now and I guess they really do not collect the pledges anymore. They do not have the ushers walking through anymore.

CARLTON

I do not think at least the last year or so they don't walk through but they are out in the lobby. You cannot walk out without passing one.

SEVERAL

I do have one other question about the Wolman Nell changes. We found a document from 1979 in which apparently you asked for the history of the naming of Kershner and it seemed to be in the context of work being done on Kershner in the late 1970s and do you recall how Wolman got involved.

PAIS

We did get fix up that place that Holly Wolman gave \$25000, \$10000 whatever it was for the Red Nation of Kershner that became Wolman but prior to that I do not know.

SEVERAL

What did the Wolman looks like? I mean what kind of work was needed on Wolman or what became Wolman?

PAIS

It just was kind of dingy and decrepit inside you know it did not the nice windows and all the lights overhead like they have now.

CARLTON

When you were president when you were involved actively in running the Temple did you have interaction with the other Temples in the area?

PAIS

I tried to. You know we did it through softball. We did it through some basketball but it was done more through federation but I remember early on while I was involved with the youth groups that gee wouldn't it be nice, we got a Temple nearby in Arcadia, to get our kids together. So I remember calling up, I was very naïve then, and spoke to the Rabbi and I said you know we would like to discussed with you the possibility of a joint youth program and/or youth advisor.

CARLTON

Which Temple were you calling?

PAIS

Arcadia and he said I am going into a board meeting and I will call you back and he did call me back and he said we are not interested, which floored me.

CARLTON

How did the rotating you now have a rotating ____ carnival came to be?

PAIS

I am not sure.

SEVERAL

You have any idea why they turned you down on this?

PAIS

I think they have always been leery of us because when I was president they came to us and wanted to talk about Temple merger and I spent two years in negotiations with them. Chuck McMinn was president at that time. He is now a member of our Temple, a former Medical Director of City of Hope, and we said that we would have everything on the table, does not have to be your building, doesn't have to be our building, doesn't have to be your Rabbi, doesn't have to be our Rabbi, everything is on the table and after two years they broke off and word came back that we were trying to take them over. Federations tried to rent space from them recently and the Temple president was very much in favor of it and it looked like it was going to happen until the board came back and said no, the Arcadia Temple board, and word was that federation was trying to take us over. We were really trying to help preserve them.

CARLTON

Were you involved in the merger with Verdugo Hills?

PAIS

No.

CARLTON

Josh thanks a lot.

PAIS

That is okay you just delayed my car wash for a week is all.

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