

Harry Mamlin: I'm Harry Mamlin. I was born in Asheville, North Carolina on November 21st, 1934.

Jan Schochet: Where do you live now?

Harry: I live now in Charlotte at – you want my address? Okay, 7217 Chaparral Lane in Charlotte.

Sharon Fahrer: Can you tell us some about your family's background, how they got to Asheville?

Harry: My father, well my mother of course was already in Asheville in the area, she grew up in the area. And my father came because of his health. He had been diagnosed as having tuberculosis, which turned out to be an incorrect diagnosis, but Asheville at that time was thought of as a health resort. So he came there thinking he could breathe easier. He came with a young wife who was soon to have a baby, and my half sister was born, I guess in about 1931, I'm not really positive.

Sharon: Do you know what year he came to Asheville?

Harry: I would guess about 30, 31. This was a first marriage. He grew up in an Orthodox Jewish Home, so his family did not want him to move to Asheville, in the first place, particularly her family. And finally, shortly after the baby was born the wife and baby moved back to Philadelphia, where they were from, and my father stayed in Asheville, and it resulted in a separation and later divorce.

Sharon: Do you know if – I guess they didn't ever reconcile or the daughter –

Harry: Oh, it was – he grew up in an Orthodox family, I think as I said, and no, as far as they were concerned, particularly the following year after he married my mother, who was a Southern Baptist Southerner, they not only disowned him, they printed an obituary,

which there are copies of, that were published in the South Philadelphia paper, saying he was dead. And that half sister was raised thinking her father was dead for a long time. Later, after she figured out he wasn't dead they said "well, he's in jail, we didn't want to tell you". So she remembers going by the jail and seeing, thinking my father's in there. Later on, as adults, they got together, and I finally met my half sister when we were both in our 40s, at an airport in Philadelphia. We have been very close since then. She's been part of the family for the last, almost 30 years. We've enjoyed that.

Sharon: Do you actually have a copy of that obituary?

Harry: Nancy, one of my daughters has that. It's a very-

Sharon: It's written in Yiddish?

Harry: Yes, of course one of the problems there is, that whole part of the family – I grew up not knowing, and knowing very little about. I can't even tell you, other than my grandfather's name, because I was named for him, I can't tell you what my grandfather did for a living, or where he came from. I'm not even sure what his name was. We think they are from the Ukraine, but there's no real official record. There's no one left in that family, and I really could have asked, but I wasn't smart enough to ask when I had the opportunity. And all those people are gone now.

Sharon: So did you always know your father was Jewish?

Harry: Oh, yes. I always felt Jewish myself. We would have been raised Jewish very likely. After my mother and father married, and my mother, to her credit, made him go back and try to reconcile with his wife and baby. Of course, she was married. That could not work. And so when they were married, and in short order there were four children, one each year, I was in '34, so there was one in '32, '33, '34, and I have a sister one year

older, born in 35. We would have been raised Jewish, but my father could not afford, when came time for us to have religious training, he couldn't afford the fees at the Hebrew school. He was so adamant that religious training was important, my mother finally talked him into letting us go down to the Baptist church. Of course we came home singing Jesus Loves Me. And then he got angry about that, I'm going to go down and see what they're telling my kids down there. Mother said she warned the minister he was coming, but anyway, the first Sunday he was there it was an Old Testament ceremony, and nothing he had not heard all of his life. And he began to go back, and over a period of time joined the church. But that – we're all good Christians, I guess. And I have no doubt we would all be good Jews had it gone the other way. He just felt it was important to have a relationship with a higher being.

Sharon: Do you know what church in Asheville it was that he went to?

Harry: That was the West Asheville Baptist Church, not the church we stayed in forever, but it was - that's the church where that took place – I think at the time of my father's death he went to an Episcopal church.

Sharon: Tell us who your siblings are, and you mentioned the years they were born. But you didn't tell us who they are. Connect a name with a year.

Harry: My youngest brother Barney was born in '32 I suppose

Mary Lee Mamlin: No, no, Barney-

Harry: No, no, he was born the other way, '36. Born the other way. Barney was born in '36. He had a career as principal of an elementary school in Portsmouth, Virginia, pretty directly went to college and then went there and stayed until he retired. He lives in that area now. My brother Joe finished Mars Hill and then Wake Forest and then went to

medical school. I should say this was all Depression years, so we were very poor growing up. Joe went to medical school on a full scholarship-

Jan: At Wake Forest?

Harry: At Bowman Gray, which is now Wake Forest.

Jan: And what year was he born?

Harry: He was born in 1935, and he's retired from the faculty of the school of medicine at Indiana University and is now working in Kenya, really as a volunteer heading up a project for the treatment and prevention of AIDS. You want to know about me next, in the order I suppose?

Jan: Yeah, sure. In what year you were born? You already said it-

Harry: I was in '34. I went to Mars Hill, and to Appalachian, majored in music education and took a job teaching as a band director at a junior high school in Danville, Virginia.

