

# Transcript – Mary Schochet Oral History

A. My name is Mary Schochet, I was born in Richmond, Virginia, October 3, in the 1900s.

Q. And where was your family from?

A. My father was from Austria. My mother was from Austria-Poland, and they both came here as children and became citizens very early, very bright people, but very young when I was born.

Q. And how did you get to Asheville, North Carolina?

A. We got to Asheville, North Carolina, through my marriage.

Q. How did you meet your husband?

A. I met my husband at the Bethel Hall, USO dance during World War II.

Q. In Richmond?

A. In Richmond, Virginia.

Q. Then what happened?

A. Then what happened, we wrote, and he came to see me, and then on the following Christmas he invited me to come to Columbus, Ohio, where he was stationed at the Army Depot in Columbus. He was at that time a second lieutenant. I went to Columbus to visit an aunt, and during that time we had a wonderful time with my aunt, and I became engaged. My father said to me, are you very sure? This is awfully quick. I said no, it isn't quick, I said I know it's good when I see it. And so we were married on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944, and we had been married 61 years when he passed away.

Q. That's great. And where did you live after you got married?

A. We lived in Columbus in a brand-new apartment development, very similar to the local Edgewood Knoll apartments, and nobody had lived in my apartment. We had – not borrowed furniture, we rented furniture from one of the furniture stores in Columbus. And actually, we lived there for two years after thinking every week he was going to go overseas, but it just so happened that he was an Army – he became first lieutenant not long after he got there, and he was in charge of two connecting supply depot units. And the people who worked under him were civilians, and this was the first office that really had rapport with the civilians. So obviously that is why we did not go overseas. We, meaning my husband of course.

Q. So then when was it that you came to Asheville?

A. Well, I don't really quite remember the year, but we came to Asheville when he came out of the service. We took a month and-a-half vacation in Florida after his – trip down the east coast. I don't remember the year that we got here, but we got here in the late 1940s, and my husband opened a business and I was involved in his business.

Q. Was that the first time you came to Asheville, or had you been here –

A. No, we came here on our honeymoon. We went to New York City for a long weekend, and then the next weekend we came to Asheville. He had 10 days leave for his wedding, and that's what we did.

Q. So what was it like the first time you saw it? What did you think?

A. Asheville?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I thought it was a charming city, and Sidney had a great family. I was met with an orchid, given to me by Sidney's Aunt Shirley Bloomberg, gorgeous flowers, and I felt very welcome to the family. The greatest thing, I have to tell you this. The greatest thing is when you met Colordora, and Coladora was my mother-in-law's housekeeper, and the reason she was called Colordora is because we had an aunt Dora, and this made a differential. Which Dora were we talking about. When I first met Colordora she was just a character. She invited me into the kitchen. I sat there visiting with her and the first thing she said to me was I'm glad you're here. You know ???, I said really? She said yeah, and I had never noticed, but she was squinting with one eye. And that was Colordora, she was really a pistol.

Q. What was that, that she said to you?

A. ??? means I have one eye.

Q. In what language?

A. In Yiddish.

Q. What did she mean by that?

A. She just wanted me to know she was part of the family.

Q. And how long had she worked there?

A. She had worked there since Sidney was a baby. So she wasn't ???, she was up there. But she was a great lady.

Q. Where did they live?

A. They lived on College Park Place, which at that time was across the street from the only junior high school at north Asheville, and although it was central Asheville, but all the kids from the northern part of the city went to that junior high school.

Q. What was it called?

A. It was called David Miller, and they lived on College Park Place, right across the street from there.

Q. Then when you came back to live in Asheville where did you live?

A. We came back to live in Asheville we lived on College Park Place, which was on the corner. My mother-in-law's house was in the middle of the block, but we had a corner apartment house, a little apartment house, lived there after our first son was born. He was about eight or nine months when we moved to Gracelyn Road.

