

A TEI Project

Interview of Shirley Hoffman

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1. Transcript

1.1. SESSION ONE JUNE 21, 2003

FINGERHUT

This is Shirley Hoffman. It is June 21st 2003, and we are going to be talking about her memories. I'll turn the microphone over to her. Let her go and I'll ask her a couple of questions as they appear. Shirley, go ahead.

HOFFMAN

Well, I was born in Santa Monica. My parents were originally in Pasadena, probably in about 1918 to 20 because I believe my oldest sister was either born here or came here when she was 2 years old. So that would have made it in 1920, or 21, I don't know, but they moved to Santa Monica for three months, and at that point, I was born in Santa Monica, came back here when I was 3 months old and have remained more or less in the community. My parents were with the original group of people who had a Torah. They met in homes.

FINGERHUT

Do you remember some of the names?

HOFFMAN

I remember that it was Harry Levi, Cher Steinberg, the Goodstein, not Goodstein, it would have been the Press family. There were probably more, but only these...

FINGERHUT

As you remember, did the men go to these homes and the women not or did the men ever.....?

HOFFMAN

Mainly, mainly the men. And then as I remember the women...oh, and the Goldman's were probably involved there because that's where she started the

first sisterhood, where the first group of women getting together and later became the sisterhood.

FINGERHUT

You mean, before the congregation.

HOFFMAN

Right. Right. So, I don't know if they actually went to the services, or they just had the men go. I don't know.

FINGERHUT

But they had this Torah, the sacred Torah which they had been moving from house to house.

HOFFMAN

Right. Uhum...Uhum...and it's true that from Dave Goldman, my father did conduct the services. I was a little girl at that time so it probably was in the 1930s and 40's that he conducted services when the rabbi went on vacation during the summer, and he had a terrible voice, but he had enthusiasm, and we were a family that went to temple every Friday night. It was just part of our life, and we all, all four of us went to Sunday school. We were all confirmed. We were all...my brother was bar mitzvahed. My sisters were active in a group called the Haddasah Buds, which was a young group of women, and then of course later on both my brother and I were active in the neighborhood B'nai Brith BBYO, the youth group, and I served as president there probably when I was 15 or around that age, and...

FINGERHUT

Do you remember things that your mother did, as well as your father?

HOFFMAN

My mother became very active in sisterhood and became very active in the B'nai Brith. Both of them were very, very active in the B'nai Brith. My father served as president and was financial secretary for 25 years, and I know my mother belonged to Hadassah, whether she was active in it or not, she probably didn't, I don't know if she had the time for it, but...

FINGERHUT

Once you were growing up, did you find yourself the only Jew in your class?

HOFFMAN

Many times (laughter)...

FINGERHUT

What was it like being Jewish, growing up?

HOFFMAN

It was hard because, and if we had a birthday party for anyone, it was always the Jewish kids. There was never any classmates or anything like that. It was always Jewish that you met at Sunday school that came to your birthday party, and you went to theirs, and so it was kind of a closed group until we went to

high school where we all became really good buddies and met in the library every morning and got kicked out because we talked too much, but we were all, all the Jewish kids stuck together. They were friends because they were not accepted into other groups.

FINGERHUT

Could you give an example of how you mean by not accepting you. When kids play did they not count you in.

HOFFMAN

Well, sometimes they had to because the teacher had, you know made them... You had to be a part of it, and I had gentile girlfriends at school, but I can't say that they really came home and were part of my life at home. I think they were part of my life at school.

FINGERHUT

What about high school?

HOFFMAN

High school, we kinda stuck together. The Jewish kids stuck together.

FINGERHUT

Still (chuckles)...

HOFFMAN

Yeah, they still did. It was just something that, we knew each other on the outside so we were there together at school and planned our activities of going to the movies on Saturday afternoon and stuff like that. My first marriage in Pasadena was in 1945, and at that point, I was married to a navy man. I moved to San Diego for a short time and then to Long Beach where my son was born, and in 1947, and things were not good at all, and I had to come back home, and in 1948, Steve was only 6-months-old, and I moved back home. Being single I probably went out with everyone's nephew, father-in-law, father, uncle, male cousin. Because there were not 21-year-old, 22-year-old girls that were single. They were all married, so everybody fixed me up, and it was just, you know, the minute I met somebody, "I have a brother I want you to meet." So this is the way it went, and it was okay. Social life, we ended up with a singles group, and I was active in that, and that was how I met Bob.

FINGERHUT

There's no singles group now at the synagogue. There was though back, what was it about 1946, 47?...

HOFFMAN

It was, no probably in the 50's...

FINGERHUT

The 50's?

HOFFMAN

Yeah, and up until the time I met Bob which was in 1957, and there was a singles group, and we met, and I was active in that, and that was where I met him, and...

FINGERHUT

With Bob, you were...Bob, he was an engineer?

HOFFMAN

Bob came here for orientation with Aerojet, and he was only supposed to be here three months. They asked him to stay on, and maybe part of it was me, but I don't know, but then we were dating, and he traveled a great deal. I didn't see a great deal of him, and when he came into town I did see him, and we dated for about a year-and-a-half, and then we were married, and it was a good life, and lucky enough, he enjoyed my friends and the temple, and he became active whereas I felt very, very fortunate.

FINGERHUT

Looking at the synagogue, can you tell us some of the people that you knew or some people that were important in your life and...

HOFFMAN

David Goldman was very, very important in my life because he was not only the president of the temple, but he was also my lawyer.

FINGERHUT

When you say president of the temple, you mean president for nine years...

HOFFMAN

Many, many years, when I wanted to start Steven in Sunday school, my dad said, "Oh I belong to the temple. You can send him", and I said "No," I said "I can't do that. I have to do it on my own." He said, "Well you're gonna have to talk with Dave Goldman." I said "Okay." So I went to Dave, and I said "Steve's gonna start Sunday school, and I need to join." And he did know my circumstances, and he said "Can you pay 25 dollars a year?", and I said "Yes.", and I joined for 25 dollars a year so that my son would be under my membership, and I always said if I could do more, it was good for me, and I hoped I could be good for them. I knew Rabbi Cohn, who was a rabbi... you could see him walking the streets, rehearsing his speech. He was like talking to God most of the time. He lived right near us, and so when I, he would be walking, we knew what he was studying and rehearsing what he was gonna say Friday night...

FINGERHUT

This was the 30s and early 40s...

HOFFMAN

Yeah. Yeah.

FINGERHUT

Did you know Rabbi Halevi before him?

HOFFMAN

And I knew him. Yeah, and he was our rabbi at the temple on Walnut, and his wife Claire...I knew her.

FINGERHUT

Can you tell us something about his, ...few people seem to remember him.

HOFFMAN

He was kind of a quiet, quiet man, had a big ego, and I remember him teaching because when we met at the temple on Walnut it was that we actually met in little groups because it wasn't big enough to have a room. So, in one corner was one class, and in another corner was another class, and he would come through and talk to us, but he was always...I always thought he was a little above us and didn't treat us like we were anything but a student or a kid or something. He didn't have a warmth about him at all. Rabbi Cohn did. Rabbi Vorspan also had an ego that wouldn't quit.

FINGERHUT

I heard that one of the rabbis...The rabbis were part-time rabbis...

HOFFMAN

Uhuh.

FINGERHUT

Until Vorspan was the first full-time rabbi. What do these other rabbis do to make a living, Halevi and...

HOFFMAN

I have no idea. Cohn I think was in the insurance business. That part I kinda remember. Halevi, I don't know what he did. I don't know what he did.

FINGERHUT

Okay, so Vorspan was the first one to come here as a full time. Do you remember him?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

FINGERHUT

Do you remember him?

HOFFMAN

Yeah. I remember him. I remember his wife. She was very, very active wanting to do plays and very, very artistic, and he gave long sermons. He really, really loved to hear himself talk, so he really gave long sermons. That part I remember, and I do remember being at Walnut, and I guess it was with Halevi that they actually closed the doors on Yom Kippur to get enough money so that they could raise the money that they needed, and that money was raised, and then he went on with the service. So I do remember that.

FINGERHUT

Vorspan came after they moved to the new facility.

HOFFMAN

Yes.

FINGERHUT

The present facility.

HOFFMAN

Yes.

FINGERHUT

So it was Cohn who was rabbi at the time that they moved.

HOFFMAN

No...yes! Cohn was.

FINGERHUT

Halevi then followed by Cohn...

HOFFMAN

Now Cohn married me. So that was in 1945.

FINGERHUT

That was in the new temple.

HOFFMAN

No. I was...

FINGERHUT

In the present...

HOFFMAN

Yeah. I was married in the new temple in the small sanctuary.

FINGERHUT

What was known then as B'nai Israel...

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

FINGERHUT

Sanctuary.

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

FINGERHUT

However, Vorspan left to go to the University of Judaism.

HOFFMAN

Correct.

FINGERHUT

He wanted ____ and then Rabbi Galpert came. Could you speak about Rabbi Galpert shortly... I know you (Shirley laughs). Don't take 37 years...

HOFFMAN

I do remember him coming because I also remember I was living at home with my parents. My father had had a heart attack and was home, and I remember him coming to visit. So, I remember this. So what year did he come in?

FINGERHUT

‘54?

HOFFMAN

Around ‘54 I guess. So that was when I remember him, and my father died...

FINGERHUT

It was in the early ‘50s.

HOFFMAN

Because my father died in ‘56, but I remember him coming to the house to visit my father, and that was when I first met him, and our paths were very close, along with Bob and myself, and he had his faults, and we all know it.

FINGERHUT

Well, now, here’s an interesting point.... We all buy it, and it’s just what other people would say, but nobody has said it. We recognize the man was affable, intelligent, funny, learned, a good counselor in many ways, but he had his faults. He was human. Do you think you could briefly say some of the faults?

HOFFMAN

Part of it I don’t want to say, and I think you know why, but it was corrected. That fault that he had that was a bad one was corrected, and so...

FINGERHUT

HOFFMAN

Right, and he wasn’t the kind to go to the hospital to visit people. That was not his thing, but he was there if you needed him for sure. I think he was wonderful with the children. I think when he taught the class, they really learned something, but it was a human feeling that they had, that he gave to the people and to the kids. It wasn’t that he was above them. I never felt that he, as intelligent as he was and as bright as he was, I never felt that he talked you down or that he did that to the kids.

FINGERHUT

We can see that in his Midrash ____ that book that we have of his.

HOFFMAN

Yeah. And I don’t remember many of the cantors. You know I remember Moses, and I remember who was before him.

FINGERHUT

Cantor of Moses. His last name was Moses.

HOFFMAN

Claiborne. Yeah, I remember him, and I’m trying to think if he was here when Steve was barmitzvahed. I don’t remember.

FINGERHUT

By the time I came to the congregation in ‘63, the cantor was Sal Blumenthal, and so was Moses followed by Blumenthal?

HOFFMAN

I think so. I think so.

FINGERHUT

Blumenthal came some time earlier than '63.

HOFFMAN

Yeah. Yeah. So, and they all had egos that wouldn't quit. They thought they were all wonderful. I don't think at that time they related to the children the way our cantor does now or the one even before. Okay, we're talking about some of the presidents of the congregation, and I remember many of them going probably way back to David Goldman. I don't remember who was before him, but I may have known him. He may have been a friend of the family, but I don't recall, and they all had their agenda, and they all did their thing.

FINGERHUT

Anybody stand out as a personality that you remember, in the early years?
We'll get to the later years.

HOFFMAN

Oh I think David, really. I think he was one of the most outstanding presidents we had. I think that he cared so much about the community, not just the temple, because he really reached outside, and along with my father who worked with the churches and the different organizations...

FINGERHUT

We'll be talking about that. Let's follow that. At that time, did the congregation have much relationship with the outside Pasadena community?

HOFFMAN

Well, I think that's what David tried to do and my father tried to do, to bring it closer so that they did have the council churches that met, and we were included, and they were brought to the temple for different things, and so I really think they tried, and so that was years ago that they really tried to do this.

FINGERHUT

Today, there are no Jews on the city council in Pasadena. Were there ever?

HOFFMAN

I don't recall.

FINGERHUT

Any Jews in the government, here in Pasadena?

HOFFMAN

I don't recall any of them. I only recall one person being on the Tournament of Roses committee, and that was David Press. Outside of that there was no one. I think they were probably two Jewish queens and princesses that were ever on the floats.

FINGERHUT

Well I haven't seen my grandchildren.

HOFFMAN

(Laughs).

FINGERHUT

My granddaughter.

HOFFMAN

But I think that they really tried to bring the community together, and this was so many years ago.

FINGERHUT

Do any of the presidents since the early ones ____ and would you comment on the new?

HOFFMAN

I think so. I mean I think they all had their thing. They all did it. I think that you, and I'm mentioning you and your committee that did the new constitution, I think that was a turning point in the community and in the temple, and I think it has worked. I hope it continues to work because it was put together so well. I have found that in the last couple of years, they have not used it. They have not had the committees' report monthly. They have not had what was started out to be, and I hope that they're gonna go back to that because I think it's so important, and I think what you guys wrote...not because it was Bob and you and people I love, but because I think it made the biggest change and brought the community together, and it has worked!

FINGERHUT

Do you remember some of the women in the congregation? Sisterhood presidents going back or some of the women who were important?

HOFFMAN

Some of them. I know that Lena Goldman was the first president. She was a lovely lady. The second one served, and I can't remember her name, served for several years as president of sisterhood. Maybe it was because no one wanted to do it. Maybe it was because she wanted to do it, but she served many, many years as president.

FINGERHUT

Goldstein?

HOFFMAN

I think it was Goldstein. I can't. I think so, and they've always been the backbone of the temple. They've always been there for the temple, and sisterhood still is the backbone.