We did that for 13 years, and then with four children and we sold our house and put everything we owned in a U-Haul and went to Indiana University School of Music, which is the world's largest music school, and pursued my doctorate in music education there. Then my career from that point on was as a music administrator. I was music supervisor in Indianapolis for about 16 years, and then a similar job here in Charlotte until I retired in '97. My sister Pat, by far the smartest one in the family,

Jan: What year was she born?

Harry: She was born in '30...

Mary Lee: -3

Harry: -3. She would have uh... did not go to college, but wrote dissertations for people who did, has her own business as an importer of collectibles, and has been very successful in that. She lives in Chicago.

Sharon: And what's her last- does she have a married name?

Harry: Shull, and she's no longer married right now...

Sharon: But she goes by Shull

Harry: ...but she goes by that.

Sharon: Talk a little bit about your –if you will about your- what your father was like, and the relationship between you and the rest of the kids and him, and kind of – some of your memories of him. Because he wasn't in your life for your whole life.

Harry: Well, in a way he was, for my whole life until he died in 1980. But my father, I would say if I had to pick one word to describe him I would say he was an entertainer. If he could have done what he wanted to do he would have been in show business, and been very very good at it. That was not one of the avenues that an Orthodox Jewish family wanted for their- in those days. Although, many, as you know, many Jewish people did do well, and every time I see one of those old-timers I say my daddy could have done that. But he was in theater all of his life, in the Asheville Community Theater, he was at Flat Rock. He did the same thing later on, moved to Texas, and then to Colorado.

Jan: Where was he in Texas?

Harry: Uhhh-

Mary Lee: Victoria.

Harry: Victoria. I am glad you knew the town. He was only there a brief time. But getting back to the focus of the question, my father was funny. He entertained us, he did magic,

he was a good magician, and he went around, all of his life he would go around to hospitals and do magic shows for children. He would – all the kids in the neighborhood would come over with our four children, and he would do magic shows for them. He taught dancing –

Jan: Oh, right, how did your parents meet?

Harry: Okay, how they met? I am not positive how they met... I think they met at a dance, but someone knew both of them and thought they would go well together. This was, I guess, around '31 or something like that. I don't know a lot of details about that. He was, as my mother said, tall, dark and handsome, which was a criteria for those days. But he was always fun to be around.

Jan: Now, didn't they teach at Arthur Murray or something?

Harry: Yeah, I don't know if it was Arthur Murray, but I know they taught in a dance studio. My father did everything he could possibly do to earn a living, and he was always sick. This disease that he had, I think from smoking, and I don't know whether it shortened his life, but it certainly diminished the quality of his health. But anyway he did everything. He worked delivering ice one time. I can remember driving a truck delivering furniture. He would go downtown and look at someone's window - just an artist too, we have his paintings all over the place. He would look at someone's window and say you know, I can decorate your window and make it better. Let me do it, and then you can pay me if you think it's worth anything, and he would do that. He just did whatever he could to make a dollar in those days, it was hard. He dug ditches, he tells me, and I don't doubt it. He said he did it, and the only suit he had was white. He was down in the ditch and a friend came in, Maurie, is that you? But uh- now to his credit, he was never able to make

money, but he was always trying 100 percent. We never felt poor, we never felt poor even though we got free clothing at school, even though they brought us sometimes food on Thanksgiving from the Salvation Army. Even though I remember people coming and repossessing the furniture, mother would say this will be fun, we're going to have a picnic. But none of those things made us feel poor.

Sharon: Where did you live?

Harry: It depends on which month it was. We had to move every time the rent came due. There's hardly a street in Asheville we didn't live in. As things got better, after the war and so forth, certainly things were more stable, but in those early years it was everywhere. The beginning of the war helped our family, it's an awful thing to say. My father his best to join the Army, but he couldn't do that because of his health. But he had a civilian defense job of working on gliders at Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base in North Carolina, it's no longer there. But it was the world's largest glider base at that time. He became an expert in plastics. He invented two things which are pretty significant. He invented the little scraper you use on your window to get the ice off, with the piece of plastic. He could not get a patent on that because it was too generic they said, and he did get a patent on a fireman's safety shield that protected you from very hot flames, by a plastic shield attached to the helmet, and similar devices are still used. He invented that while he was on government time. He went all the way to the Supreme Court, for him to get the rights to it, but it was overturned at the Supreme Court level that it wasn't his because he was working for the government when he did it. He still had rights to manufacture, he opened a factory, but he was the world's worst business man. That didn't

work either. I remember a big thing in the Asheville paper one time about the new factory.

Jan: What year would that have been?

Harry: That would have been in the very early 50's I guess.

Marry Lee: Might have been early 40's.

Jan: Do you know where the factory was?

Harry: I did go to it, but I can't tell you where it was. One of the things he did, they bought a huge press – in those days this was a lot of money, \$60,000, that would stamp out one of those things every time you snapped – you clicked - your fingers, but they couldn't sell them that fast, because they could stamp out enough in one day to do the whole day's inventory. So it was just not really understanding how to grow a business. But he was not a business man. He was an entertainer.

Jan: What's your father's – what was your father's name?

Harry: Oh, yes Maurice W. – which I have two definitions of the W. – I thought it was William, and I still kind of think that, but he always said my middle name is Wolf, and of course that's daddy, or it could be true. There was a Wolf Mamlin, we discovered, that lived in Moscow, - found that on the Internet, so maybe it was. But in any case, M-a-u-r-i-c-e.