Q. What was that neighborhood like, the central –

A. When I first moved there, working people, old families on one side and then my building, where I lived it was an apartment home, had been converted from a big house into apartments, and most of the young people were there.

Q. Was it a Jewish neighborhood – were there a lot of Jewish people in the neighborhood?

A. No. The only Jewish people in the neighborhood was around the corner on Oak Street, was Chandler's grocery.

Q. What was Chandler's like?

A. Chandler's was the meeting place of all the Jewish people in Western North Carolina, because they sold delicatessen and Jewish items, food items that people enjoyed.

Q. Like they had lox and –

A. Oh, yes, they had everything that was traditional.

Q. What were the Chandlers like?

A. The Chandlers were a wonderful family. In fact, Jack Chandler, which is about the second – third youngest of the Chandler children, was ??? they were together all the time.

Q. So was he married also –

A. Jack at that time – Cindy had gone to North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Jack had gone to State at Raleigh. And of course they were bitter rivals in college, but they were the best of friends. Then Jack got married and moved up north. He moved to Camden, New Jersey. He had his job up there after the service, and Sidney opened the Bootery. That was on Patton Avenue in downtown Asheville.

Q. And what kind of things did it sell?

A. Family shoe store.

Q. Did it have other things, like accessories?

A. Pocketbooks, not many other things, just the normal things a shoe store would carry. It was a big family shoe store, and we had customers from all over Western North Carolina, and I was very active in the business.

Q. What did you do?

A. Everything. Everything you do in the store. I helped with the bookkeeping, and I waited on customers, everything that was to be done, I did.

Q. Was it just the two of you who ran the store or were there other family people –

A. No, we had two or three help all the time. We were very busy at that time.

Q. Was anybody else from the family involved in it?

A. Not in that store, no. We opened the store next-door to my brother-in-law's business, it was a family business that had been there for many years, and they had Army-Navy supplies and blue jeans and all kinds of things associated with the service. After the war that wasn't necessary, so they went into western wear, different items that you would find in a department store.

Q. What was the name of the store?

A. That store was the Star store.

Q. Were there other members of the family who helped in that store besides just your brother-in-law?

A. My brother-in-law Gene and his sister Lillian, and at one time the mother was there. She would come in and be the cashier and help. They were very busy too at that time.

Q. Uncle Dave.

A. Oh, and then when his sister got married, she married a gentleman from Bynum, New Jersey, and he was an attorney, but was in service, and she met him when he was in service. And after they were married she conned him into coming to Asheville because she didn't want to move to Bynum, New Jersey. He did come, because he liked it very much, and he was a great guy. And he was involved in that particular family business, the Star store.

Q. So he gave up law?

A. He did. You know, he had had three or four years of service, and at that time if you don't have a law office, if you leave, you have to start all over again, so he just as well started all over again in Asheville with the family business. It was lucrative and they did well.

Q. So what was downtown like when you came here? What kind of stores were there?

A. Oh, there were four or five shoe stores, we were not the only ones. And they were moderate priced, and then there were a couple of very very expensive shoe stores, but they were up on Haywood Street. But on Patton Avenue we had Belk's, we had lots of businesses and lots of Jews owned businesses.

Q. What were the names of some of the businesses?

A. Well, there was Gross Jewelry Store on Patton Avenue – do you want just the Jewish names or all the names? The Charles store was directly next-door to us –

Q. What was that?

A. The Charles store was a big, low-priced department store, pretty big.

Q. Who owned that?

A. The Charles store was a department – one of these big fixtures that came from out of town.

Q. But didn't somebody Jewish manage it or something?

A. No, not the Charles store. And next to the Charles' store was the Holly Shop, which was another franchise business –

Q. Going towards Pack Square or Haywood?

A. Going towards Haywood. Towards Pack Square, next to the Star store was Tall-McCann Shoe Store, which was on the corner. And then on the other side was the Charles store and the Holly Shop, and then a movie house was there –

Q. What was the name of it?

A. The Paramount – I'm not sure about it.

Q. Was it the State?

A. I don't think so. It may – I don't know. That's so many years ago and I don't think I ever went into that movie. But I think they primarily showed cowboy pictures, that type of stories.