FINGERHUT

Could you give me an idea of some of the things sisterhood did when they built the new building, and...

HOFFMAN

The kitchen (chuckles), and we still are doing the kitchen.

FINGERHUT

Well, that's important.

HOFFMAN

Yeah. I think that what the Goodstein or the Press family started with the Torah fund to raise the money for that has been wonderful, and I think that we always, you know, if they needed a new stage drape, if they needed a new curtain, if they needed...whatever they needed...if they needed chairs, they needed tables, they needed stuff...this is what we raised the money for, and this is what it was given for, and we still give a check to the temple every year aside from what else we buy. So, we are still, I think, the right hand. What else? Do I remember Mrs. Hassler. I certainly do, and I...

FINGERHUT

Could you explain who she is because...

HOFFMAN

She was a non-Jew who was the organist for the temple and led the choir, and at the time that...I know she was at the old temple, but when we came to the new place...

FINGERHUT

When you say the old one, you mean Hudson?

HOFFMAN

Hudson. She was there, and there was an organ there, and there was a choir, and Mildred Melvin and Bertha Goldman and all of those women sang in the choir, and then we moved over to the other place, and it was upstairs in the Nell Chapel...

FINGERHUT

Where the air-conditioning is.

HOFFMAN

Where the air-conditioning is today, and the choir was there, and the organ was up there, and Mrs. Hassler was there, and she retired, I don't remember what year, but she retired, and I'm sure she's gone now. She has to be, but...

FINGERHUT

Do you remember any specific or particular events that involve officers or important people or anybody...

HOFFMAN

No.

FINGERHUT

Could you discuss the physical changes in the temple? When we came here...

HOFFMAN

Okay.

FINGERHUT

What was it like?

HOFFMAN

Okay. There was no new building. When the new building was built, I remember the first year that we went to services for the High Holidays with a dirt floor. They put up folding chairs, and we sat on a dirt floor until we had the money to put down a floor, and Ben Kinfeld was the instigator and the man behind buying that property.

FINGERHUT

What was the property like when the congregation first moved into it, before the new building...

HOFFMAN

It had just... It didn't have the school building. It had just that one part where the Nell Chapel is and ____ and that was it.

FINGERHUT

There was another wing that ran from that building eastward along the north side of the property that had been apartments.

HOFFMAN

Okay, that was what was torn down when the school was built.

FINGERHUT

Right. But that was there, and people have said that those apartments were rather interesting.

HOFFMAN

Well, that's what I heard. That it was a roadhouse. Is that using good terminology?

FINGERHUT

Yeah.

HOFFMAN

Okay, roadhouse. That's what I heard, and of course you gotta remember this was on the outskirts of Pasadena. I mean, there was not much up there.

FINGERHUT

Which raises an interesting question. Most of the Jews lived on the West side of town.

HOFFMAN

We all did.

FINGERHUT

And to go to the synagogue, you came all the way across Pasadena. Speaking of which, where did you live?

HOFFMAN

I lived off of Walnut, on Rosemont, which is near... Rosemont ran from Walnut to Orange Grove, and then there was Cypress and Pasadena Avenue...

FINGERHUT

Pasadena, present neighborhood church.

HOFFMAN

Yes. Yes, and the Minovitz's lived on Walnut, right at the end of Rosemont, and the Presses lived on either Pasadena Avenue or Winona or one of those. So, we were all in that area, and we all lived there, and of course going to the temple on Walnut was not far, and then when it moved out, of course it moved out, and then we eventually moved away from there and moved to the eastside of town.

FINGERHUT

Well, until you did, that was quite a trip

HOFFMAN

Uhum...Uhum..

FINGERHUT

Every Friday night

HOFFMAN

Yup. And then rabbi had his office up where the caretaker lived. That was his office and in part, a library, and then they opened the annex where the library is now for the holidays, and if you had a big event, it was kind of closed off.

FINGERHUT

Oh, okay. So, that wing to the side was generally closed off and generally not open.

HOFFMAN

Right. Only when we had the High Holidays and when there was a wedding or whatever. So, that's the way it worked.

FINGERHUT

So the congregation closed what is now known as Knell chapel.

HOFFMAN

Sure. Sure. One of the events, of course, I have to mention is the fact that when I was a young girl, we had dances for the army and navy and boys that were around, and we had a Saturday night dance which our mothers all supervised.

FINGERHUT

This would have been in the early '40s.

HOFFMAN

This was in the early '40s, and they were very, very special for a lot of people. Then, most of us either went off to school or got married, and the lives changed. Coming back to some of the social life that was there, there was always a Yom Kippur night dance that everyone went to, and I remember all of those. There was...

FINGERHUT

And was there the sisterhood plays that...

HOFFMAN

The sisterhood plays were absolutely phenomenal. They had them, and not being a part of it, but I was just wonderful in the audience because I enjoyed it so much.

FINGERHUT

Ivy, though, mentioned Cohn's Mutiny.

HOFFMAN

Right. Right. There was so many. There was so many. They were just... The girls that wrote this put so much time into it, and it ended up to be such a fabulous evening, and when I think about it today, I think about how much we could charge and really make money on it because the people would pay it when they didn't years ago that was because they didn't have it, but all of the plays were put together for the enjoyment of the community, and I have to tell you that they were wonderful.

FINGERHUT

Did they, they found this unity together...?

HOFFMAN

Absolutely. Everybody looked forward. The minute one was over, they said what are you gonna write for next year. So, it was something that we all looked forward to.

FINGERHUT

This would have been when, about the 40's or 50's?

HOFFMAN

No, this was in the 50's because Bob was involved. This was after I was married to him. So, it was after the late 50's and the early 60's. So....

FINGERHUT

I remember ones that my wife was involved with, and the writers were Marilyn Fingerhut and Marsha Alper and Fran Collins.

HOFFMAN

And Connie Levy. And Shirley Collins. And, of course, I do remember Eugene Fingerhut, because he was the star of the show with his salami, but did we ever eat that?

FINGERHUT

Months of activity, I think months of preparing a play, in some ways was almost as important as the performance itself.

HOFFMAN

Absolutely! And I remember we gave, we do Hanukkah for sisterhood now, but we had dinners. We had Hanukkah dinners every year, and I remember one year we worked our fannies off. We prepared everything. We served the food. We didn't have, we paid to get in. We went to get something to eat, and we all had to go out to dinner because it was all gone. So besides paying to get in to eat the dinner, we had to go to a restaurant to eat dinner!

FINGERHUT

These are things that occurred that made the congregation a happy place.

HOFFMAN

The other thing that made it so good was our bar and batmizvahs. We all helped one another. It was a group of people, not just a class which they do today, but it was a group of people who our kids walked in and said "Eat that one because my mother made that." They knew exactly what was on the table and which mother had prepared it, and they had a great time, and it was just a wonderful way of getting to know people and working with people, and that's what made the friendship, and that's 40 years ago.

FINGERHUT

We can speak of the synagogue as a happy family, if you wish, but then let's talk of divisions and schisms. One led to the creation of the Arcadian temple. Could you tell us about that because there are many people who would skip over it and...

HOFFMAN

Yeah, I don't know much about it. I remember Frank Ackerman, who was the dissenting person, who really felt he needed his own edifice, and wherever he went, after he left Arcadia, he went and opened up a storefront temple because he needed his own name on it, and he was very egotistical, could not get along with the other people. He did serve as president for the temple, and I know that probably there is somebody else you would talk to who would give you the other side of it, and that would be David Blancher, and he would give you a blow-to-blow description of what happened and who involved, but I don't remember.

FINGERHUT

I heard that the split that took out approximately one-third of the congregation not only involved people who went because they wanted to be with Ackerman, but also there was some people who went because they didn't like rabbi Galpert.

HOFFMAN

Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah.

FINGERHUT

And so when did this split occur?

HOFFMAN

I'm trying to think when it happened. It happened before I married Bob, so that was in '58. It happened probably in the early '50s.

FINGERHUT

Interesting. Interesting point. The building, the new building, before it was renovated and revamped, was built about 1954 or '55, and it had on it a plaque,

as you walked into the main sanctuary on the right there was a plaque to President Frank Ackerman who was instrumental in building this building.

HOFFMAN

Yeah. Yeah. Now I have to tell you that that man that David Blancher wants that thing hung and you wanna know something, we can't find it.

FINGERHUT

You mean, in the demolition of the old building and the resurrection of the new one, that plaque has been lost?

HOFFMAN

We can't find it, but some of the people he took with him are listed as givers to our temple. So it happened after we came to Altadena Drive.

FINGERHUT

Now, let's change the subject to more...

HOFFMAN

One, one other thing I was thinking about. I lost my train of thought.

(DICTATION GAP)

HOFFMAN

You have no idea.

FINGERHUT

What was it like?

HOFFMAN

I have to tell you about one of the important parts of our social life at the temple was the pool. The pool was there. We were there. Our kids were there. This is where we really got to be sociable. We had barbecues. We had Tuesday night potluck dinners. We had everything. The men came home from work, changed their clothes, and came to the temple to swim, to talk, to visit, to eat, and our children were there. It was just a wonderful experience for all of us, and we really enjoyed it whether we swam or not. Anyway,

FINGERHUT

What role did various organizations play in the social life of the synagogue?

HOFFMAN

Well, we had the City of Hope group that a great deal of us belonged to, and we would have dinners every year, and we would have them at the temple for a long time. Then we had to change. We had them in Arcadia. They were a social group that brought people together, raise money for the City of Hope, and so many of us were active in it. It was just a part of our lives. The B'nai Brith has always been a part of the temple. They met there. They gave money to the temple. They raised money playing cards, and that's where they gave the money. There was another group many years ago called the Wednesday Nighters, and it was a group of men who played cards, and I don't know if the women played also, but they raised money, and that was money raised also for

different luxury things at the temple such as curtains, drapes, whatever we needed, and they did not have any say on the board or anything to do with the running of the temple. It was just a group that met, that belonged to the temple, that raised money for the temple.

FINGERHUT

They also held B'nai Brith dances.

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah. Yeah. We had dinner dances, and we raised money, but it wasn't for the temple, it was for the City of Hope.

FINGERHUT

But it involved many people.

HOFFMAN

Absolutely. Yeah, it did, and...

FINGERHUT

Did you belong to any groups and hold offices in any organizations or in the sisterhood or?

HOFFMAN

Yeah, I was president of the sisterhood. I had been treasurer of the temple, secretary of temple, on the board of the temple, on many, many committees, and I still serve on a few. As a young person I was with BBG, and president of BBG and BBYO, and I think I had held other positions both sisterhood and temple.

FINGERHUT

You mentioned that your life with Bob, when Bob died and you are now part of the congregation. Can you explain your life.

HOFFMAN

Well, I continued to be a part of it because it was so much a part of my life, and my friends are still there, and I have to say that without them I would not have survived. They were there for me, and after Bob died they came and said that he had served on the planning committee, would I take his place and continue? So I did that, and then I continued being on other committees, and it has been a part of my life, and it gets me out, and it gets me with people, and that's important to me.

FINGERHUT

Do you have any activities in the larger Jewish committee of St. Gabriel or even the Los Angeles federation?

HOFFMAN

No I had just been active somewhat in the St. Gabriel federation. I served on a couple of committees and I've been on the Woman Who Makes The Difference committee for a couple of years and been a part of that, and

FINGERHUT

In summary, your life in Pasadena as a community...have you ever found yourself faced with any Anti-Semitism?

HOFFMAN

Ah, yes I did. In McKinley, which is right across the street from where I live is where...

FINGERHUT

McKinley School?

HOFFMAN

McKinley School is where I went to junior high, and there was a Gerald L.K. Smith who was not a very nice man, but his son also happened to go to school at McKinley when I did, and there was a contest, and the contest was to name the newspaper. Well, I happened to name it, and I won, and I got a certificate, and it was handed to me by Gerald L.K. Smith's son because he was president of the association at the time, and of course I know that he didn't know that he was handing it to a Jew.

FINGERHUT

Did anybody ever confront you in any way about your being Jewish, any incident?

HOFFMAN

When I was at Lincoln School, and that was my elementary school, I was friends with a Japanese girl, and this was in the early '40s. I had lunch with her every day, and we would you know we were together, and pretty soon she stopped having lunch with me, and the teacher noticed it. She went to my mother, and she said "Is there something wrong between Shirley and Mary?", and my mother said "I didn't think so. Shirley didn't say anything.", and she confronted Mary and Mary said "No, my father doesn't want me to be with anyone Jewish." So that was one part, and I will mention one other thing about my mother who was active in a lot of things. She was the first president of the PTA at any school in Pasadena. I've always heard that, "Oh you live in Pasadena? I didn't know there were Jews in Pasadena." Well, there are a lot of Jews in Pasadena, and they're all nice people, and I think that we find in our community we find a closeness that I don't think you find in the other valley or in West LA or in other places. There is not competition. There's just love.

1.2. SESSION TWO OCTOBER 6, 2010

SEVERAL

Today is October 6, 2010. This is Michael Several, I am with Shirley Hoffman, and we are going to conduct a very focused interview today. You know I have been writing articles for the Flame dealing with the businesses owned by Jews what is now Old Town from the period basically between the Great Wars.

HOFFMAN

What year are you starting?

SEVERAL

Well, I have a list of names. I got these names by going through the Pasadena City Directory, looking at the businesses that were located on, I don't know, on 4 or 5 streets, Colorado, Raymond, Fair Oaks, Holly and Union. Also I looked at the directories, the few directories that we have of members of the Pasadena, well the B'Nai Israel temple, so I got names, matched them up with the businesses and anyway I have this list.

HOFFMAN

Okay.