Jan: And they called him –

Harry: Maurice, some people called him Maurie, but Maurice is what my mother always called him. My oldest sister Pat's name was Bertrice. My mother's name was Bert, Roberta, and his name was Maurice, they put the two names together. They thought that

was really cute. She called herself Pat, and later on legally changed it because it was not cute to her at all.

Jan: Well, now, your father, what was your father's interface with the Jewish community in Asheville?

Harry: Of course I don't know, in terms of faith itself

Jan: I meant just dealing with Jewish people.

Harry: But he always considered himself - he never considered himself anything but Jewish, and neither did we, even though I don't technically, this heritage is supposed to come from your mother. But I think in some ways mother adopted feeling Jewish along with us. But we were always proud of that part of our heritage, and my father always felt Jewish. He worked, as you know for, after the war, when he came back he got a job with Sidney Schochet, who had the Bootery in Asheville, and he did really – that was the longest term of stability, I think in our family. He had a regular job he could depend on. It wasn't a big paying job, because little stores can only do so much, but very good people. We've always considered the Schochets part of our family, and I think they felt the same way about us. So that relationship is good. We finally lived in a house and stayed in it more than a month.

Sharon: How long did he work there?

Harry: I think at the time they did that fireman shield thing he left for a little while, but pretty much from the 50's or even very late 40's up until, probably until he left.

Mary Lee: He worked at Penny's.

Harry: Oh, he did work at Penny's.

Jan: What year did he leave Asheville?

Harry: Left Asheville in about '57, I would say. We were married in '56. My mother and father were still together. I don't know whether I should jump-

Jan: You can do whatever you want.

Harry: -but the breakup of my mother and father is just simply because my mother was wedded to those mountains. She felt like she couldn't breathe anywhere else. And my father, really, with all this struggle he had in Asheville – well, he had debts he could never pay, and he had a lot of pride. He was a very proud man, and it bothered him to see people that he owed money to that he knew he couldn't do anything about. So he wanted to get a new start in a new place, and so he went to Texas, mainly because of a director of a theater who said if you come there I can get you in movies, and I can get you –

Jan: Do you know who that was?

Harry: What was his name? Shoal?

Mary Lee: I never knew.

Harry: Zoal, Zoal.

Mary Lee: Oh yeah.

Harry: Bernard Zoal.

Mary Lee: Bernie Zoal.

Harry: Bernie Zoal.

Mary Lee: Z-o-a-l

Harry: You see his name on the old movies once in a while, directed by him.

Sharon: Z-o-a-l?

Marry Lee: Z. Zed.

Harry: Yeah.

Sharon: Z-o-a-l.

Marry Lee: Zed. Zed.

Sharon: Zed-o-a-l.

Harry: Yeah, right.

Sharon: Was he in Asheville? Had he known you in Asheville?

Harry: Yeah, I think he was there maybe with the Asheville Community Theater for a short time, and was impressed with what dad did. He was marvelous on the stage, and so he went to Victoria, Texas, and stayed just a little while. That didn't seem to work out, and then he went to Colorado, Greeley, Colorado, as a manager of a shoe store there, and continued that profession until he died.

Jan: What year was that?

Harry: He did retire a little bit. He died in 1980, and I think he retired a few years before. But anyway, his business was selling. After he returned he worked in a jewelry store just part-time. But he loved people and he loved to sell. But my mother just would not go. He wrote and begged her to come, but she would not, and so finally he met someone that really saved his life, okay, who was a nurse. My mother and father divorced, and he married her and she put him on a budget, got him out of debt. He actually owned a house free and clear before he died, that would never have happened to him otherwise. It's not that that couldn't have happened in Asheville, he didn't have the management skills to make it down here. And my mother remarried, and both of them, the end of their lives were far better than it would have been together, because together it was always a struggle. I never heard my mother say an unkind word about my father. Never heard my father say an unkind word about my mother. My children grew up with three sets of

grandparents and they loved all of them. So it was not a traumatic thing, I guess we would say it turned out to be a good thing.

Sharon: What was your mother's maiden name?

Harry: Martin, Roberta Leastra Martin.

Sharon: And was she from – did she grow up in Asheville?

Harry: Outside of Asheville, I think in Haywood county – but am I right about that? I may not be 100% sure about the location. She was one of nine children and being the oldest girl she had a lot to do to raise the younger ones, stood up on an apple cart, she said, and washed dishes. So she married when she was 16, to get out of the house, to an older man. They had one child, I have a half brother also who's a very close part of the family. We were just with him last week. He's 84 now, 13 years older.

Sharon: And what's his last name?

Harry: His name is Blythe. B-l-y-t-h.

Mary Lee: -e.

Harry: yeah, -e. And he loved my father as well. They never really lived with us. He lived with his father, and then he was a grown person, but visited all the time. So we have an expanded family because of that, things worked out.

Sharon: Did he live in Asheville?

Harry: He lives in Canton.

Sharon: Oh, Canton.