Q. Not your kind.

A. And then across the street from our business was a corner store that was like a cigar shop, and then next to that was Brooks Clothing, which was a franchise store. Then on the other side of that, that was the Leader, which was a big department store owned by Sidney's uncle, S. I. Bloomberg and Buster Bloomberg. And next to them was Ben Shost's store, the Hollywood Shop.

Q. What did he sell?

A. He sold ladies clothing. And then next to that was cleaner's, on the corner, which was 16 Patton Avenue, which was our future home when we had to leave the location we were in at the Bootery. Then down the next block on the corner was the Man's Store, which was owned by the Zagiers, and they had a very very beautiful big ???, and then, in that block there was Belk's, and that was a big department store, and that was a North Carolina chain. And next to Belk's was a jewelry store, Lee's jewelers.

Q. Who owned that?

A. Lee Lacman owned that.

Q. So that was a Jewish –

A. That was a Jewish store.

Q. Then next to Lee, between Lee and the movie house there was –

A. I don't remember the name of that. Between Lee and the movie was a little newspaper stand owned by E. C. Goldberg, and he was one of the wonderful characters in Asheville. He was a Jewish guy.

Q. What made him a character?

A. Because he knew everybody, he knew everything, and he had great stories, and everybody liked him. He was a very very nice guy.

Q. Was he funny? What were his stories like?

A. He never told me the stories, so I can't tell you what the stories were like, but they were all kind of stories, and always he had good things to say, and everybody liked E. C. In that same area was Field's, which was run by Joe Cooper, and a man's store, a very nice man's shop. And the next block was this big bank, I think it was the Citizen's, and next to the Citizen's was the S&W, the S&W cafeteria was the meeting place of all the people of Asheville, all times of their life. It was a wonderful meeting place. Everybody in downtown Asheville went to the S&W for lunch, and most of them brought their families back for dinner, and it was a buzz buzz buzz cafeteria, and a good cafeteria. We loved going to the S&W.

Q. What kind of food did they have?

A. That was there for many many years.

Q. Southern cooking?

A. No, just every kind of good food. It was a very very nice meeting place. Then beyond the S & W were the banks. There was Bank of Asheville, First Union, Bank of America, and then across the street –

Q. Stop for a minute. (recording pauses) We got to the block with the banks, and so – what banks there were.

A. At that point, across the street were Pritchard Park, and across the street were a number of Jewish merchants. There was Kerr Jewelers which was run by a Roth family. Around the corner from them was Fader's, which is on Haywood Street.

Q. What was Fader's?

A. Fader's was a cigar/cigarette/sundry kind of shop, and it was very very popular, because that particular corner, College and Haywood Street, was a very very busy corner.

Q. Did they have booths or tables or something?

A. No, it was not a very big place, but it was a meeting place, all newspapers and everything you would find of a Sunday shop. Cigars –

Q. Drinks? Everything was packaged, like you could get peanuts or things pre-packaged, drinks, snacks.

A. Right. Then you go up Haywood Street and you find the Bon Marche, you know, all the things you that you grew up and ???

Q. Was there anything else on Pritchard Park, on College Street?

A. Pritchard Park – on Haywood Street at Pritchard Park, Dora ???, our aunt Dora that I mentioned earlier, had a little hat shop, and then across the street from there was Lerner's, and in the middle of the block, somewhere there on Haywood Street was Worth's, which was uncle ???'s daughter, Madeline Sandman, and her husband, Dave Sandman, ran. They were family members and –

Q. What kind of store?

A. A ladies' dress shop, very nice. And then further down the street on Haywood Street you would find Harry's Cadillac-Pontiac place. He was our cousin, mom Bloomberg's cousin, mom Schochet's cousin, she was a Bloomberg.