SEVERAL

And about six weeks ago, I went through the list with Al Levy and so I am now going through the list with you and I think probably you two are the only ones who could have any memories.

HOFFMAN

The only third person would be Donald Minovitz. He might be the third person who possibly could remember some of these.

SEVERAL

Okay yeah. We may do him, well before actually I want to get on this, there was a question I want to ask you about any memories you have of Albert Einstein. Let me give you the context. There was a book, short book written a couple of years ago about the years Einstein was in California, the early 1930s and there was very little information about life in Pasadena, but one of the things it says is when he came here in 1930, he practiced violin at the Walnut Hudson temple. The people that we have interviewed, that Jean interviewed, nobody had ever mentioned that before and I am just wondering, do you have any memories or ever hear?

HOFFMAN

The only memory I have is a picture of him and I am not sure if it was with my father. I am going to look for some pictures and I am going to ask my niece to look through some pictures because there was a picture of him, and as I said, I cannot remember who was in the picture, but that part I do remember and I will try and find it, but I don't think I have it. It was probably in the things with my brother so I will ask my niece to see if she can find it.

SEVERAL

That would be great. Also if we could make a scan of it or something and I think the Einstein archive contact, I think they would like that.

HOFFMAN

I cannot remember if Einstein spoke here or what, but I do remember a picture, so I will try and see if I can find it.

SEVERAL

Did you ever see him?

HOFFMAN

I was 4 years old, but I think my father did and if he spoke, I am sure my father was there, and I as I say, I recollect him in the picture, but I don't remember who was with him.

SEVERAL

That would be great if you could get that. So now let's talk about this rather long list of people. Max Hart. Max Hart had a ...

HOFFMAN

Millenary

SEVERAL

Yeah, first it was at North Fair Oaks then it was right around the corner on Colorado, then he moved further north.

HOFFMAN

He moved east.

SEVERAL

What do you remember about Max Hart?

HOFFMAN

I remember I was friends with his daughter. We were in Sunday school together and he was I think an active person in both B'Nai B'Rith and the temple. I don't think he held positions per se, but I know he was active and a member there.

SEVERAL

Yeah I do have, it says he was a member of the temple and B'Nai B'Rith.

HOFFMAN

Yeah because I went to Sunday school with the youngest daughter. The oldest daughter was a friend of my sister and then there was also a son and I think he was probably friends with my brother.

SEVERAL

Was he a tall man or a short man?

HOFFMAN

I don't remember. I don't think he was very tall.

SEVERAL

Was he a smart dresser?

HOFFMAN

He was a generous man and he had a good business, but you know, that's about all I remember.

SEVERAL

Josh or Jass B. Rodgers. He was a jeweler.

HOFFMAN

What was the last name?

SEVERAL

Rodgers. He was a jeweler on East Colorado between 1928 and 1941, and he apparently was a B'Nai B'Rith member.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall him at all.

SEVERAL

Abraham Veneer. He had a pawn shop.

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah, okay. Bernice Feldstein was his niece and he was married to a woman and they got divorced and he had that business on Colorado Street for years. He was not particularly an active member at the temple, or I don't think, he may have been a member of B'Nai B'Rith. He was a big man and he had two daughters; one daughter was my age and she was in Sunday school with me and the other one was my sister's age and was with her. She became a nun. It kind of wiped like the family out completely, but Abe and Sylvia had been divorced, but she became a nun and moved to one of the islands far away. She later did give up that part of it. Her sister, I have seen in the past 10 years when I go to convention for sisterhood because she is also very active in sisterhood and, Bernice Feldstein, her sister was Henrietta Orlov who signed on the first, she was secretary of the temple and I think she signed the papers when they became the temple so that was the connection there.

SEVERAL

Did you ever socialize with them in any way?

HOFFMAN

My mother was very good friends with his ex-wife, Sylvia. She was very, very active in B'Nai B'Rith, became president of the whole everything, so my mother was very friendly with her and we grew up together as kids.

SEVERAL

Al recalls him as being active in the American Legion.

HOFFMAN

Probably yeah, but I don't remember that.

SEVERAL

William Simon. He operated a lunch room that went through various names, Simon's Lunch Room, Simon's Cafeteria, but it was located at 43 E. Colorado, so it is just east of Fair Oaks and he operated it between 1929 and 1947 at least.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall that.

SEVERAL

You don't recall him or eating there?

HOFFMAN

No.

SEVERAL

He may have been, the only thing that I could find, he may have been a B'Nai B'Rith member. The reason I say maybe is because he advertised in the B'Nai B'Rith yearbook. He didn't advertise in the temple yearbook, so I don't know. Sidney Robinson. He had a shoe repair on...

HOFFMAN

Kindly of vaguely remember him, but not well you know, I don't know. I remember the name and I remember the shoe but that's it.

SEVERAL

Louis Kuresh, he had a shoe store on North Fair Oaks and then moved to E. Colorado in that corner building on the northwest corner of Raymond and Colorado.

HOFFMAN

I don't think I remember that.

SEVERAL

He may have been temple president.

HOFFMAN

Who was?

SEVERAL

Louis Kuresh in 1935. I was surprised; I was looking on the list of...

HOFFMAN

He's not on the list?

SEVERAL

No he actually is. I am surprised to see his name there. But you don't...

HOFFMAN

I remember the name and probably a friend of my father's, but that's all I remember.

SEVERAL

John Biscuit, he had the lady's shop.

HOFFMAN

Yes, I remember him. He was vice president of the temple for many years. He just kept that position for many, many years, so he was very active in the temple and he had the dress shop. When he sold the dress shop, he sold it to the Weber's, Monica and I can't remember his name, Weber, and they had the dress shop there when he sold it.

SEVERAL

Do you recall when he sold it?

HOFFMAN

M-Lady.

SEVERAL

Did he sell it after World War II?

HOFFMAN

I think so.

SEVERAL

What do you recall about the business, the M-Lady shop?

HOFFMAN

It was a nice shop.

SEVERAL

A quality shop?

HOFFMAN

Yes it was.

SEVERAL

And the customers were?

HOFFMAN

Well you know, it was on Colorado Street so he had a walk in business and it was good quality merchandise.

SEVERAL

Morris Marks, he had a shoe repair in the early 1930s on E. Colorado.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall that.

SEVERAL

Louis M. Cohen. Mutual outfitting.

HOFFMAN

I remember the name and what was his last name?

SEVERAL

Cohen.

HOFFMAN

I just remember the name but I don't remember him.

SEVERAL

I mean he had an affiliation with either the B'Nai B'Rith or the temple. I think I pulled his name from the city directory.

HOFFMAN

I see.

SEVERAL

That sounds Jewish. Morris Sander.

HOFFMAN

What's the name?

SEVERAL

Morris Sander. He had Paris Fashion.

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah, he was on Colorado street and he had, it was a high end store and he was active, I think he was active in B'Nai B'Rith and I don't think he held any position at the temple, but they were members.

SEVERAL

Yeah and when you say active, how would that express itself if they weren't on the board or something?

HOFFMAN

Well you know we have that now of course, people are members and they attend things and they're active, but they don't take a position and there are a lot of them, they just don't do it.

SEVERAL

Yeah. Did Paris Fashion specialize in anything, was it coats or?

HOFFMAN

I don't know. I don't remember.

SEVERAL

Let's see, I have the name Max Ravin. He was a furrier on E. Colorado and he was a temple member.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall it.

SEVERAL

_____ E. Hiam. He had Ladies Furnishings on N. Raymond and that it was on.

HOFFMAN

What was the name?

SEVERAL

Haim.

HOFFMAN

I don't remember.

SEVERAL

George Burger.

HOFFMAN

What did he have?

SEVERAL

Let's see, he was a haberdasher

HOFFMAN

I remember, yes.

SEVERAL

Also a men's shop. I think he started off I guess selling hats and then it became a men's store on E. Colorado.

HOFFMAN

Yeah he was a friend of my father's in B'Nai B'Rith and you know, they were active people but didn't take positions.

SEVERAL

Do you recall anything about his store in any way.

HOFFMAN

I think what he had was a good personality. That's what I remember. I remember he had a very good personality. He liked to tell a lot of jokes.

SEVERAL

You don't remember any of them?

HOFFMAN

No.

SEVERAL

How about the store?

HOFFMAN

I don't remember the store. My father might, but I don't.

SEVERAL

Arthur Sigmund. Colombia Outfitting.

HOFFMAN

The name I remember. I don't remember him.

SEVERAL

How about the store? Do you remember anything about this store? I mean, when they say outfitting, what was that, clothes?

HOFFMAN

I would assume it was clothing.

SEVERAL

Let's see Harry Lichenstein. The Style Shop.

HOFFMAN

Where were they located?

SEVERAL

On E. Colorado.

HOFFMAN

I remember the name and I remember both the names and the store name. I don't remember what they did, but I do remember them.

SEVERAL

Do you remember anything about the store, was it high end?

HOFFMAN

I don't know.

SEVERAL

David Pian. At Pian's millenary and dress shop on E. Colorado from about 1937 to 1944.

HOFFMAN

I don't remember.

SEVERAL

Jacob Asia. He had dry goods store on W. Colorado, then a men's furnishing on North Fair Oaks.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall.

SEVERAL

Antoine Roos, shoe repair on North Fair Oaks.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall it.

SEVERAL

Benjamin Zitnik. He had a meat market.

HOFFMAN

What was the last name?

SEVERAL

Zitnik.

HOFFMAN

I don't remember.

SEVERAL

He had a meat market and delicatessen. The Savings Center Market. Josh Winthrop.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall that.

SEVERAL

He had a meat market on North Fair Oaks. Well, it was during the 1920s so. Josh Rosenberg. He had a shoe repair.

HOFFMAN

I just remember the fact that there was a Rosenberg that had a shoe repair.

SEVERAL

But you don't remember anything about him.

HOFFMAN

No.

SEVERAL

Do you recall the store in any way? You know, when I think of a shoe repair I say its kind of little narrow place, but getting a photograph from Pasadena History Museum, that showed it was actually taken because the business next door was a bike store and there was some event and there are all these bicyclists in front of the store, but next door to this is a shoe repair place and it is pretty large. You know, it's not some narrow thing, it was a pretty large store. Do you recall that store at all?

HOFFMAN

No. What year was it, do you remember?

SEVERAL

It was in the 30s. This store, he was there for a long time, from 1927 to 1943 so that's 16 years, but this particular photograph I think was taken around 1935 or something and I was surprised at how massive it was. Harry Steinberg.

HOFFMAN

I remember him. A short little man who used to get drunk when they carried the torah around. He had a wonderful time. He was very active in the temple and a nice little man.

SEVERAL

Do you remember anything about the store?

HOFFMAN

No.

SEVERAL

It was a furniture store.

HOFFMAN

I am sure it was not high end. I'm sure it was either medium or low end, I don't recall.

SEVERAL

Yeah. Phillip Steinberg.

HOFFMAN

That was his son.

SEVERAL

Do you remember anything about him?

HOFFMAN

He just took over after his father did.

SEVERAL

Do you recall how long the store lasted? You know the reason I ask is because in this research, I only looked in city directories up till 1947, so I don't know how it continued. Do you recall?

HOFFMAN

No I don't. I know that, I don't know.

SEVERAL

Barney Everon.

HOFFMAN

Okay.

SEVERAL

He had...

HOFFMAN

A furniture store?

SEVERAL

Let's see, it was Chicago Outfitting.

HOFFMAN

Yeah, but I think it was a furniture store because if it wasn't then it was linens and goods like that. He was nice man. His daughter and I were in Sunday school together. He never really took an active part in being an officer or anything like that, but was there in support of the temple very well. And Harry Steinberg, going back to him, he stuttered quite a bit and it was so funny you know when he was on the bema by the time he got the words out, everybody was holding their breath, but anyway, that's Stein's point.

SEVERAL

Why was he on the bema speaking?

HOFFMAN

Well it's something I remember.

SEVERAL

What was he talking about?

HOFFMAN

Oh when he was on the bema, he called the people up, but by the time he got the words out you know they were already on the bema anyway. That's the way it was.

SEVERAL

Max Shure. He was tailor.

HOFFMAN

Was that clothing or tire?

SEVERAL

Yeah men's clothing from about 1927 to 1935.

HOFFMAN

Yeah I remember the name that he was here, but I don't know too much about him.

SEVERAL

And the store you don't. Joseph Edelman. He was a clothing cleaner, men's. Actually this may be before your time.

HOFFMAN

I don't remember him.

SEVERAL

This was 1925 to 1931. Phillip Pepper.

HOFFMAN

He had a grocery store, a vegetable market and I always got the first cherries that came out for the season because he liked me. They were very, very giving people. They would not take a position as far as doing anything like that, but they would support everything. They were just really nice people.

SEVERAL

Do you remember the store in anyway. I mean, did he have...

HOFFMAN

It was a store. You walked in and the veggies and the fruits and everything were all there. It was open. When you walked there the veggies and stuff were right there and it went back, but it was out in front.

SEVERAL

Did he have these kind of stands on the sidewalk too?

HOFFMAN

Uh huh.

SEVERAL

Who shopped there?

HOFFMAN

Well it was walking. It was in Fair Oaks and people walked by. My dad drove, so we went on Saturday to shop and that's when we went. I guess it was just not only word of mouth, but people who were just there that walked by because Fair Oaks was a busy street. People walked back and forth, they didn't have cars and if they wanted to get to the street car or the bus, it was down on Colorado so they would walk from up here down to Colorado.

SEVERAL

Where did you live?

HOFFMAN

I lived over on Rosemont. I don't know if you know where Rosemont is. It's off of Walnut between Walnut and Orange Grove and a lot of Jewish people lived around there. The Presson's and the Minovitz's and quite a few people lived in that area.