Harry: Jack went to work for the Canton/Champion paper-fiber company, which is a paper mill, produced paper, when he was about 17. He took time off and went in the Army – uh Air Force, he was a bombardier here in the Second World War. Came back,

went right back to that mill, worked in that mill until he retired, lives in the same house he's always lived in. He's been the stability in our family in terms of being one place.

Jan: So what do you remember about downtown Asheville when you were growing up.

Harry: Well, one of the things I remember, I got a job when I was in the eighth grade working at Kress's, which is of course no longer there, was a dime store, on Saturdays and after school. On Saturdays Asheville was so crowded you could hardly walk down the street without being pushed off the sidewalks. Every store was busy, it was a wonderful place to be. Some of that's coming back now, but there was a long period when that was not the case, as many towns. There were places you could get a full meal for 85 cents up on the square, including dessert –

Sharon: Where was that?

Harry: Uh, what was that-

Mary Lee: Tingle's.

Harry: Ingle's.

Mary Lee: Tingle's.

Sharon: Tingle's.

Harry: Tingle's, yeah, Tingle's and there was another one close to it –

Mary Lee; Gross's.

Jan: Gross Brothers?

Harry: Might have been.

Jan: Peterson's?

Mary Lee: Peterson's

Harry: Yeah, I think that's right.

Mary lee: There was a Chinese restaurant down there too.

Harry: But I always had a - from the time I was in the eighth grade I had a job. From the time I was able to do it I bought my own clothing, I think at that time, so Gene Schochet didn't have to give it to me, which she did for a long time. We all worked, and I thought that was a good part of – This is a little bit of an aside I guess, so stop me if I get off track, but this interesting thing about the three brothers especially, that is unusual, all of us failed both the first and the second grade when we started the school. And it's kind of funny, I will do this quickly. I went to the first grade and failed it. The next year Joe and I were both in the first grade. I passed the first grade and Joe failed the first grade. The next year Joe and Barney were both in the first grade. I failed the second grade, Joe got out of the first, Barney failed the first. So that year Joe and I were both in the second grade. The next year I got out of the third, Joe failed the second, but Barney passed the first, so then Barney and Joe were both in the second grade. The next year I passed to the fourth, Joe passed to the third, Barney failed the second, so we were lined up like we were supposed to be. I was the valedictorian of my college class, Joe went to medical school on a full scholarship, Barney had no academic problems and had a career as a principal. I just like to say that because sometimes kids have a slow start, sometimes a label gets put on them and they are told they can't learn because they don't have the equivalent of a – But I think we didn't learn because there were four of us right together, our family didn't have the time or resources to give us the kind of things we should have had, people reading to us, taking us places. So it just didn't happen. Our family didn't have a car. My wife and I, all of our dates were on the city bus. We didn't have a car until the second - third - second year we were married. Things people just have to have now, you can do without and

there's more pluses than minuses. I worry about my grandchildren because they have too much. I don't have any concern about anybody today –

Jan: Oh, tell us how your brother Barney got his name.

Harry: Oh, Barney was uh - there are stories about it, but I know he was named for Barney Perlman. And one of the many jobs my father had was working for the Perlman's, and I'm not sure which business that was, because I was so young. But the memory is that he gave - when he knew Barney was coming he gave a new crib, and my parents were so grateful for it, and my mother said we're going to name him Bernard. His name is really Bernard. People always called him Barney. And I guess Bernard Perlman is called Barney.

Jan: That's a funny story. So do you have any other memories of being around the Jewish kids or Jewish families or Jewish stores?

Harry: Yeah, one of the families, well several, the Chandlers were very important to us. We lived for a while on Oak Street, and the house is no longer there, the Chandler's grocery, right up against the First Baptist Church, been there for a long time. And Mr. Chandler, even though there was no reason to, he knew we went to the Baptist Church, he always considered us Jewish, and in fact I went in to tell him Mary and I were engaged and he said oh, is she a good Jewish girl? I said no, Mr. Chandler. He said oh, we lose so many of our good boys. But Aaron Chandler, who played in the Asheville Symphony, played violin, used to come by, because I had no transportation, even in that time, and pick me up. Both of us played in the Asheville Symphony. He played violin and I played trombone. He gave me a ride there and back for a number of years, and we always just felt like they were part of the family.

The Finkelsteins we knew, that's where my father went to pawn his watch every once in a while for a few extra dollars. But they were good people and good friends. The Freemans, they had an antique business – Susquehanna? Isn't that what they called it? Barbara particularly was one of mother's very best friends for years and years, even after dad had died. She helped take care of those children when they were babies. Mother was a caring person, and a lot of the people she cared for were Jewish people. She loved Mrs. Schochet, and spent a lot of time with her, particularly in her last years.

Jan: Oh, you mean my grandmother.

Harry: Yeah, your grandmother, I didn't mean your mother, I said your mother, but didn't mean that. Your grandmother. She felt like that's somebody I need to care for. And in my mother's later years, even though mother didn't quite recognize it, there were people that cared for her too. Those things come back.

Jan: Did she have Alzheimer's?