Q. I noticed that a lot of the people were called by their initials, like S. I. And E. C. Goldberg, what was that about?

A. I have no idea what that was about. That's the way it happened, that was tradition.

Q. Just wondering if you knew any more about that.

A. I don't know, I have no idea about that.

Q. What were the customers like who came to your store?

A. The customers were just normal people, and they were very very nice people.

Q. Were they from all – where were they from?

A. From everywhere, Western North Carolina, not necessarily all from Asheville, but a lot were, but everywhere. When your doors are open you don't really know who's going to walk in. We've had some wonderful wonderful experiences in that store, and we met wonderful wonderful people. At one time I remember, Chief ??? from Cherokee would come in, and the store might be minimal busy, but somehow or other we always got to visit with the chief. But then he would get in the middle of a story, and in would walk an influx of people. It got to the point where we would say to him, chief, if you would just let us pay you to come in, we would just do fine. He always drew a crowd, and not necessarily because they knew he was there, it just happened that way.

Q. What kind of stories did he tell?

A. Oh, he, the chief had at one time been a boxer, and a very very big name. He was a big man, and a good man, and a great guy. We really liked chief ????. And the stories he told were about interesting things that happened in his life.

Q. Did he live in Asheville?

A. No, he lived in Cherokee. He was chief of the tribe of Cherokee. And he did not look like an Indian chief as you would think he would. He just looked like a normal American citizen from Asheville, North Carolina.

Q. Can you remember any funny or weird stories or happenings in that particular store, like anything memorable as far as a customer or incident or anything?

A. Oh, well I will never forget what your daddy told one lady when she came in to get point shoes for about the second time in the year. She was really quite annoyed with the daughter, because her foot had grown and she couldn't still wear point shoes. She was getting on your dad's nerves. He finally said to her, you know, you just have to be very very thankful that she can walk, and that she can dance is an added virtue, so let's just not complain too much about it, will you? And all I could do was sit there and applaud. That was really a wonderful thing to say.

Q. Was it around the time of the polio epidemic?

A. No, no, it wasn't. It really had no bearing on the fact that it was polio epidemic, it was just the fact the child couldn't help it that her feet were growing, and the mother shouldn't have made such a scene and in public, because the child was embarrassed, and I think your daddy saying that gave the child a little feeling of somebody's on my side. That was just something that stuck in my mind for a long time. We've had lots of incidents, some of them I must not talk about.

Q. Why? Why?

A. Well, I remember the time that Morris Mamlin, who was one of our clerks at one time, and a great guy, he was an actor, he was quite a character, and a little background on Morris is that we was born of a Jewish family in Philadelphia and had moved to Asheville after a broken marriage and couldn't decide where we wanted to go. Knew he wanted to go South and landed in Asheville. And he married a lady and subsequently they had four children, and he was a family man, but he was an actor and a character and quite a nice guy, and very active in the Baptist church, and the reason he joined the Baptist church is because he felt that he was asked to come into the synagogue, but he would have to pay x number of dollars, which he couldn't afford to do, and the Baptist church didn't require any money, so he went to the Baptist church.

Q. But his wife was Baptist.

A. His wife was Baptist, and they reared their four children as Baptists. And one day a customer came to the door, a probably customer came to the door, a person came to the door and said to him you know, I'd come in there and buy some shoes, but I know you're a Jew and I don't think I would like to do business with a Jew. And Morris looked at him and said tell me something, are you a Christian? And the guy said – he was taken aback and said I guess I am. And Morris said oh, no, you're not a Christian because I'm a Christian, and Christians don't talk like that and act like that, and you should never walk the streets and say things like that. And the man was so taken aback he ran. But that was a good story, because it was true, and Morris felt that way. And he was a Baptist, but he also was a Jew.

Q. And did you go to the Temple or the Synagogue?

A. We went to the Temple, we always joined – when I moved here we went to ???, but at one time we also belonged to the Synagogue, because, oh, for years we belonged to the Synagogue, because we supported things that were Jewish.