SEVERAL

So on Saturday you would go down to Fair Oaks. What would you buy there?

HOFFMAN

Well on the corner of Fair Oaks and Walnut was Minovitz's, so we would be there and then go down the street and that would be the Pepper's and if we had to go to a shoe store it was there and things like that. So it was usually Saturday's were the days and we went to the library every Saturday to get books. I mean my mother, my father and kids we all got books for the week and took them back the next week and so those were routine things that we did as I recall.

SEVERAL

Do you recall going to any other specific stores?

HOFFMAN

Not that I recall. I mean I recall these because I guess I was able to go in with them and be a part of it.

SEVERAL

Do you recall what you would buy at the Minovitz's store?

HOFFMAN

At where?

SEVERAL

The Minovitz Store.

HOFFMAN

Well they supplied our meat. We got all our meat there. It was always if they had lamb chops, we had lamb chops. I mean it was just whatever they had. I remember the pickle barrel. We would go and get pickles. My mother did a lot of shopping there, but she also took the street car and went into Boyle Heights and did her shopping. I often sit and wonder how she did Passover the way she did it because I did it for years and had 40 to 50 people and I had the luxury of a refrigerator and all of this and she didn't. I don't know how she did it. She had her family there and they had always 40 to 50 people and I don't know how she did it, but she did.

SEVERAL

Did your mom go shopping or your dad go shopping during the week or was it...

HOFFMAN

Well my dad worked all week so he didn't go. She took the street car and went into Boyle Heights and did shopping and came back. For the High Holidays he would take her into Fairfax. He stopped buying a lot of stuff when he pulled off a label, and she put a label on it and he turned around and he said no more. He said I am not paying double price for a label.

SEVERAL

Would you buy that or?

HOFFMAN

They started buying fresh vegetables and the fruits rather than the canned. You know, I will never forget when he said not any more.

SEVERAL

When did this incident take place was it after buying something?

HOFFMAN

In Fairfax.

SEVERAL

Oh yeah. Let's see I had a thought, but I lost it. Let's go to somebody else. Leopold Zimmerman or Harry Zimmerman, he had a kosher meat market.

HOFFMAN

Yeah I vaguely remember, but I don't remember going there and I don't remember him at all. I just remember that there was, that he had a meat market.

SEVERAL

Julius Dooly Brown, he had Brown's Furniture on East Holly. David Brown.

HOFFMAN

Yeah, I remember him. I remember his furniture store. His son and I were in Sunday school together. Nice people. I think he was probably more of an active person. I don't think he held a job at the temple, but he was there involved in things.

SEVERAL

Do you recall the store Star Furniture?

HOFFMAN

Star Furniture, it was David Brown, and then he changed it to Star. His son was in business with him.

SEVERAL

And his son's name?

HOFFMAN

Irwin.

SEVERAL

Now Star Furniture, I guess originally it was on Holly and when it was on Holly, it was called David Brown's?

HOFFMAN

I don't recall, but I do recall if he started out he may have started out with David Brown, but changed it to Star, why I don't know.

SEVERAL

Yeah because the city directory identifies David Brown as having this furniture store on Holly and then in 1938, it's now called Star Furniture, so I am assuming in 1938, is when he started calling Star and then he moved to North Raymond.

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SEVERAL

The store on North Raymond was there for a long time. I was surprised I came across a photograph taken of it in 1965.

HOFFMAN

Did he close it in 1965?

SEVERAL

I don't know.

HOFFMAN

Well what they did, they entered, I can't remember if David was still alive or whether it was Irwin and his mother who ended up buying Ethan Allen and they still have Ethan Allen. Irwin died, the son died, and the mother kept the business going and she had three sons who are also in it, but they evidently sold Star Furniture and with that bought Ethan Allen or the franchise and she still has it.

SEVERAL

Does she still live here?

HOFFMAN
She is still living, but she has Alzheimer's and so I can't say she is living. I think two of the boys still run Ethan Allen.

SEVERAL
Where is that store? Here in the area?

HOFFMAN
Oh it's on Rosemead between just north of Colorado where Tribunal and Trader Joe's is. It's next door to Trader Joe's on Rosemead.

SEVERAL
Are the Browns still members of the temple?

HOFFMAN
Phyllis is still a member of the temple and one of the sons is still a member.

SEVERAL
Does she know the history of the store you think?

HOFFMAN
I don't know. I never thought to find out, but you know what, he is in the phone book, he is in the directory, Kelly. Now Kelly, I have to say I think is the one who is not with Ethan Allen anymore, just his two brothers. But he may have the history of the store because he was involved in it. He was involved up until a couple of years ago, so I would contact him and he may be able to give you more information.

SEVERAL
Of all the businesses I have looked at, this one seems to be the most successful.

HOFFMAN
It probably was.

SEVERAL
It started and basically is still going under a different name.

HOFFMAN
Yeah it kept going mainly through Irwin before he died and then Phyllis with her three sons really kept it going.

SEVERAL
And based on the photographs and you know, Al recalled when it was on Holly it was kind of a low end store, recalled that they would hang the merchandise on something. Do you recall that kind of thing too? I have some pictures of the store with David Brown I guess standing in front of the store. They were in the temple year books.

HOFFMAN
Yeah I remember that.

SEVERAL

You know there is the signage and so on you know, it looks like its kind of a medium to low end type store, and yet I saw these pictures in 1965, you know its middle range store, it was no longer. It was not high end; it was definitely not low end you know. The showroom looked very nice and so on so there seem to be an evolution and the store that should be, I don't know let me get it down, so Phyllis is a member of the temple?

HOFFMAN

Yes.

SEVERAL

But Kelly is not?

HOFFMAN

Kelly is a member.

SEVERAL

Oh, Kelly is a member. Okay, let's see, Ida Brown. Apparently she was with Julius Dooley Brown in their store. Al mentioned that there was some family conflict in the Brown's.

HOFFMAN

I wonder if she was David's mother.

SEVERAL

Who, Ida?

HOFFMAN

I don't know.

SEVERAL

Daniel Jacobson.

HOFFMAN

Who?

SEVERAL

Daniel Jacobson. He was a temple member and he had a liquor store on North Fair Oaks.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall it at all.

SEVERAL

Harry Levine.

HOFFMAN

Was that a glass shop?

SEVERAL

Yeah.

HOFFMAN

Okay, they were members of the temple. I didn't know them well. My father probably did.

SEVERAL

Do you recall what kind of glass he sold?

HOFFMAN

I think that Al probably knew them better than I did because they had a son that I think Al was friends with.

SEVERAL

Okay. Samuel Waldon. He had the Leader Furniture Company first on Union and then he moved into North Raymond. Do you remember the Leader Furniture Store?

HOFFMAN

No.

SEVERAL

Al Baskin. He was another furniture store on North Raymond. Do you remember him? Okay, tell me about him.

HOFFMAN

He really wasn't a nice person. He was a low end furniture person. Just was not a person you would like to say was a friend of yours. I don't know if he did anything good, bad or indifferent, but just was not one you wanted to know.

SEVERAL

I think it was interesting that you made the comment on low end because if I am recalling this right, its ads give that impression. You know, like you can get easy credit here.

HOFFMAN

That's why I am saying that he was not the nicest person to deal with. I hate to use the term ... but he probably got enough down payment to actually pay for the merchandise and then collected monthly money, so that's the way he ran his business.

SEVERAL

Yeah. Let's see Boris Melvin.

HOFFMAN

My father did insurance work with him. My father sold insurance with him so they were very, very close friends. Have you heard of the Wednesday nighters? Well, he was involved in that, making money for that and was a very generous person.

SEVERAL

He was a member of the temple?

HOFFMAN

And B'Nai B'Rith.

SEVERAL

I ask that question because unfortunately we don't have any membership directories for that period and he is not...

HOFFMAN

No, he was a member.

SEVERAL

Was he an active member?

HOFFMAN

Mm hmm.

SEVERAL

He was. Did he serve on the board?

HOFFMAN

He probably was on the board, which at that time had thirty-six members. Try to come to a conclusion on that.

SEVERAL

That must have been quite a time. Was your dad on the board too? Did he ever come back and say...

HOFFMAN

My dad was financial vice president of B’Nai B’Rith for over 25 years, so he was active in B’Nai B’Rith, but he was also on the board of the temple.

SEVERAL

How many people were on the board for B’Nai B’Rith? Did they also have 34?

HOFFMAN

No. They ran it little different.

SEVERAL

Do you recall, this is kind of a subjective question, but do you think B’Nai B’Rith kind of had a higher socioeconomic class than the temple?

HOFFMAN

Yeah. I think they did. Not completely, but I just think if you’re going to put money into something you do have to have the money, so to belong to another group, yeah I think so.

SEVERAL

I was struck, not by the members because I don’t have a membership list of B’Nai B’Rith, but I do have these dance books, yearly dance books and they do identify who was the officers where, and I was struck by B’Nai B’Rith. You would see doctors being on the board of the temple.

HOFFMAN

It took a long time. It was after JPL came in and of course they would not talk to doctors, but then it came in that there were a lot of doctor that decided to join our temple.

SEVERAL

And also, I guess he wasn’t active for very long, but _____ Gutenberg from Cal-Tech was at least on the board for B’Nai B’Rith at one point and apparently it was his wife.

HOFFMAN

You see, Cal-Tech members didn't join the temple for quite a while. They just didn't and it took a while.

SEVERAL

I mean even now there are very few members. Let's see, Maurice Silver. He had a stationery store.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall that.

SEVERAL

Myer Alpert. He had a store called The Merit; actually it was kind of early, in 1932.

HOFFMAN

I don't recall.

SEVERAL

One other thing. Just kind of a general recollection. You know it seems in the area from Union to Walnut on the west side of Fair Oaks where Parson's is had a large number of Jewish owned businesses. That's where Pepper's store was, that's where Steinberg's furniture store was, that's where the Minovitz's store was. Zimmerman's store was on...

HOFFMAN

Did you ask about Press?

SEVERAL

Yes, I did. I mean I didn't ask about Press or Minovitz because you know a lot of people have talked about those.

HOFFMAN

Yeah okay.

SEVERAL

I mean do you recall that area?

HOFFMAN

I think it was the north side of Fair Oaks. I think a lot of those businesses, I think they belonged to temple and were active and I won't say they took the jobs, but they support, when I say active, they supported things and that part is as important as taking a job. So I think they all and even those that you mentioned on Colorado in the clothing businesses stuff like that, they all were part of temple growing and the sad part is most of them moved away. I remember Morris Sander, when they moved away, they moved to LA. I mean all of these businesses they were here, but they ended up, the families moved to the west side or elsewhere. A lot of us stayed, but not I don't think, and of course lot of them died off and they didn't leave families, you know, families moved away before they passed away so it's kind of different.

SEVERAL

Were stores open at night? The reason is, I don't know where I heard this, the only night stores were open was Friday night. Is that your recollection?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SEVERAL

I could see this could cause problems about attendance on Friday night services.

HOFFMAN

Yeah, but somehow or other you know we attended every Friday night. That was the routine and even after I married Bob and my mother came to live with us, she was with us for 13 years, she really liked to go to temple on the Friday night so it was always Friday night we went to dinner and then we went to temple and it was just that I was raised that way and my kids were raised that way. Neither one of my kids go to temple on Friday night. They don't belong to a temple anymore, but their daughter was bar mitzvahed. They adopted this child five years ago, she went through the conversion, she went through the mikvah and I had her named at the temple. I mean it's still all there whether they belong. It's partly how you were raised and how you feel about it. I don't go to temple Friday nights like I used to. First of all, I don't drive anymore which a big problem, but it's good to see that the families are supporting the temple now, that they're there. When I walk in, I don't know the people anymore, which is okay.

SEVERAL

Neither do we.

HOFFMAN

It's okay.

SEVERAL

As active as Ruth is, she keeps coming back, but I don't know these people. It seems that a very high percentage of the members of the temple did not work for other people. They were self employed. Is that kind of your impression too? I guess it's probably less so now, but I went through the 1925 directory, which is the earliest one we have and tried get their occupations. It was incredible. They were self employed.

HOFFMAN

You know in the 25, 30s and 40s, and probably the 50s, it was all merchants that really belonged to the temple and then it changed. We got the doctors, we got the professionals and JPL, and so it changed and you know it used to be you'd look and you'd see, oh there is one doctor. I mean on a holiday if you need a doctor, if they raise their hand, you've got a lot there, so that part changes.

SEVERAL

Did that change in the 1950s? I mean, I think of it mainly in the 60s.
HOFFMAN
I think in the 50s.
SEVERAL
After Rabbi Vorspan?
HOFFMAN
And Rabbi Galpert came.
SEVERAL
Well I really appreciate it.
HOFFMAN
Well I don't know if I added anything or not.
SEVERAL
You did. You know, I think your comments about some of these people were extremely important. I mean, what's on my mind now is the Brown's.
HOFFMAN
Again, if you want to talk to Kelly Brown, I think he could give you input about the Brown furniture bit and that will help.
SEVERAL
Oh absolutely. I have an article for the January issue, maybe December, dealing with the stores on Raymond, and that is going to talk about furniture, but if I could get enough material I mean start from furniture, we may require an article in itself you know. I am planning to write one on the Minovitz's store, just the Minovitz's store because a lot of people have talked about that and we interviewed Donald and got good material. Well, thank you very much.
HOFFMAN
You're welcome.

1.3. SESSION THREE NOVEMBER 16, 2008

SIEGEL
Are we recording?
SEVERAL
Yeah.
SIEGEL
Okay so the date is November 16, 2008 and this is Carolyn Siegel and I am here to interview Shirley Hoffman in Pasadena California. How are you this morning Shirley?
HOFFMAN
Pardon.
SIEGEL
How are you?