Harry: A kind of dementia, but not Alzheimer's. She used to say not a soul ever comes into this house. And after her death, she lived in the 90s, we were in the house trying to get things together, and people kept coming by, oh, I check on her every day, and I'm so sorry. So she was a lucky person. I am trying to think of other people - Mary, you might have some others that you remember. I think those were the people that we were closest too.

Jan: You said something about how my uncle would give you clothes? What was that about?

Harry: The Star Store and the Bootery were not next-door to each other, and Gene Schochet was – he was like an uncle to me in a lot of ways as Sid was. They were just

people we knew and came to. I just know when it came time for us to go to school - we were a different size every year, otherwise we would have worn the clothes we had, but we would go over to the Star Store and they would say "Pick out what you need." We got what we needed. I'm just sure, as I'm sitting here, that those were bills that were never paid, if they ever became bills. Gene was just a loving, caring person, and I never went in that store that - either of the stores, that everybody there wasn't happy to see me, ask how we were doing. And I think in some ways they took a little bit of pride in the way the family turned out, because they knew a lot about the struggle. They felt good about their efforts and contributions to that. And we certainly remember them as important people in our lives.

Jan: Was that when you were really little or –

Harry: Well, really little, and even somewhat after we got back. I was up to the first grade, I guess, before we left to go down. I remember going to Aycock.

Jan: Did you all go down to Laurinburg, too?

Harry: Yeah, we all went down.

Jan: How many years was that?

Harry: I guess most of the years during the war. We actually lived in Maxton part of the time and Sanford part of the time, and then we lived on the base part of the time in housing. But things were pretty good for us there because daddy made a decent salary. Him and Mother bought a big house, rented out rooms to soldiers, and daddy was in theater down there too. He was in the base plays. And another interesting thing, he played base- softball, maybe it was baseball, but played first base on the team that went around

and played various areas. I never thought of him as an athlete, but he had some of those skills too.

Jan: Now, here's an interesting question. Did - Do you know if your father ever experienced any kind of anti-Semitism in Asheville and/or did you mistakenly experience any anti-Semitism in Asheville? Or anytime, actually.

Harry: I don't know whether I can for sure say I did, but I know my father did. He tells me times, even there at the Bootery when someone would come in, start to go in and then say "no, this is a Jew store" and go on. I think that kind of experience maybe more than anything else was uh, things he experienced. Whether that had anything to do with his efforts to get employment and so forth, I don't know. I kind of doubt that because there were so many Jewish people running businesses that loved daddy. If he could do what they were doing I am sure they would be glad to have him. But I think, from that standpoint- Daddy also always made a point for people to know about his Jewish background. The worst thing in the world for any of us would be in position of denying, I mean that would be like denying who I was. He felt very strongly about that.

Sharon: Did your mother work at all, where she got paid, I mean?

Harry: A little bit. Most of the time she was at home taking care of kids. And you know, the tradition of that time anyway is the wife stayed home, and a man felt even a little more put down, I suppose, if he could not support his family. I mean that was just what he was supposed to do. Most of the time I remember my mother being there at home. She had the rooming house on the base. Later on for a while - but that might have been after they had split up she had a hat shop. I think after the marriage split up she managed a hat

shop which was on the cor- was right across from Pritchard Park, and I can't remember the name of it.

Jan: Was it My Aunt Dora's hat shop called Dore's, Dora Rapport-

Harry: It could have been

Jan: - owned it

Marry Lee: Right on the corner of College and Haywood Street. across from Pritchard Park.

Jan: Yep.

Harry: That's probably the connection that got her that job. She did that a while. She did some kind of light housekeeping and companionship of an older couple for a long time. They wanted her to move to Florida with them. Of course she wouldn't leave Asheville no matter what. But-

Mary Lee: The Raefords ?

Harry: The Raefords, I think. And I don't think they were Jewish, but that was out in Biltmore. I remember my mother telling me when she was out there how to get there, she said "Just go out Biltmore Forest until you're sure you've passed it and then it will be the next left." It was pretty good directions.

Sharon: This was when you all were grown.

Harry: Oh, yeah, we were married. We married between my sophomore and junior year in college.

Jan: How did you and Mary Lee, your wife, meet?

Harry: We lived on Rumbough during a lot of the time when my father was working at the Bootery. A block away, on the other side of the park is Madeline Avenue, and Mary

Lee lived there. So we've known each other, I guess since I was in the fifth grade and she was in the sixth grade. We didn't have our first date, however, until the eighth grade, which was kind of an interesting date. I asked if I could sit by her on the bus. We both played trombone in the band, and we were going on a band trip, and she said yes. And so after we sat there I reached over and held her hand a little bit, and the principal tapped me on the shoulder and said there's a seat for you back here. That was the end of that date. Lasted about three minutes.

Mary Lee: That's Mr. Hunt (?)

Harry: So even though we married what seems to be early, we had known each other. And even though I don't think she had loved me that long, I loved her since the fifth grade.

Jan: Now, what schools did you go to in Asheville?

Harry: We went to Vance Elementary School and then Haw Fletcher, and then of course the only one high school, which was Lee Edwards at the time we were there.

Sharon: So you lived in West Asheville.

Harry: Yeah, in West Asheville-

Sharon: Pretty much.