Q. Can we go back to the store for just a minute? Did you have any other people who worked for you that were Jewish?

A. Yes, at one time we had Nat ??? who was a young guy who came here after the war to go to Oteen, because he was a veteran. And he was from New York, and came in looking for a job because he had to stay at Oteen. He didn't live there, but he had to be there for treatment. It seemed that he had contracted a non-contagious disease similar TB, but it was due to his prior business. He was a saxophone player, and he was a young fellow, and we got friendly with him and he needed a job, so we gave him a job. He was in our store a couple of years, and he was quite a nice guy.

Q. Whatever happened to him?

A. He married a girl from Asheville and subsequently he was cured at Oteen, and he went back to New York with his wife.

Q. Was she Jewish?

A. No, but they were a nice couple. And we could tell you many many stories about the Bootery and the characters who worked for us, because they were great. But they were odd characters. Every person, by characters, I mean they weren't individual, but something unique about them. It was an interesting experience. And we also had a fire, when we were going out of business, because the bank was coming and they had to take our businesses and we had to move, period. So we bought the building across the street, at 60 Patton Avenue, I knew that we would go there, but the lease had not been up on the ??? establishment, and they were there for another year and-a-half, so we had to find a location to be for a year and-a-half, temporary deal. So both Gene in the Star store and Sydney at the Bootery had to leave. So the Bootery went up to Wall Street for a year and-a-half and Gene went over on College Street for about a year and-a-half, and when the lease was up on the cleaning establishment they refurbished, redecorated the corner store and it became the Star-Bootery because one side we had the Bootery and the other side we had the Star store. So we were there for many many years.

Q. You didn't finish telling us about the Jewish people who worked for you.

A. Oh, no, okay. When we were on the Bootery on Patton Avenue across the street, in the original store, we always hired young Jewish girls for cashiers. There was the Silver girl and the Roth girl, Charlotte, and there was the Rosen girl, Jeannette.

Q. Phil's sister?

A. Phil Rosen's sister, the youngest sister, the baby sister.

Q. Who was the Silver girl?

A. The Silver girl was Herman Silver's 's daughter. He was with the Wadopian and Lurie group in the shirt factory.

Q. Were these high school girls?

A. They were all high school, in high school.

Q. Who else do you remember? Were there other girls?

A. I'm trying to think. That's a long time ago, I can't think of any other Jewish kids, but they were nice. Oh, yes, I do remember that we did hire Rodney??? Weinberg. When we went out of town he worked for us a couple of times, just to be an extra while we were out of town. And he was in high school.

Q. How about people that weren't high school people who were Jewish. Didn't you have some other – Harry Miller?

A. Oh, Harry Miller was a Jewish fellow who was in the insurance business, and he didn't work on Saturdays because in the insurance business you just don't work on Saturday and Sunday, so Saturday – Harry was our Saturday help. He was a wonderful guy. He was a little fellow, and we got him when he was single, living with his mother. And then he married a little girl, a wonderful girl, Virginia, and subsequently they had a child. And Harry worked for us for years and years, always on Saturday.

Q. But was he in a concentration camp?

A. Oh, he came here – no, Harry, I don't think Harry was. His mother may have been, but they got out of Germany and came here.

Q. Do you know how they came here?

A. Somebody here, and I'm not sure which family, I don't want to give the wrong person's name, knew his mother was Jewish and his father was not. But when your mother is Jewish in Germany you're Jewish. But Harry basically didn't live Jewishly, but he was a very very good person. I really don't even know what his religion was. I'm sure he went to church with his wife Virginia because she was an avid church-goer.

Q. So among the Jewish shopkeepers, would you say you were friendlier with the Jewish shopkeepers –

A. We were friendly with everybody. Our family was a lot of the Jewish shopkeepers, but we were friendly with – the Pollocks had a shoe store in the next block, but we were friendly with the Pollock family, we didn't feel animosity toward anyone.