HOFFMAN

I am fine.

SIEGEL

Okay good. Well just a sort of, could you tell me a little bit about your own family? What were the names of your parents?

HOFFMAN

My names in my family were Nina and Arthur Burman and they came here in 1918 and they met in different homes, somebody had a torah and they met in different homes on Friday night and Saturdays.

SIEGEL

They came here to Pasadena?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGEL

Really? In 1918, your parents did? Wow.

HOFFMAN

So they were founding members of the temple and active in the temple and in Branabreth and my mom was the first president of Branabreth women, my dad was president and very active for many many many years and he came here because he worked for the United Cigar Store and where cheese cake factory is, ____City Coloradois where the United Cigar store was, so he came here and worked for them and then he went into the insurance business and many years later, he worked for the anti-defamation league and he passed away in 1956. I had an older sister who was born in 1916 and then I had another one that was born in 1919 and then my brother was born in 1924 and then I was born in 1926.

SIEGEL

So you are a California girl all the way?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGEL

So where were your parents before they came out here?

HOFFMAN

My mother was in, she was born in United States and she was born in I think Connecticut and they came to West Omaha and Colorado Springs and then the whole family ended up in Los Angeles and my father was born in Lithuania, came here when he was 10 years old and they came to Chicago and there was I think a distant relative relationship that brought them altogether and he came here and then he married my mom and they lived here all the time and I was born in Santa Monica, because my mother was pregnant and my grandfather

was ill and they went down to take care of him and in the meantime I was born so I came here when I was three months old.

SIEGEL

So your grandparents in Santa Monica?

HOFFMAN

I was born in Santa Monica.

SIEGEL

And your grandparents came out at the same time?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGEL

That being your mother's parents?

HOFFMAN

Hmm. My mother took care of my grandfather.

SIEGEL

So he was out here too.

HOFFMAN

Until he passed away yeah.

SIEGEL

Tell us a little about, I mean you had your Jewish education done at PJTC.

HOFFMAN

And it was not where it is now, it was on the corner of Hudson and Walnut.

SIEGEL

Could you describe that temple to me, because I have heard so much about it, I have driven by trying to find it you know.

HOFFMAN

Well it's a church now and it is terrible to go by there and see a cross but there is a cross there. We had very, it was very small so that we divide, there was a social hall they would divide that for classes one would be in the kitchen, one would be another corner you know just like that because there was enough, there was no space and then we moved over here in, was it 1956? I am not sure.

SIEGEL

Do you know?

HOFFMAN

It was in the early 50s.

SIEGEL

That they became, went over to Altadena Drive.

SEVERAL

Well they moved to Altadena Drive in 1941, '42.

HOFFMAN

I don't think it was there then, I am not sure of the date but I know you have had it somewhere.

SEVERAL

Well they moved to the site you know where it is now, it was the main building which they occupied but the main sanctuary was built in the mid 50s lets say were using the site, what is now Wohlmann.

HOFFMAN

But I was confirmed at the other temple and at that place, there were steps and I know there is a picture at the temple showing this whole big class because it took care of all the kids that went and my sisters were in it so they were in the higher grade but there was a picture of.

SIEGAL

The steps were at the Hudson street? And the building is there now, is that the original building, is the building still standing that we use, if you go in there does it still, are there still remnants having ____.

HOFFMAN

No haven't gone in there.

SIEGAL

We are curious to see if it really still is intact.

HOFFMAN

They took away the steps and it is down on the street now.

SIEGAL

I think we never have thought we actually would be going there and explore it. So when you were in Hudson, what year did you start your Jewish education, how old were you?

HOFFMAN

Probably when I was very little with kindergarten.

SIEGAL

Who taught you?

HOFFMAN

The rabbi taught classes, most of them, David Goldman taught a class, I think Steven Wiseman taught a class, quite a few of the older kids that had already graduated or been confirmed and so forth, came back and taught.

SIEGAL

Do you think that was paid teacher, was it kind of informal volunteering thing?

HOFFMAN

It was more volunteer, there was no money. You know there was no money but we had a choir the whole time I was going to services, there was a choir.

SIEGAL

Is that the cantor lead that choir?

HOFFMAN

Hmm.

SIEGAL

Who was responsible for the choir, how did that come about?

HOFFMAN

I don't know, it was volunteered, they had an organist that they paid, I am sure they paid her but probably not very much and I know that during the summer when the rabbi took a vacation, my dad conducted the services, he did not have a voice but he had enthusiasm and there are so few of the kids that are left that I went to school with but there are still some.

SIEGAL

So how about, I am just kind of getting a feeling of the physical lay of it of Hudson Street, is that something that I think we like to know about?

HOFFMAN

Okay when you went in there were steps and you walked into the sanctuary, from the beam out, there was a door going in and I am sure that is the rabbi's office.

SIEGAL

Is that the study there?

HOFFMAN

Yeah and then as you came in instead of going into the sanctuary, you can turn right and there was a social hall.

SIEGAL

But it was all men and women were mixed, it was always, was it a conservative temple?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Just found it is part of a you know, Hebrew union and was it like wooden pews kind of like it is now, those kinds of same benches?

HOFFMAN

I don't know, I think that we had so few Jewish families, that we really all went to services and we all were...

SIEGAL

Every week, did they ever go every week?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

And did you go Friday and Saturday?

HOFFMAN

My dad went Saturday, we went Friday.

SIEGAL

Was Saturday kind of a men's service?

HOFFMAN

Yeah more likely, the women stayed home, yeah.

SIEGAL

Right and so that it wasn't segregated men and women but there was this tradition that the men would go to the temple on Saturday and the women staying home. And what about one of the things you know the temple now kind of tried to figure out is how do you have a good dinner and go to temple on Friday night so in those days, do you recall like did your?

HOFFMAN

It was just a normal way of living, Friday night we went to services.

SIEGAL

Did you eat dinner first?

HOFFMAN

And after Bob and I got married, it was that way too.

SIEGAL

Yeah.

HOFFMAN

My kids always needed to be home Friday night if they could, if they were working on something that couldn't be, but Friday night they came home and most of the time Lisa was little when we took her, she fell asleep but she was there.

SIEGAL

So its like you had a real sense of community it sounds like because everyone would be there and if they weren't there, you might notice it something like, I wonder where this is first time. How many families do you think were in the temple at that time?

HOFFMAN

Well first they met at homes but after they got the place on Hudson, I would say that there was may be 25 or 30 families.

SIEGAL

And what made the move? I mean why did they move over to Altadena Drive?

HOFFMAN

May be they couldn't afford LA, may be they had other families.

SIEGAL

Oh I mean the temple, why.

HOFFMAN

Why? It was too small.

SIEGAL

Oh they outgrew it?

HOFFMAN

Yeah we outgrew it.

SIEGAL
About how many families do you think you got to be when it was too small,
was it like?

HOFFMAN
Well you know we moved over there, probably there were at least 100 families.

SIEGAL
Okay. I have to go back to Michael. So how many days a week did you go to
Hebrew school? Do you remember was it one of those things like now we got
three days a week?

HOFFMAN
So the girls did not have Hebrew school. We just went Sunday school.

SIEGAL
Okay so you just went Sundays

HOFFMAN
But the boys did go I think at least twice a week, I am not sure.

SIEGAL
And what did you learn as girl, since you weren't learning Hebrew and you
weren't learning... torah.

HOFFMAN
No we weren't learning that.

SIEGAL
_____ torah

HOFFMAN
Just about Jewish life and what was going on but no we did not learn any of
that and Lisa's class was the last one where the girls were bat mitzvahed on a
Friday night. There was one girl, her parents' sister that you have a Saturday
morning and that was when it all changed.

SIEGAL
I have heard that. Do you remember who that was?

HOFFMAN
Yeah I know who that was, it was Kitovers, they don't belong here anymore.

SIEGAL
And for the most important point was, like in your time, it was an opportunity
even have a bat mitzvah, was that offered Friday night or Saturday?

HOFFMAN
Some of it was I think but no, it was never offered to us. This woman
demanded that her daughter be..

SIEGAL
On a Saturday because there is a progression where there is nothing for girls
really when you are learning but when you are done, when were you done, like

what year did you stop going on Sundays? Do you have like how old were you in high school?

HOFFMAN

I finished you know when I was confirmed probably.

SIEGAL

So you went through like a confirmation ceremony?

HOFFMAN

Yeah and with that, we went on with you know Jewish neighbor's girls, the AZA Boys and that is what happened after.

SIEGAL

After the confirmation.

HOFFMAN

USY was tried, I know a lot when Lisa was in school, not so much when Steve was there but more when she was there but sometimes, it took off for a year or two and then it fails.

SIEGAL

Right, as is now. And so I am just trying to get a hand on, how it progressed particularly for your daughter, she was part of the group that at least was allowed, they have a bat mitzvah on a Friday night and started to learn torah obviously and when, do you have any idea when the torah, was temple started to allow girls to have bat mitzvahs, when that happened?

HOFFMAN

Right after her class.

SIEGAL

No no because she had one you were saying.

HOFFMAN

No she didn't have it.

SIEGAL

Not even a Friday night?

HOFFMAN

One girl had it.

SIEGAL

Which other you said she had on Saturday but there were some girls who were allowed to have some kind of summary.

HOFFMAN

Friday night.

SIEGAL

So how, do you remember..

HOFFMAN

But they didn't read the torah, they didn't know what the kids know.

SIEGAL

So what did they do when they did.....

HOFFMAN
They just ran parts of service and stuff like that but no I did not have an actual reading of the torah and what was going on, they just didn't.

SIEGAL
Well in terms of Friday night ceremonies, can you remember when that started? Like was it just one day it started up, like I would say if you could associate with a particular education director or particular rabbi that...

HOFFMAN
I don't know when it started. I really don't.

SIEGAL
Like was it something that Rabbi Galpert started or.

HOFFMAN
I don't know who you know, somebody evidently.

SIEGAL
Whatever you remember the girl, who started at Saturday and that changed things.

HOFFMAN
I don't know what year is when that happened.

SIEGAL
When you were going on Sunday school, was the boys in your class as well?

HOFFMAN
Mmmhmm..

SIEGAL
So they came in your classes and then they went to extra classes for like torah and Hebrew?

HOFFMAN
Mmmhmm.

SIEGAL
Who was the rabbi when you were young like when you were like 9 or 10?

HOFFMAN
Rabbi Halavey.

SIEGAL
Halavey. Don't know much about him. What kind of rabbi was he? Was he a full time rabbi?

HOFFMAN
He was I cant say he was a friendly man or relaxed person or a sense of humor, I don't think he had one, it was all he was the rabbi and you had to look up to him which is right, I am not saying its wrong.

SIEGAL
Right but it's a little different now.

HOFFMAN

But there was no feel of knowing him and being a friend of his or anything like that, he was the leader.

SIEGAL

So he didn't come to people's house for occasional dinner something like that?

HOFFMAN

Not that I know of? He could have but I don't know.

SIEGAL

Did you ever do like Shabbat dinners with other families?

HOFFMAN

Yeah we tried that a lot.

SIEGAL

Oh really?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

What other kinds of social things did your parents do and the other families when you were a kid?

HOFFMAN

I am going to look for one book that I have that is, I don't know where it is right now but it was a perm program and the adults did it, my mother's picture is on that and she was all dressed up for perm and everything, and was part with the Banabreth, the temple and the Banabreth tried to do things together because it included a lot of the same people and so this was it wasn't a carnival but it was some kind of a party and I will look for the booklet, I know I have it somewhere and it shows the kind of things that they did but they had dances and they had New Year Eve's parties and they had social things like that.

SIEGAL

You know many of the congregats they became each others best friends, became the core of social life, remember the time that your parents generation even more than yours because they felt that there was discrimination in terms of other places, do you think that's true?

HOFFMAN

Yeah there was and that's why they stayed together and tried to do things together.

SIEGAL

And for yourself, where did you go to, pardon me this is not in my list but where did you go to school here?

HOFFMAN

Across the street?

SIEGAL

Oh really?

HOFFMAN

What goes around comes around.

SIEGAL

Right, right.

HOFFMAN

That was a junior high school and then I went to PCC which was Pasadena Junior College, elementary school, my mother also was the first Jewish PTA president in Pasadena.

SIEGAL

So did you think that... give me a sense of whether that... I mean seems kind of ground breaking, did she have any ... did you felt any negative experience from it or?

HOFFMAN

Probably.

SIEGAL

And you were like, did kids ever, did they know you were Jewish?

HOFFMAN

We all felt it, I felt it, mainly I had a Japanese girlfriend in school and this was in the elementary school and we had lunch together and we were together all the time and pretty soon she wasn't having lunch with me and my teacher noticed it and she called my mother and she said that there is something wrong, Mary and Shirley aren't together anymore and they found that, Mary found out that I was Jewish and of course, they were on the other side of everything and whatever happened to her, because they were all taken away. The Japanese were all taken away from here so I don't know what happened to her but that happened.

SIEGAL

It would be interesting person to find.

HOFFMAN

And in school, the Jewish kids did stay together because we were not allowed to be in any of the sororities or any other clubs or anything that was going on, it changed afterwards that some of the guys were able to get, and I am saying guys could I know too many girls went in there, were able to get onto some of the activities that were going on.

SIEGAL

Sports team and so on.

HOFFMAN

Mmhmm..

SIEGAL

Did the BBG, it sounds like you did an AZA, did they actually meet at the Hudson street Schula you had it started back then and they had meetings there, is that how they were met?

HOFFMAN

Mmhmm.

SIEGAL

May be just a little bit but what kind of activities do you remember like when you were like 15 or 16 that is like that is the height of BBG times, what kinds of things did you do?