Harry: -by Malvern Hills Park, if you know where that park is, Rumbough is the street that faces the park, on the side where you pay to go in to swim, that's Rumbough, and then two streets over is Madeline Avenue.

Mary Lee: But you moved to town –

Harry: Oh Yes.

Mary Lee: Before you-

Harry: During some of that time we moved to Oak Street, about the time I went to high school. So my brothers went to David Miller, because we moved right across the street from David Miller.

Jan: So you lived really close to where my grandmother lived. Because she lived on College Park Place.

Mary Lee: And they lived on College Park Place.

Harry: Yeah, and we lived on College Park Place for a while too.

Jan: In the apartments there or in a house?

Mary Lee: No.

Harry: It was kind of a—

Mary Lee: It was a house, but a duplex.

Harry: Yeah. We would climb over the fence - went to the First Baptist Church, would climb over the fence to go there. There were a whole lot of places we lived, because of the frequent moving.

Jan: Now mention your children and what they do.

Harry: Okay, my youngest-

Mary lee: Well, lets start with the oldest.

Harry: Well, let me start with the oldest. Okay. Nancy, my oldest daughter, that's easier to keep track that way. She's right now a professor at Appalachian State University teaching in the education department, preparing people to be special ed teachers. Her mother was a special ed teacher, so she gets that naturally. And she's very into folk music. She's a good musician, she played clarinet quite a lot when she was growing up - played in the marching hundred when she was at IU. She has a degree from Indiana

University, her doctorate is from Maryland. She's married, has no children, and probably won't have children at this stage, but she's... she had lots of children in terms of the people she teaches. Lots of nieces and nephews.

My youngest daughter, but next in line, Patsy, teaches drama, takes after her grandfather, in Cambridge, Ontario, she married a Canadian. She went to the University of Evansville, married a young man who was an All-American soccer player, he was there on a soccer scholarship. He works for the Blatt Beer Company and they live in a little place called Carlyle, which is about halfway between the two jobs, and they have two children - three children. I almost forget Zachary is a child. My oldest grandson is now 20, and through his second year of college. I have a granddaughter, Natasha, who is 16, and getting ready to learn to drive a car. She's in high school. And the youngest is 7, and she's a dancer, loves all kinds of things. Anyway, they have three, kind of a spread out family. My oldest son, who is named after me and I am named after my grandfather, so he's the third Harry Ruben Mamlin, is a music teacher in Indianapolis, actually in Pike Township, which is in the city, officially, of Indianapolis, but it's a separate school system. Been in the same school now for 18 or 19 years. He finished Indiana University, took the job in that school when it opened, and he's been their only music teacher. Loves it, he also sings professionally and – beautiful voice - he's also a bass player, musician, has no children, and is not married. My youngest son, Joe, was named after my uh...

Mary Lee: Two Brothers.

Harry: Two brothers, his name is Joseph Bernard, lives in Columbus, Ohio. He has a degree from Indiana in English education, with no certification to teach. His only degree like that, he's a good salesman, he talked them into letting him graduate, but he was going

to be an English teacher and decided he didn't want to teach. He worked for child support in Indiana for a long time, became the director of that program, and then worked for a consultant firm in that same area and is doing that now in Columbus. He's married, and has - they have two children. Joey is... nine?

Mary Lee: Eight.

Harry: He does, he just looks like he's nine. He just won a swimming medal or something. But, and Francesca then is... six?

Mary Lee: 10.

Harry: 10, oh, 10. She's the oldest. I should have done that the other way and then I would have been closer to being right. They have two children. So all of our children are doing great.

Jan: Do they feel any - do they have an Asheville connection or connection with their grandparents?

Harry: They had close connection with their grandparents. They called my father grandpa, and her father granddaddy, but they didn't have as much time with him, really, because he was in Colorado most of the time when they were older-

Mary Lee: All the time.

Harry: - when they were growing up. He did see them a couple times a year would be the most. But they certainly know enough about him. They also, I think all of our children claim what little bit of Jewish blood is left in them. They treasure that connection, that feeling of belonging to that community. So they are certainly up-to-date on their heritage.

Jan: Did you all travel as a family to Colorado to see your dad?

Harry: Yes.

Mary Lee: Every year they didn't come see us we went to see them.

Harry: Yeah.

Jan: So it wasn't like your father left in order to leave the family and get away from them

Harry: Oh, no. Oh, no.

Jan: He was very involved in your lives even after –

Harry: Oh, yes, sent Christmas presents, we talked on the telephone. Actually, I don't know that I'm doing much better with my grandchildren. They are scattered out all over the place. We go all we can, but still, there are none of my grandchildren who aren't happy to see me when we get there. I think that was the case with my father.

Sharon: Was your family musical when you were growing up?

Harry: I wonder sometimes whether – I am not even sure I'm musical. I have five degrees in music, but it was something that I just loved, and wasn't particularly good at, but I don't know anyone more stubborn than I am in terms of pursuing it. I still practice every day, and I still think I'm going to learn to play some day. But I really think in terms of my profession, what I want to do is let other people have that same love and I don't know, I think you can feel it a little bit if you've had that experience. There's something you feel inside you when you're making music that listening to it doesn't quite do. And doing it with people live, even not as well, is better than hearing it done perfectly by the New York Philharmonic. I like both, I subscribe to the symphony, been on the boards of symphonies. But in any case, I know I had an Uncle Sam, I mean an Uncle Lou, who played violin some, I don't know to what extent.