Q. Who were some of your best friends?

A. When I was growing up – first in Asheville? Well, I used to play cards with cousin Helen Bloomberg, who was Buster Bloomberg's wife, and Madeline Sandman, who was S. I. Bloomberg's daughter, and Marta Adler whose husband owned Adler's shop up on Pack Square, and Caroline Grand whose husband was a furrier, and we would play cards once a week, sometimes twice a week, whenever the notion struck us, at each other's homes, we would play canasta. That was the big thing back there. When I first moved here you either played canasta, or mahjong, and I didn't play mahjong, so I played canasta and bridge, those were my two favorites.

Q. Well, tell the story of how you learned to play bridge and why did you want to play bridge, and who you learned from.

A. I learned from a lady when I was just about 12 years old, and her husband was a traveling salesman. And I lived on an apartment house on – and she lived in an apartment house across the median from us. But she was a very nice lady and always lonely, so I always felt sorry for her, and she would invite me to come up and watch her make home brew, so while the home brew was cooking in the kitchen she and I would sit. And she taught me how to play bridge. We would deal out hands, and she would explain the game to me. And we would ??? for hours while she made home brew, we were playing bridge.

Q. What was her name?

A. Her name was Miss Armstrong, and I don't remember her first name because I always called her Miss Armstrong. She was a nice lady. I don't know whatever happened to her, but when we moved off of the boulevard I lost contact with her.

Q. How did you start playing bridge in Asheville?

A. I really don't remember quite. I know when I started playing duplicate bridge. I sort of played ??? bridge while Sid was in service. There's playing bridge and then there's playing bridge. You think you know how to play bridge until you get into the big leagues, and that's duplicate. But I really learned duplicate, and the fine parts of from – my elders, Mary Gottlieb, Sophie Kaplan, Julie Cooper, they are all elderly, wonderful, and marvelous teachers. They were my mentors and I can't say enough about them. They were great ladies.

Q. If they were all older, how is it that you – were you the only younger person who was playing bridge with them? A. No, I wouldn't say I was the only younger person playing bridge. I was one of the only people playing at that time.

Q. Who were these ladies? Who was Mary Gottlieb?

A. Mary Gottlieb was part of the Roccamora family, Mrs. Roccamora, Fran Roccamora and Mary Gottlieb were sisters. And Louis Gottlieb was involved in business with the Roccamora boys who had Asheville Showcase, and at that time Asheville Showcase was on Biltmore Avenue.

Q. I think it was on Broadway.

A. Broadway.

Q. Who was Julie Cooper?

A. Julie Cooper was the wife of Field's – Joe Cooper. Julie, Mary and Thelma Burkele was a lady who lived here at one time and played bridge, and I never had the honor of playing with her. She was one of the older ladies who was a smart bridge player. And if you involved in duplicate bridge you just don't go back to rough ??? bridge. But he had lots of fun, and part of my life growing up in Asheville, there was a segment of my life that was devoted to going to the sisterhood meetings and going to Hadassa in? Meetings and I was always an officer in Hadassa. I never was an officer in the Sisterhood, but I always went to their meetings and helped them all I could. And one of my close friends, Leola Rosenstein was sisterhood president, and a lot of our friends involved in an investment club which we had. And investment club consisted of a large group of Jewish women who were interested in stocks and bonds but left all the big buying to their husbands. But we were curious and interested enough to form this club, and we had, I think 12 or 15 members. I have to think of some of the ladies who were involved. Would you like to know their names?

Q. Sure.

A. We're talking about Helen Gumpert, Jodi Lichtenfeld, Joe Lichtenfeld's wife. I think Julianne??? Harry Winner's wife, Sylvia Finkelstein, who was Leo Finkelstein's wife. Jane Haber who was Richard Haber's wife.