HOFFMAN

Oh we had parties, there was not, I cant say we did anything Jewish, it was just mainly being together.

SIEGAL

Were there dating between girls and boys?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Anybody from your group get married?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Yeah who got married from that?

HOFFMAN

Ruth Wiseman married a boy from here, but I don't think, I know they were several that met in the AZA BBG group and got married.

SIEGAL

Was it like you stayed pretty local in terms of Pasadena Junior College. People here kind of talk about kind of going beyond like whether even just the UCLA, like having further horizons or was it kind of, this was your horizon, was kind of focused here? When you were about to go off to college, when you were about to go off to college, you are at that age, you are thinking about your future?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Yeah do you think was there a lot of talk about lets get out of Pasadena?

HOFFMAN

Probably there was but a lot of kids have come back and are here which you know Allen and Ed. Even Felice, a whole group that have stayed, that went to school together.

SIEGAL

Was your generation the same way?

HOFFMAN

But they were a lot , Al Levy married a girl from here, there are so many but a few, they did?

SIEGAL

How did you and your husband meet?

HOFFMAN

Okay I was married twice. The first time met through my cousin and I married her cousin and that only lasted a couple of years but I did have Steve from that marriage and then I met about 10 years after that and he called the temple to find out there was a group, a young group, a group of single, so the secretary called me up and said that somebody called about this so the story goes, that I called him.

SIEGAL

So you are interested in singles, let me help you.

HOFFMAN

So he came to a meeting and helped me carry chairs down and asked if I would see him again, you know he traveled a lot and he was supposed to be out here for three months and he ended up staying here so that's good.

SIEGAL

That's very nice. Okay lets see, okay just talk a little bit about Altadena Drive now, when I was you know, how it got built and little bit and particularly like do you remember when they built the main sanctuary?

HOFFMAN

We sat the first time for the high holidays it was dirt floor and they put up chairs but it had the most wonderful feeling that we had our own place and eventually of course it became better and better.

SIEGAL

It has, the ceiling was done, it was just like woods studs, or was it just they finished the whole thing?

HOFFMAN

No we built the whole thing.

SIEGAL

But just the floor it wasn't finished at that point. Because I heard that they had that service and it wasn't quite finished so it was a great sense of accomplishment. How did they raise the money to build that thing?

HOFFMAN

There were different houses and had meetings just like they did for the last one, and they borrowed and stole.

SIEGAL

Well before you built the Nell chapel, obviously that was the main chapel and that's where everybody went and so was it were there people who didn't want a new? Was it any disagreement, was everybody on board let's build this bigger sanctuary where the people were like no no we were fine.

HOFFMAN

Oh sure there people that didn't want to give money of course.

SIEGAL

Because when people at that were still coming every Friday?

HOFFMAN

Yeah

SIEGAL

And you still had pretty much everyone in the congregation come Saturdays.

HOFFMAN

You know Bob and I went every Friday, my mother lived with us, we took my mother to temple every Friday night and that's how I met my group of friends and most of them are still my group of friends.

SIEGAL

And you still go?

HOFFMAN

We don't go now, no I don't, it's just hard.

SIEGAL

Hard to get there or just the services changed?

HOFFMAN

Part of it is getting there, you know everybody nowadays just seems to have other things that go on, but you know I have to tell you, every time at ____ when I see all of those kids get up on the beama, I think everyone that we did the remodeling because the other beama will never would have held all of those kids and so we just look at each other and say, that was our best move.

SIEGAL

Yeah it's a nice thing, it's a nice service. We do the half dollar service on the high holidays at the end when all the kids are gone. Do you remember when they built the swimming pool? What kinda got them to do it.

HOFFMAN

I don't remember the year.

SIEGAL

How old were your kids were then?

HOFFMAN

Steve was little because he went swimming there so he is 61 so it was a long time ago that they have put it in and we went all the time.

SIEGAL

So do you remember kind of why they built it, do you have any recollections of?

HOFFMAN

I remember the guys pouring cement to do it, we took a lunch.

SIEGAL

We were wondering, we heard different things, some people say they built the swimming pool because other community swimming pools were really not open to Jews, or they didn't feel comfortable like private country club or something like that, that's one thing we've heard.

HOFFMAN

I never felt it was like that, you know it was just open to everybody and we never charge for anything, I remember that we had, there was a group of us that met every Tuesday night and we took dinner and the kids swam and guys were there for dinner and we did that and then we did it on a Friday night and rabbi said you can come in and services, you don't have to go home and get dressed but we would have dinner there.

SIEGAL

Would you go into services like in your shorts?

HOFFMAN

Well we tried to put something on but it was you know the guys were in shorts that it was okay.

SIEGAL

So its nice for the kids because they kind of feel like temple isn't this stuffy thing they have to get dressed up for, kind of it was continuity in your life. So I guess that there may be two that there could have been health reasons why you wanted to have your own pool, do you think it sounds like mostly just social?

HOFFMAN

Somebody that donated the pool of course had no children and they wanted to do something for the children and they had a lot of money and this is what they did.

SIEGAL

So there was an individual that donated the money for the pool. Do you know who that was?

HOFFMAN

Joseph. I don't remember his first name but the last name was Joseph.

SIEGAL

They had no kids and they wanted to have a kind of things that would be nice for the kids to have. What sound like the temple for many years, got a lot of use out of that.

HOFFMAN

We really did because people didn't have pools then and now they all do so its different and that is why it went to the point that they were not using it.

SIEGAL

Because now people have their own pools. So it was like a Tuesday night gathering and then there is Friday night gatherings and then were kids allowed to swim like on Shabbat or was it kind of like no swimming on Shabbat?

HOFFMAN

We kind of had a Shabbat dinner, sometimes people would bring to share I mean a lot of time you got to gather and did that part instead of each doing individual and you made friends there and the kids had a wonderful time.

SIEGAL

So was it like a day camp for the summer?

HOFFMAN

They all had to day camp, almost all of them.

SIEGAL

Every kid who got... basically went, they went and it was kind of given. Do you remember who ran the day camp?

HOFFMAN

Steve Sensor.

SIEGAL

The Felice's Dad. Umm the Louis B Silvers building, that's different than the main sanctuary?

SEVERAL

Yeah that's across the way its kind of the extension.

SIEGAL

Oh extension of where the Chaim Weizman school is?

SEVERAL

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Do you remember when that was built in the order things?

HOFFMAN

I don't remember when it was built but it must have a year I think there is a plaque there and it must tell the year.

SIEGAL

And that is where your kids went to Hebrew school and Sunday school? I think your daughter, did she go to the same schedule as boys at that time?

HOFFMAN

No. No she didn't go that often, I know she went Sunday and may be one day during a week.

SIEGAL

It wasn't like a three day.

HOFFMAN

Steve went the three days,

SIEGAL

So the boys are still like learning the Hebrew and the girls are learning little bit about the service.

HOFFMAN

Hmm.

SIEGAL

We know at one time its now the parking lot, it was actually like lawn, it was like grassy area, that's what we think. Do you know where the parking lot is?

No. So do you remember it?

HOFFMAN

I don't remember it.

SIEGAL

I remember that when I came out. So you don't remember people parking some place else. In the late 1970s there were some modifications done on Wolman and Nell, do you have any recollection of those?

HOFFMAN

Im sorry what?

SIEGAL

Well they made some changes to Knell and Wohlmann in like late 70s.

HOFFMAN

Okay. The two things, one was Wohlmann and one was Knell. The Knells wanted to honor, Max wanted to honor his father and mother and so they re-did, they paid to have all redone and then Wolman wanted to honor his parents and they did the same as Wolman because you know, Wohlmann is not in too good of shape but we didn't have anything at all so this was really nice.

SIEGAL

What did they do to Wohlmann improve it. I mean how was Wohlmann improved? I am having a hard time picturing how it was before.

HOFFMAN

Probably had no rug, no nothing at all. It was just re-doing it.

SIEGAL

Okay the cosmetic. What did they actually do in Knell, do you have any recollection of that because Nell existed.

HOFFMAN

Okay I was married there so let me see what did they do. You know that where the library is, that was open.

SIEGAL

It was like the sanctuary just opened up into it.

HOFFMAN

It was like an annex and you could see people there and I guess they did the pews,

SIEGAL

Is that when they sealed it off like in the late 70s?

HOFFMAN

Yeah MmmHmm,.

SIEGAL

Because at that point, they have the other sanctuary so when they needed extra space, they used the inner sanctuary to create the library. How did they pay for, you know we talk about, seems like a lot of it, this construction was paid by individuals, there is a lot of individual donation for their improvements.

HOFFMAN

Knell or Wohlmann?

SIEGAL

Well we talk about the Knell improvements?

HOFFMAN

They donated all of it, all the money and so did Wolman.

SIEGAL

And Wolman did all the money. Now that when you built the big sanctuary, that was the whole community came together, it was like a building fund.

Right.

SEVERAL

How about the Louis B Silver Building. How was that funded?

SIEGAL

Tell me was there any controversy, well first of all, you know Michael was just wanting anything you know about how they finance the Louis B Silver Building?

HOFFMAN

Okay they had parlor meetings and invited so many people at that time to give them the outlook of what we were doing, what we wanted to do and asked them for donations and there was, ways you could have a room and whatever you wanted and that's how they held many many parlor meetings to tell them and show them, we had pictures of what we were going to do and so they went ahead and just raised the money like that.

SIEGAL

And the concept was we need space for our kids to have a good Hebrew education? Is that the way they were pushing it?

HOFFMAN

Yeah I guess.

SIEGAL

Or was it the other purpose is that they saw it would be good for?

HOFFMAN

Going back to Wolman, originally it was named Kerschner and he wanted to donate the room to his parents and he never paid which is why we could go ahead and re-do it with Wolman. The building all started because they wanted to redo the offices, that was how it all started, it never had anything to do with the sanctuary. Rabbi came to me and Josh and said they wanted to name the new building after Bob would I approve? How could I not approve, I said I don't have money to pay for it, but whatever. As they started meeting with different people, the people started saying what we really needed was to not only to change the offices but to change the sanctuary and so we all went into this huge amount of money that we needed and they got the money, I mean we got the loan really but we had enough money to get the loan and we have one designer and that was supposed to be that way and we changed in the middle and got another one and it was a long process, it was almost a 10 year process. Needing everybody and doing this and getting up contractor and getting everything to go together, was really a long process.

SIEGAL

Someone has to be in charge right? Nothing happened so who was the one person who really did it?

HOFFMAN

The one person who really took over was Nancy Carlton.

SIEGAL

Oh Nancy Carlton?

HOFFMAN

Nancy really saw it all the way through.

SIEGAL

Of the one of the last renovation? Right. What was Wolman used for, this is back to the question, did Wolman existed in some form when it may not had been renovated before they made the new sanctuary, the main sanctuary, is that right? The two iterations of the main sanctuary so Wolman was built before the main sanctuary?

HOFFMAN

MmmHmm.

SIEGAL

Okay what was it used for before there was the main sanctuary.

HOFFMAN

We have the little sanctuary, it was used for social work

SIEGAL

Social work, and then afterwards?

HOFFMAN

It has been used for meetings and some social events.

SIEGAL

Show map.

SEVERAL

I don't have the map.

SIEGAL

Alright, were there ever orthodox services at the temple?

HOFFMAN

Yes. I think probably when rabbi Galpert came and the men wanted more orthodox.

SIEGAL

Because he was more liberal?

HOFFMAN

Right and they fought for that and so what he finally said to them is why don't you men who want the orthodox go to Janelle and have your services there and then come in and join us for the social event and they did that for a while and then they found there was less and less going to the orthodox, they were going to the other so that was, but we did have it separated for a while. It didn't cause a real conflict. It was mainly Lou Silver, Mac Stone, Weisman and you know just some of those older men that really kept thinking if they wanted it orthodox so that was how it changed.

SIEGAL

And the reason, in terms of when they say orthodox it is sort of prior to Rabbi Galpert's Saturday morning service, sounds like it was pretty much always men and was it conducted in sort of orthodox style where there is not really a formal, the rabbi is not really and conducting, you know they just kind of plough through it, they are all kind of bringing to it, prayers at their own pace and that kind of thing so I mean, so when they said they want an orthodox service, was it really they just want to continue to do the Saturday morning service the way they have done it?

HOFFMAN

I don't know, I don't know.

SIEGAL

And rabbi Galpert, so rabbi Galpert came in and he had different style of doing the services and how did the congregation react to that, it sounds like some reacted in terms of why don't keep going what they had?

HOFFMAN

Most of them really liked him. He had, he was knowledgeable in so many things, that he brought it all to us and he was laid back, may be more so than what they wanted out of the rabbi so they, there were two sides that wanted and those who didn't, but all in all, I think that they liked him and supported him.

SIEGAL

Okay, before you finished the construction on the main sanctuary, did you have services that other places when Knell wasn't big enough, was that was like Shakespeare club, does that ring a bell?

HOFFMAN

We had services at the convention center.

SIEGAL

Oh Pasadena convention center?

HOFFMAN

MmmHmm. For a couple of years, we had them there.

SIEGAL

Like the high holidays services?

HOFFMAN

MmmHmm. Trying to think where else, we might have on some place else, all I remember is, is the convention center and I know that was a couple of years that they did it.

SIEGAL

Okay so if everyone is coming to temple every week, but then high holidays were still so much bigger, why is that? Was it people have family members that, or you know, or it is...I wonder may be its just that your group, you had a group of people you are with that came every week and there was this other group that didn't may be come over?

HOFFMAN

I don't know.

SIEGAL

Alright lets see, how did the congregation get its torahs, do you have any stories around torah, obtaining torah, or raising money for torah?