Jan: And where was he?

Harry: He was in, uh-

Mary Lee: Atlantic City.

Harry: Atlantic City when he died. All of them, of course, were buried in Philadelphia.

Jan: This was your father's brother.

Harry: Yes, who I didn't meet, again, until I was 45, I guess.

Sharon: Did you have some search for your father's family at some point?

Harry: I think there was a mellowing as people got older. I remember my uncle Al, the only one in his family they remember when I was a child. He lived in Texas, worked at the Pepsi Cola – no - Dr. Pepper company.

Sharon: Your father's brother.

Harry: Yes. Just saw him a couple of times. He was the youngest. I remember him coming to the house. Uncle Sam, I don't –

Mary Lee: Tell them about living in Philadelphia.

Harry: Oh, yeah, I should say this. Along about, what year, about '52, or something like that, '53?

Mary Lee: you were in 10th grade.

Harry: Okay. When I was in the 10th grade, I had to figure that out, I have to factor in the flunkin's. But anyway I was in the 10th grade my father got the urge, because the family was more accepting, he said let's move back to Philadelphia. And my mother, for the only time in her life said “okay,” and we moved to Philadelphia. He went there and got a job managing a Carl's Shoe Store. We lived in Germantown. We all moved there right after Christmas. We were going to go a little earlier, but my sister had an appendix operation unexpectedly, and so it was delayed a little bit, my father went a little early, got an apartment there for us. But we lived there for about six months. And then during that time

we did have some contact with the family. My grandfather was no longer living. My grandmother could only speak Yiddish, so I didn't get to have long conversations with her. But I did at least get to meet her, and met more of the family there. But it was just that short period of time. I was crushed, because I was madly in love with Mary Lee and thought I would never see her again. Because Philadelphia to me was like going to China. I couldn't conceive of being anywhere out of North Carolina, like my mother. So there was some acquaintance there, the family gatherings, so many people I wasn't sure who was who.

But later on I had an uncle Sam who moved to Indianapolis, and he had a son- a daughter who she and her husband moved there, and he was just kind of moving to wherever they lived, something I'm not ever going to do. But anyway, when Nancy got married, her first marriage, they came to the wedding, because that's what Jewish people do, they come to the wedding. And we were at the house, visited, and I thought we would have a relationship, and I'm not sure we have ever gotten them to come back to the house. Did we?

Mary Lee: No.

Harry: That would have been a opportunity, I should have pursued it, and I kick myself for not. Because if I could have, because he was very nice, we had good fun visiting. He just didn't feel a real connection, I guess, or maybe not social.

Mary Lee: But he was funny, too.

Harry: But he was funny, entertaining like my father. We had a great time that day, and I said boy, we've got to get to know uncle Sam, and it didn't happen. But I could have asked him about his father. Surely he knew what his daddy did for a living. And surely

my daddy knew, and I never asked him. Isn't that awful? That's why I am writing it down. Because my grandchildren, or my children aren't going to think to ask, so I'm going to tell them anyway.

Jan: Well, they're also going to be able to have access to the material on the tape too. Do you have anything else to ask? Maybe a little bit more about your memories of some of the other businesses downtown, just in general. You talked about that it was busy on Saturdays, and you named Cress's, where you worked, and Finkelstein's, but -

Harry: I worked for Bon Marche, for Lipinsky's.

Jan: What did you do there?

Harry: I was a stock person, and kind of what I did most of those places, putting the tags on the clothing, and bringing it in. Things like that.

Jan: How old were you then?

Harry: I was in high school. I was just always looking for a job. And then I guess the job I had the longest during that time was at J. C. Penny's. I worked in the boy's clothing there, and actually sold, and I really enjoyed that, and Joe did the same thing, and my brother Barney did, we were all working up there. My father was working in the shoe store there for a while. At Penny's. So it was like a family thing. Dave and I can't remember Dave's last name, but the manager of that boy's clothing store, when he would see Mr. Alger, he was the manager, coming, he would go over to a table and he would just mess it up, and he would say to me, Harry get over there and straighten it up, it's a mess. And I would go start putting it back in order and Mr. Alger - would walk by. Because if Mr. Alger walked by and you weren't busy he would send you home. So Dave really looked after us, and I appreciate that. Dave later on left Penny's and opened his

own store here in Charlotte, I never knew what happened to that. But one of the memories of people that helped me and that was even while I was in college I would work when I came home in the summer and vacation times.

Sharon: Where was Bon Marche when you worked in it?

Harry: It was on Haywood Street, up on the right, I can't say exactly where, but kind of –

Jan: Across from Winner's. Was it across from Winner's?

Mary Lee: Penny's was across from Winner's. Wasn't it?

Harry: Well, Penny's was-

Mary Lee: Penny's was there too.