Q. Was Leola in it?

A. I don't remember if Leola was in it.

Q. Was Evelyn Ness in it?

A. No, she had gone – I can't remember some of the other. I think Miriam Kell was in it, Lou's wife. And she was originally a Cooper. I hate to leave somebody off, I know I am.

Q. Were they mostly from the Temple, or not necessarily?

A. I don't think they were all from the Temple, although all the once I mentioned were from the Temple.

Q. Was Mrs. Frumpkin?

A. No. We would meet at each other's homes, and usually we would have a luncheon, and we would have a speaker from Merrill Lynch come and talk to us. And I'll never forget the one time I had it at my house and we were waiting for one of the brokers to come and speak to us, and all the women were in here visiting and talking and we looked up and here comes the broker in a little broken down car, and all of our cars sitting in the driveways are Cadillacs and Buicks and Chryslers, and they were pretty up-to-date, but here this man in this little broken down car is going to come and tell us what to buy. We had fun, and we made money, and we eventually broke up and split the money. And it was a fun thing while it happened, and it happened for several years, but that's a long long time ago, at least 25 years ago.

Q. And what changes did you see in downtown, in the store owners?

A. Downtown itself at one time was a hollow city, when the Asheville mall came about, the things that are new always attract people, and people rushed there to shop and buy, and downtown became a little on the hollow side, although we never worried too much about it. That's the way it was, that's the way it was. We saw all the wire fences go up around all the new buildings, all the construction that was coming downtown, and at that point there was some hope that maybe there's some good life left in the old ???, so we managed to keep afloat. Business didn't suffer too much, because it was pretty specialized, and people still were coming downtown, because crowds sometimes are not attracted to people, the traffic and all. And it was just easy for some people to shop downtown.

Q. What kind of stores were there after the mall came? What was left of downtown?

A. Pretty much what's there now. Except we didn't have all the restaurants. And eventually the theaters closed, because there were two theaters, one up on the square and one down in the middle of the block next to Belk's on Patton Avenue. And then the S&W closed and when the S&W closed that was a big blow to downtown, because it drew people from everywhere. It was very very good, the people enjoyed the atmosphere and the prices and the food and it was excellent.

Q. Was it owned by one family or –

A. No, I think it was a little chain, a small chain. Asheville wasn't a ghost city but it was slow, and then eventually with all the building, the BB&T building, the parking decks came up some of the life came back. Because when they were building it was very hard to park on the square where they were having all this activity over where the theater used to be, the library was.

Q. Why did they tear down that whole block in front, after your store, where Field's was and the Man's Store –

A. Why did they do it? I don't know, they tore a lot of it down. The Man's Store was left, and he eventually gave it to the city. The girls did, who inherited it, gave it to the city, and they just cleaned it off, because the banks owned it, and they wanted the parking.

Q. So what do you think about downtown now? You're the last of the original stores except for Asheville Showcase.

A. Asheville Showcase, of the jewelry stores, T. S. Morrison down on Lexington is one of the old stores –

Q. But the same people don't run it –

A. No.

Q. Morrison was Jewish?

A. No. But it was an older store, you're talking about Sluder Furniture was an older store, Morrison's is an older store. I mean, these stores are still there. What do I think of – what did you ask me?

Q. Well, the Jewish stores are sort of gone.

A. Well, actually most of the Jewish people were not involved in retailing anymore. Their children all had either left town or gone into professional life, done something else.

Q. Why do you think that was?

A. I think in a way smaller cities have that background of being a good place to grow up, but when you grow up they are bigger ventures than the bigger cities, and the children have careers, and they look to further their goals, so they go elsewhere. I think that happens in most small towns everywhere, all over.

Q. What changes do you see in the Jewish community?

A. Well, in the Jewish community the biggest change has been the influx of people from other areas of the country who have moved into town, and some of them have become very active. Some of them are still unaffiliated, but that's their business if that's how they want to live. I think it's up to all of us who want to see Judaism exist and become bigger instead of smaller, and families are bigger and there's no reason why we can't continue our heritage right here in this wonderful little town. It's not so little anymore, but compared to New York City it's little.