HOFFMAN

The only what I know about is the Nadar.

SIEGAL

Yeah that is what just pretty recent.

HOFFMAN

But I don't know how the others were have gotten and I don't know who when in, when my parents came, I don't know who have gotten a torah and was able to have one so that they could meet, I don't know who it was.

SIEGAL

Were your parents very religious, I mean did they feel committed to starting the torah?

HOFFMAN

They weren't religious, they were, what do I want to say, they were very Jewish.

SIEGAL

Yeah did they speak Yiddish?

HOFFMAN
My mother would have to go on a street car to LA, to Boyle Heights and come back with her food.

SIEGAL
So they kept kosher?

HOFFMAN
Right and then she stopped. She did stop.

SIEGAL
Do you remember when she stopped?

HOFFMAN
She stopped after my grandfather came to live with us, because my grandfather needed her and didn't need her to go on the street car and do all that work so that was when she quit. She still kept very kosher for the Passover and changed dishes and all of that.

SIEGAL
Yeah. Do you remember anything about Nadine and Marlene Goodstein's bat mitzvahs in 1951?

HOFFMAN
They were the first ones to get bat mitzvahs. They had a bar mitzvah in 1951?

SIEGAL
Yeah.

HOFFMAN
But that would have been before Lisa's or after Lisa.

SIEGAL
Did they do on Friday night?

HOFFMAN
Before Lisa's, it must have been Friday night because I don't recall them having one on the Saturday.

SIEGAL
They might have been the first one to do the Friday night? but you don't remember going or anything? Kids even in that time, when the boys were having bar mitzvahs, would they then have a party at the temple afterwards, like they do today and celebration?

HOFFMAN
Even for Steve I had it..

SIEGAL
Did you, was it kind of a thing where you hired a caterer, oh then you did do it all yourself and people danced and...

HOFFMAN
They had a band but I remember we had.

SIEGAL

Luncheon.

HOFFMAN

Catered and stuff.

SIEGAL

Okay things go back to, seems like may be rabbi Galpert's time because when women counted as part of the minyan and Saturday mornings is when you need the minyan so.

HOFFMAN

Marsha can tell you more on that, I don't know when they did that.

SIEGAL

But that sounds like when rabbi Galpert came in and he is the one who sort of changed the Saturday morning services so may be women, did women, did you start going on Saturdays at that time?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

What made you feel like, okay now I should go on Saturdays.

HOFFMAN

Because you enjoy the him.

SIEGAL

And he kind of invited to come. Did you ever like, was it kind of a guy who would walk up to you on Friday night saying you know we are doing the Saturday morning service, have you seen it?

HOFFMAN

You could go if you wanted, it just wasn't done before that.

SIEGAL

So somehow you know though that now it was okay, if you recall, what made you know it was okay now to go to Saturday services?

HOFFMAN

I guess when you went to a bar mitzvah; you decided you wanted to go.

SIEGAL

Yeah and did friends talk about it, I'll see you on Saturday?

HOFFMAN

MmmHmm.

SIEGAL

I have heard that rabbi Galpert didn't go to Saturday services himself every week. Is that not true? Okay that's what, we did hear that he would always do Friday night, and he would do Saturday if it was bar mitzvah but he didn't do a regular Saturday service.

HOFFMAN

As far as I know.

SIEGAL

Okay that's just, that's little different we did hear that. Lets see, I am not sure... do you remember I guess in the context of the temple of Pearl Harbor, I mean when that happened?

HOFFMAN

What?

SIEGAL

Pearl Harbor? Not quite sure what you want to know here.

SEVERAL

Well do you remember where you were when the Japanese attacked?

HOFFMAN

I know exactly.

SIEGAL

Where were you?

HOFFMAN

My father has just picked us up at Sunday school and we got in the car and he had the Minivis boys with him... he carpooled and he said that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I cant remember how old I was, well I could figure it out if I wanted to. How many years ago was it? 50 years ago? More than that? [On December 16, 2008, Shirley said she was picked up at the Hudson/Walnut facility.]

SEVERAL

67 years ago.

HOFFMAN

Oh I was 12. Probably didn't have the impact that it would have today but we had the radio on and that's what he told us.

SIEGAL

How did the war, did the war have any impact on your day to day life?

HOFFMAN

Yeah when I graduated, there was no prom or no nothing. There were no boys, most of them had gone and you just didn't celebrate so you had none of that, school was a little different because the pressure was there that there is a war going on, we had, I don't know if you knew, but we had USO dances at the temple.

SIEGAL

No tell me about that.

HOFFMAN

That was when Hy met Mariam, it was the same night I met Hy okay, so we have known each other how many years?.. many many many years but so we

had our mothers were there, our parents were there because we were 16 you know but they had these USO dances.

SIEGAL

Because it was the Jewish serviceman that would have only Jewish serviceman that would come?

HOFFMAN

No some of the Jewish kids have brought some of the others and there were some non-Jews there and it was every Saturday night we had dances and some of the mothers in Pasadena were very very offended that we would go out with serviceman and not with their sons who work for something but it was that part was a good part, we met a lot of different people from all over, I mean I didn't know anybody from New York but they were Philadelphia, they were all there.

SIEGAL

So it sounds like Hy Vego. Is that who you are talking about?

HOFFMAN

He was stationed here in San Anita and he came.

SIEGAL

That's how he first came to the temple as through a USO dance? And he met Mariam there. So that's interesting. So it sounds like there was a lot of fun, dances.

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

Anything else like that?

HOFFMAN

Yeah those were days that when they dance and eat.

SIEGAL

It is my trick for not eating.

HOFFMAN

Changed a bit.

SIEGAL

Was it like record player or?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

So were the parents in charge or like they had refreshments?

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah you know they had food there, you know who is going to have anything Jewish without food. So they had food.

SIEGAL

If you had pictures of that, those would be great.

HOFFMAN

I wish I did, I don't. But I may be able to get some, I just need time to think.

SIEGAL

It would be really cute to see, imagine seeing, I am sure you and your girlfriends would go, it sounds like you would be so excited to meet some new boys.

HOFFMAN

We had a great time.

SIEGAL

After the war, do you remember you know celebrations of VE and VJ days? Anything that happened in terms of when the veterans came back, anything that the temple did or any organizations to help people get jobs or get back on their feet?.

HOFFMAN

You know I don't know anything about that, I really don't.

SIEGAL

During World War II, did the rabbi and cantor have jobs outside the temple? Who were the rabbi and cantor during World War II? Do you know?

SEVERAL

Cohen?

HOFFMAN

Yeah Cohen was here in 1945 I know because he married me, and then that's Galpert came after him.

SEVERAL

Vorspan.

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SIEGAL

So that was early like, Cohen was fulltime, do you think he was full time or did he keep other jobs?

HOFFMAN

I think Cohen had an outside job but that's the only one I know about.

SIEGAL

Okay. And at that time in the 40s, what was the rabbi's jobs at the temple, beside leading services, what other things did they do?

HOFFMAN

Probably the same as what it is today. They did teach, they did have classes, they did visit the sick, you know that type of work, and I think they were very into what was going on in community to be a part of the, there was a council of churches, I think my father belonged to that too, I cant remember but, I don't think it has changed much except there may be more things to do.

SIEGAL

Yeah that would be more people to keep after.

HOFFMAN

Right.

SIEGAL

In terms of rabbi Vorspan, do you remember specifically about he may be he came in and had, every rabbi has their own touch.

HOFFMAN

He had different idea of what he wanted to do, he wanted to make it a center.

SIEGAL

Okay so he was the Pasadena Jewish Center?

HOFFMAN

Yeah Pasadena Jewish Center.

SIEGAL

It sounds like it already was a center I mean you were already gathering there.

HOFFMAN

No it was a temple.

SIEGAL

I mean more in spirit it was like that.

HOFFMAN

Yeah but he wanted to make it a center.

SIEGAL

Was he trying to make it more secular you know in terms of changing the name?

HOFFMAN

May be.

SIEGAL

And why did he want to make it a center? Do you have any recollection of what this was done?

HOFFMAN

It his idea, I don't know.

SIEGAL

And were the people in temple you call were opposed to that?

HOFFMAN

I wasn't involved at that time, I really don't know.

SIEGAL

It's okay. What other changes besides than changing the name did he bring?

HOFFMAN

I don't know.

SIEGAL

So its like change the name, and then, did he institute different activities that were more new standard, kind of?

HOFFMAN

His wife was very artistic and into a lot of things and I think she brought some cultural programs, they had different speakers that were very well known and they were able to do that and I don't think we had much of that before.

SIEGAL

Was it like the Sunday bagel breakfast?

HOFFMAN

No it was more like a Sunday night lecture type thing and so they did that.

SIEGAL

Was that the first sort of adult education ever at the temple?

HOFFMAN

I think so.

SEVERAL

Do you remember Mordecai Kaplan?

HOFFMAN

Who?

SEVERAL

Mordecai Kaplan?

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

SEVERAL

Do you recall him speaking at the temple?

HOFFMAN

I think he did, I think he did and that would have been in that era.

SIEGAL

He was the father of the reconstructionist movement, right.

HOFFMAN

That may have been when rabbi Galpert was here. He really spoke at him so much.

SIEGAL

I guess if there was any other event like that where you could think, this was the event when the room was packed and everyone was thrilled to hear a person speak, was there anything else that we wont know about, so we can ask about if you could remember something really special that happened in that time?

HOFFMAN

I know they had a lot of good speakers and at that time, I wasn't involved or going really probably I know that she doesn't belong to the temple anymore but she helped do the programming and everything so that was help her friend

Halpern and she got speakers that I understand were really good and it really took off.

SIEGAL

I guess now, lets talk about rabbi Galpert a little bit, it sounds like the change to PJTC like abbreviation, is that what you are asking about here?

SEVERAL

Yeah in 1956 or so I think, the incorporation papers of the congregation changed from Pasadena Jewish Center to Pasadena Jewish Community to Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center, what took place, why did that change happen?

SIEGAL

Why temple get back its name, took that, but put it back in? Do you have any recollection of that?

HOFFMAN

No because when I went to the temple on Wolman, it was Temple B'nei Israel and I guess it was Vorspan I guess when we changed it.

SEVERAL

1949.

SIEGAL

And then they changed it to, temple back in so obviously that was a little more Jewish. Were you active, I am trying, I am not really sure where you were in your own life, when there was a whole thing when rabbi Galpert kind of coming in and there was a split in the congregation. Were you active?

HOFFMAN

I was not involved in that.

SIEGAL

And do you recall rabbi Galpert ever making sort of political statements or taking political stand in the sermons?

HOFFMAN

No he tells the score of Dodgers.

SIEGAL

Apparently, people really loved his sermons. I have heard that.

HOFFMAN

His sermons were superb.

SIEGAL

And why? What was so wonderful about that?

HOFFMAN

Because he talked to you. He didn't talk above you. He was talking about things that were happening now and he had a sense of humor about what was happening and yes, when things were bad and there was war, you heard about

it, but he just spoke about so many things that you always wanted to listen to him.

SIEGAL

Do you recall what his stand was on the war, where he said things are bad, did he spoke about it?

HOFFMAN

About what?

SIEGAL

Like do you have a stand, like a position in terms of...

HOFFMAN

I don't think so.

SIEGAL

So when things were bad, what was it that he talked about, I mean do you recall how he approached the topic of war? You know currently like in a subtle way be opposed the war and that's clear, so do you think he had an opinion about it?

HOFFMAN

I don't know, I don't know.

SIEGAL

Like did he ever talk about, you know injustice is obviously the interment of the Japanese you know, was that something ever not necessary rabbi Galpert, but in general, do you think the temple ever stand up in anyway?

HOFFMAN

Yeah I don't remember.

SIEGAL

One time I guess the Flame, this may be a sisterhood publication location and then it became a temple publication. Do you have any recollection about that?

HOFFMAN

No. I don't remember.

SIEGAL

How it went from sisterhood publication.

HOFFMAN

Marilyn may remember because I think she wrote the Flame at that time.

SIEGAL

Were you involved with sisterhood at that time at all?

HOFFMAN

I am trying to think when I got involved in sisterhood; I did get involved in the sisterhood probably the middle 60s.

SIEGAL

So was the Flame already out there as a temple newsletter by then? Ok. When did the Sancta shop open?

HOFFMAN

Its been there for ever as far as I can remember.

SIEGAL
The same shop we have now?

HOFFMAN
No. Well yeah I guess so because it was always run by sisterhood.

SIEGAL
Why is it called Sancta?

HOFFMAN
Now its called...

SIEGAL
A gift shop I guess.

HOFFMAN
What is it called?

SIEGAL
What does Sancta stand for?

HOFFMAN
I have no idea, but I don't know who named it.

SIEGAL
Okay. In 1969, there was brail transcribing.

HOFFMAN
It was what.

SIEGAL
Brail transcribing, the sisterhood did transcribing for the blind as a service.

SEVERAL
Apparently so, they had I don't know classes in which they were teaching people in the sisterhood how to do the transcriptions.

SIEGAL
Do you recall that, we got a laundry list here so lets just keep going.

SEVERAL
Yeah I have going through the Flames and I have seen some references to these classes. That is why the question is on the list.

SIEGAL
You were the head of sisterhood in 1971 so tell us a little bit about that like how did you get to the head of the sisterhood?

HOFFMAN
I worked on committees and did other things and they asked me for president and I agreed.

SIEGAL
And do you remember anything, any something from your time, your tenure that really stands out for you, something you are really proud of?

HOFFMAN

Well at that time we had luncheons on Wednesdays and for me right now the best part was getting to know the people and having them as friends and that's what came out for me, I don't think I did anything that was any different or you know it just went along okay, but I made a lot of friends and it was a good time for me.