Harry: Yeah. The Penny's, of course, changed sides.

Jan: Oh, that's right. Well Penny's-

Harry: Well maybe Bon Marche was on the other side. I think-

Mary Lee: No. Penny's, you went up and there was Woolworth's, there was something else, and Bon Marche, and something else and Penny's. It was on the corner.

Harry: Okay. Well, I though I remembered it-

Mary Lee: While we lived there. It all moved.

Harry: We went back to Penny's, although that was the same Penny's, wasn't it, that had been turned into a hotel?

Mary Lee: No, Ivy's.

Jan: That was ivy's –

Harry: Oh, oh, that was Ivy's. Did I? Oh, I never worked for Ivy's, but there's a story about Ivy's. You know I told you about my daddy's invention, daddy, in his lack of management for money, he got about \$500 one time, all at one time. I mean that was like

becoming a millionaire all of a sudden for our family, he took us up to Ivy's, which was probably the most expensive place to buy things, and bought us - outfitted the three boys in the nicest clothes - I had a sport coat, pants and a tie, I had everything, each of us did, which we're going to outgrow in six months. But I sure he spent almost all of that money right there, because he wanted to see his boys dressed up. And I mean, uou know, looking back on it, I don't know that wasn't the best money he ever spent. But even then I knew he shouldn't be doing it. That's why he couldn't have money, because if he had any-

Mary Lee: He spent it.

Harry: -he would spend it, not only on himself, but on the family.

Jan: So it was sort of a generous thing.

Harry: Yeah, very, very Generous.

Mary Lee: He should have been a rich person.

Harry: Yeah, I don't know anybody that would have enjoyed being rich more than him.

If someone gave me a billion dollars tomorrow I think I would live right in this house and do – I don't have any wants. My father always did. He would – I hope I would give it away if that happens.

Sharon: When you worked at Bon Marche, did you know the Lipinsky's?

Harry: Just knew their names, I didn't really–

Sharon: See them on the-

Harry: No. I probably would have known who they were if they walked by, yeah, I think, I think I maybe knew 'em that well. But, you know, I was just a part-time kid in the big operation.

Sharon: Well, I didn't know if they walked around the store, and you would see 'em.

Harry: I'm not sure if Mr. Algary would have known my name at Penny's, but he would have sent me home because I wasn't busy. The way Penny's operated, the manager managed the store, and he paid his bills, and he paid the people who worked for him, and whatever was left was his salary. So if I wasn't - if he didn't need me it was coming right out of his pocket, so he was not interested in having me around. He never sent me home though because Dave saw to that.

Jan: Did you know who Harry Winner was?

Harry: The Harry W-? Oh no, but I'll tell you another person, Harry-

Mary Lee: The Cadillac.

Sharon: The Bloombergs.

Harry: The Bloombergs. Yeah, the Bloombergs were close to the family.

Jan: And how was that?

Harry: I don't know precisely how, but they have been at our house, Sandy particularly.

And uh-

Jan: Sigmund?

Harry: Yeah, Sigmund, yeah.

Jan: He sang.

Harry: Okay, and I don't know-

Mary Lee: Wasn't there a, Harry Bloomberg-

Harry: Yeah, Harry was the one who had a Cadillac.

Jan: That was his younger brother.

Harry: -his younger brother, but it was Sigmund I guess that came to our house, I remember being there. Harry was always a friend of the family. We would have had a car if it was up to Harry, Harry would have given us a car-

Mary Lee: According to your mama.

Harry: Well, he did give her one, one time. They knew the family and were very supportive.

Jan: Did your father ever work for him?

Harry: No. That would have been out of his bailiwick, selling cars I don't think he could have done-

Mary Lee: 'Cause he never had one.

Harry: -because he never had one. He did all kinds of other kind of jobs. Drove a taxi in Philadelphia before –

Jan: What year was your father born?

Harry: That's always been a kind of debate. I kind of think around 1902, 3, he says 5.

Jan: I he was actually the same age as Sigmund, so maybe they did theater things together.

Harry: Oh, did he do theater? He could have.

Jan: He did a lot of things.

Harry: Daddy was always - I don't know whether you remember him much, but sometimes he had a beard, sometimes he had a mustache, because he was always in a play. One of the things, he and Gene, they used to tease each other. One time daddy decided - he put on his nose, mustache, glasses things, going to wear it all day. And Gene came over, he saw Gene coming, he put it on. Gene paid no attention to it, Maurice, how

you doing today, and this went on the whole visit and really got daddy's goat. He was acting like it didn't change your appearance at all. But they had fun together.

Sharon: What do you remember about Sigmund Bloomberg?

Harry: I just remember the name, and I remember him being at our house. I remember Harry because of the Cadillac, the greatest thing that could happen to anybody. I would hate him to know I have a Lincoln town car. But Harry, he was just - kind of to me a famous person, but to mother and dad, they were always friends. And in fact, in mother's last years, she had the impression that Harry had some kind of a house that he wanted her to manage, and I even put her in the car, she knew where it was and I said show it to me. We drove all over Asheville, she couldn't find it. But when we got back, then she knew where it was again. But anyway, she just always had Harry in her thoughts.