SIEGAL

So the sisterhood at that time would do Wednesday luncheons, that was one of your regular get-togethers like every week you would do a luncheon?

HOFFMAN

No we did it once a month and then we had board meeting another time but the luncheons brought, people didn't work, you know it was so different at that time, they didn't work, they would get a baby sitter or we would have a sitter there and you can go and spend the afternoon with adults and not with your kids so it was really, everybody looked forward to get away that was there, you know they would sit there for the whole afternoon probably and drink coffee and visit and it brought the people out, it brought the women out and we would have some kind of a program usually to go with it and it was just being together.

SIEGAL

And at that time what other things were sisterhood responsible for the temple. I mean were you doing onegs and stuff like that?

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah, we have done those for years.

SIEGAL

And were you doing all the onegs?

HOFFMAN

The luncheons were usually you set aside for women to be that to take care of luncheon that day and it would go around through the whole memberships so that everybody would have a chance and everybody, the programming was usually pretty good, they would get different speakers and different things that would interest people and that was a good way to meet people really and to get to know them.

SIEGAL

Was the sisterhood involved with Israel at that time, I don't hear much about like Hadassah for example, the temple did not seem to have Hadassah.

HOFFMAN

No because we have women's league, which is UJ so we are involved in doing that and torah fund which is raising the money for UJ. So that is what our goal is.

SIEGAL

Do you recall like I know getting involved in Zionist activities getting the state of Israel is..

HOFFMAN

Sisterhood has never really.

SIEGAL

You organized the New Year's dance in 1969 I guess so. Do you remember when they start having New Year dances on the temple.

HOFFMAN

We have fun I guess.

SIEGAL

Do you remember when they started having New year's dances at the temple?

HOFFMAN

They had them years ago and then they stopped and then they started again and it was just you know a social event and it was fun and I do not know why they abort it.

SIEGAL

Why did they stop?

HOFFMAN

Well I think they stopped because people you have to always get somebody who is got to take care of it and that is the tough part. Once you get somebody who is going to head it then you get a committee and it works, but that one person you have to get them to do it and it just falls apart. You know, if you do not do it yourself it does not get done.

SIEGAL

Absolutely okay, I know that. You were corresponding secretary of the board in 1969?

HOFFMAN

What was I?

SIEGAL

Corresponding secretary of the board? Remember that? So what did you do as secretary of the board?

HOFFMAN

Corresponding I do not know I guess I am read correspondent, was this for the temple?

SIEGAL

For the temple board yeah.

HOFFMAN

Because I also was treasurer.

SIEGAL

Of the temple? Okay. That seems like a more important job maybe?

HOFFMAN

Yeah. I took care of the money.

SIEGAL

How long did you do that for?

HOFFMAN

I think just a year. Correspondence you just take care of you know you what you have to, but I don't think they really need one now, because of the Flame and everything.

SIEGAL

On the treasury thing I have heard about other men doing it so was it common have women being a treasurer when you did it?

HOFFMAN

No, somebody asked me if I would do it.

SIEGAL

Were you the first woman you think that did?

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah.

SIEGAL

Oh really? If you had respect of the man in terms of you are doing that job or were you treated equally or?

HOFFMAN

Well somebody came and asked me if I would do it and I said what do I have to do and they told me and I said okay.

SIEGAL

Because you are doing bookkeeping already. So, did the temple have, what kind of professional staff did it have it at that time?

HOFFMAN

They have one secretary and a bookkeeper and I really worked a lot at the temple at that time. I was like Eddie Taylor now, but I was there I mean nobody if they could not find me at home, they know where I was. But that was when Bob became president and I wanted to help him and he could not be there during the day but I could and so that was what I did.

SIEGAL

Was that kind of ____?

HOFFMAN

You know when I think back and looking what they are doing now and that you just go to a machine and it comes up we did you know the hand memory graft and addressing and you know the equipment would breakdown and you were hand a dressing every thing that went out I mean it was just a very different thing.

SIEGAL

Right you just E-mail everybody.

HOFFMAN

Now you come in and just stamp it and send it out but it was not that way.

SIEGAL

So it was really the temple members who made sure it happened?

HOFFMAN

We went in and helped of course.

SIEGAL

Do you remember Irving Burg? Who is he and why he is significant do you have any idea why this question is on the list?.

HOFFMAN

He made the poorest Yom Kippur speech I have ever heard.

SIEGAL

Oh you ____.

HOFFMAN

Do not put that in anywhere. You can cut that out. Irving was a very strong go-getter salesman and they asked him to do this the Yom Kippur speech. While it was the dearest thing that you have ever heard. I mean it just there was nothing there that major sale okay I am going to give you \$10 more just nothing but he was a very active man never would be president.

SIEGAL

Why is that?

HOFFMAN

I do not know whether his wife maybe didn't want it or maybe just he didn't want it and I saw him last year bar mitzvah or something and he is the same.

SEVERAL

I am curious about that you said that he was not or could not be president because going through the Flames I think it was in 1969 there were minutes of board meetings and it says that he was presiding these meetings and it was not just one meeting. He was presiding at a number of meetings and one reason I was struck by this is that Jean prepared a list of board presidents and his name is not on the list and yet there he is being shown presiding of these board meetings and so you know I am kind of, which Jean's list correspond with what you just said.

HOFFMAN

Was an officer? Maybe he was an officer that one president could not be there, he stepped in.

SEVERAL

That was my first reaction but he presided the whole number of meetings.

HOFFMAN

I do not recall that unless you are right that they had somebody rather than the president preside. He did handle a lot of the nomination he was head of the

nominating committee several times and I served on the committee with him a couple of times. He was a go-getter. I do not know why he did not become president.

SIEGAL

We can ask him that right? So there was no executive director like at that time?

HOFFMAN

You know we had it off and on.

SIEGAL

Was there a special fee for use of the pool? Did you have fee, you know the charge the members any kind of fee for using the pool do you recall? No?. How did the desegregation of Pasadena schools impacted PJTC?

HOFFMAN

There was a division of people some left the temple because we were all for integration.

SIEGAL

Okay.

HOFFMAN

I had very difficult time sending my little blonde girl on a bus going over to Washington. I will tell you that I did have, we moved to the ranch because there was a ___9:09 school so it was difficult but I think she became a better person for having different color children to grow up with.

SIEGAL

Did some people move, I mean were people trying different strategies or sort of?

HOFFMAN

She was hit by I will not say beaten but some of them didn't treat her nice.

SIEGAL

What did she ask to leave or was she like get me out of here?

HOFFMAN

At that time, you talked to the principal and they will take care of it and that was it but you know I think she should become a better person be with them and having that. She says it is so difficult when she walks into a place and into some kind of a meeting and it is all white or she said I do not understand how people do not tolerate of other people?

SIEGAL

Right it made her understand. Shirley Hoffman So it was hard but as I said it did divide the temple into pro and con it was a lot of discussion about it.

SIEGAL

Yeah people get involved in terms of actually trying to stop it or any things like that?

SEVERAL

Where did discussions take place? It seems like I heard there was a social activity.

HOFFMAN

They had a meetings at the temple.

SIEGAL

So there were people in the temple who were actually like part of a group that is sort of pushing for it or trying to bring segregation around, desegregation around and then there were probably other people are feeling that it is not an appropriate thing for the temple to be doing.

SEVERAL

Was there an effort to have a resolution by the temple?

HOFFMAN

No it was just really to hear both sides and you were able to do that. They have got, they had people from both sides to listen, we would never go one way because you cannot but they did it that way.

SEVERAL

And they had a number of these meetings where they presented ___ and also explaining what did desegregation order was doing to do was that in addition to talking about the pros and cons of the desegregation do they talk about this specific desegregation plan?

HOFFMAN

Probably.

SEVERAL

But you recall whole bunch of meetings. Who presided the meetings?

HOFFMAN

I do not remember.

SIEGAL

Do you remember anything about rabbi Mendick, he was an education director.

HOFFMAN

I remember him.

SIEGAL

When was this?

SEVERAL

In 1970 or '71, I do not know when he left, but he first shows up as the Education Director in the mascot of the flame in 1970 or 1971.

SIEGAL

So did you have kids in the program at that time?

HOFFMAN

Lisa was in.

SIEGAL

So do you recall what is this?

HOFFMAN

I did not know much of him. I really did not. I do not think he had anything to offer or to anyone.

SIEGAL

It does not sound he lasted very long, now that is true, was he there couple of years?

HOFFMAN

Only a couple of years if that much, I do not remember.

SIEGAL

Okay here are some other organizations and you can tell me if you know anything about these, they were in the Flame in 1968 so it was like test the memory here. Clubs of Eminence?

HOFFMAN

What? I never heard of it.

SIEGAL

Okay, Rashi society, ___13:45 society do you remember any of these? Okay. Do you remember did ORT have meaning of PJTC?

HOFFMAN

No I do not think they ever met at the temple.

SIEGAL

Okay. Life Savers Chapters City of Hope, did they meet at PJTC? And could you tell me were you every involved with that?. Can you tell me about it?

HOFFMAN

Very involved.

SIEGAL

Okay tell me a little bit about it.

HOFFMAN

We decided to do something for the City of Hope and so we would have a dinner dance every year and we met monthly those who mainly to plan things and socialize and we met we had the dinner dances both that our temple and at Arcadia because we had a lot of people from Arcadia that belonged to the group and we had dinner dances sometimes with 300 people there and we did the cooking. The whole group of us when we were able to stand on our feet and do it. It was a fun time and we raised a lot of money for the City of Hope.

SIEGAL

Seems like City of Hope was a uniquely Jewish charity. I have this impression that City of Hope had a strong Jewish connection. I know because I know my grandmother raised money for the City of Hope so I guess I am trying to understand why that became a favorite sort of charity for Jewish women. Do you have any idea?

HOFFMAN

I don't know, just somebody came to us and asked if wanted to do this and we did Bob as president for quite of few years of that of the group and it was just really it started out as a social group and we ended up that we wanted to do something and that was what we did.

SEVERAL

Do you remember the year it was operating?

SIEGAL

Or you picture yourself like where you were in your own life.

HOFFMAN

Probably in the 60s because I am trying to think Lisa was a baby and she was born in 1961 and so it was mainly in 60s and 70s.

SEVERAL

Why did the group die out?

SIEGAL

Why did they stop having the City of Hope group at the temple?

HOFFMAN

Same reason you have to get somebody to run it. Somebody to be the head of it and people started doing other things, women started to work and it made a big difference.

SIEGAL

In the 70s when we were coming out of college like myself wanted to work with.

HOFFMAN

Your kids grew up and you went to work.

SIEGAL

So its hard to find women to do things that will require time during the day particularly.

SEVERAL

Since then did temple had any connection with the City of Hope? I mean it does not seem like there is any real connection between the City of Hope and the temple. Other than some individuals.

SIEGAL

Few members but not.

SEVERAL

It does not seem to be in this kind of a fund raising mechanism.

SIEGAL

I am not sure if the whole City of Hope Jewish women fund raising thing is even going on anymore. I do not think it is just our temple I think that our groups of supports they tend to be large very you know significant male donor as a kind of any different thing than it used to be but because I know I observe this change too and events like I know something like my grandmother lived in

LA, she was very involved with that, same thing but I do think you are right that unfortunately the women like myself who did not stay home and we changed things in many ways. Okay we did talk briefly I brought Zionist activity and you know Michael got a bunch of different time period here and I could go through those but did not seem like you had in 1947 when Israel was established.

HOFFMAN

I do not remember in 1947.

SIEGAL

In 1956 when we had in 1956 war. Do you remember doing bond drives, tree sales any of those things?

HOFFMAN

We did bond drives, temple did bong drives. Bob and I honored one night for bonds.

SIEGAL

Did you buy trees and all that stuff? Did you go to the Israel, have you ever been to Israel?

HOFFMAN

No.

SIEGAL

Never been?

HOFFMAN

We never had a chance to go.

SIEGAL

You still have a chance to go.

HOFFMAN

Yeah well.

SIEGAL

You go to a rabbi trip. Okay, Michael I am not sure about this question here. Living here in Pasadena while the holocaust was going on, did you feel like you knew what was going on and how do you?

HOFFMAN

Excuse me a minute, I will be back. I can answer that.

SIEGAL

Okay we are almost done. And the last question just had to do with really just like the holocaust and what was going on the temple and how people might...?

HOFFMAN

What year was that?

SIEGAL

Well I would say probably in 1939, 1941, somewhere in there.

HOFFMAN

I know it affected my parents.

SIEGAL

Did the temple raise money to try bringing the people over?

HOFFMAN

I really do not know.

SIEGAL

Did you have a sense you have relatives there that you knew?

HOFFMAN

No I did have some cousins there but they are gone.

SIEGAL

And there was like temple got together to sponsor anybody to come in or we had people obviously we had members of temple that probably were serving in the military when United States went in.

HOFFMAN

1939 I do not know.

SIEGAL

Or later? Now Michael, he asked all the questions all of things that I did not get

SEVERAL

I just have a few during World War II were there are any bond drives at the temple, in addition?

HOFFMAN

Oh yeah, yeah that I remember and in fact Irv Berg might have been in charge of that if I remember correctly I am not sure but yes we did have that.

SEVERAL

So when did Irv Berg start? So he was there from the 1930s.

HOFFMAN

I think so. I do not know.

SEVERAL

Okay I will find out. Any other activities during World War II that you can recall?

HOFFMAN

I am sure the women I know my mother went down and rolled bandages and stuff like that at the Red Cross and they knitted blankets and things so there was a probably a group of women that did do that I do not know but I do remember her doing that.

SEVERAL

But that was not at a temple that was a Red Cross or some other.

HOFFMAN

Yeah.

Date:

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