Q. So are you still involved with the Temple?

A. Well, my life still revolves around the Temple, but I'm not that active in anything much anymore except my hobby.

Q. Which is?

A. Which is bridge. Duplicate bridge.

Q. How long have you been a life master?

A. Since 1970.

Q. Well, actually, you didn't tell us how you got the Dancer's Place from the Star Bootery.

A. Oh, that's my daughter's street. She said to me when she got out of college that, mom, if we don't have a separate place for dancing somebody else is going to come in and have a separate place for dancing. And I said that's true, so we decided to take the space that we had a store we had used for years for reservation area for our stocks that we needed at the Bootery, on the corner. We took that space and converted it into a dancewear shop. That became Jan's baby for a couple of years until she decided retailing wasn't her thing. And mom took over. And it became my baby. I just love all the little babies.

Q. But how did you start selling dancewear to begin with?

A. To begin with, how we began dancewear was over in the old Bootery when it was at – across the street at 9 Patton, Beale Fletcher came to Sidney and said Sid, I'm having a problem. You know, my kids need pink dance shoes, and ballet shoes, and equipment, and Ivy's carries it, but they have a small department and their department is only allocated so much per month, and in September when dancing

school starts we just don't get equipment for months, and we need it, and we need it that month. We can't wait until December. And that's what was happening in Ivy's. One month they would get a little bit in, and another month they would get some more in. We need it all in one lump. They just don't do business like that. So why don't you put dancewear stuff in here? And Sidney said well, we're here, we may just as well put dancewear in. So we carried, for a long time we carried just the ballet shoes and tap shoes and point shoes, and then we slowly got into the equipment of leotards and tights. And then, when we had to go over to the place on Wall Street we got more into the garment part of leotards and skirts and costumes, and then from Wall Street we came over to the Star-Bootery and we were selling dancewear on one side and cowboy boots on the other side. And sometimes they didn't mix quite well. And Jan, my daughter, said oh, mom, you just need a separate store, this is what we should do. And when she got out of college, she was my inspiration, and she did 90 percent of all the planning and we got a Dancer's Place in spot, and that turned out to be fun. It's been my – between the Dancer's Place and bridge it keeps me busy, and I thank goodness for having both of them at this time when I need to be kept busy.

Q. When did the Bootery close, and the Star store?

A. The Bootery and Star store went out of business about 10 years ago when –

Q. 1995?

A. Yeah, about 1995. We just sold everything to a stock buyer and closed the doors, and that was hard, because closing the doors isn't so easy. You have all this equipment inside. And finally we just decided to give everything, all the fixtures and everything we didn't need to Elida Home, which we did. And we were happy that they could use it, and the Humphries were wonderful people, I think he was the head at the time. But they came in and helped us, did an awful lot with us, we gave them a lot of good stuff they could use, and they've used it. And then Sidney wanted me to give up the Dancer's Place, because he was free, but he didn't like to travel. He liked to stay at home, so I didn't see the percentage in not having a fun place to go to when I could, because I liked the Dancer's Place, I still like it. It's a fun place.

Q. What's your favorite part about it?

A. The little kids are my favorite part about it. I love making them feel like they're dreamboats, and they are. They are so cute. And that makes me feel young. I don't remember to feel old. I don't want to feel not worth anything, because worthless is an awful word.

Q. You have a story about this cute little girl one time –

A. Oh, that was over on Wall Street. I won't ever forget this. This mother comes in with this little girl, and she's not particularly a pretty little girl but she's a little girl, and all little girls have a certain charm. But this one didn't have much charm and much beauty, but she was a nice little girl. And her mother came in and said she's just starting dance class and we need a little equipment for her. I said what do we need? And we got her ballet shoes and a leotard and just dressed her up, got her looking so cute. She got a skirt on and went to the mirror and looked in the mirror and said oh, mother, have you ever seen anything so beautiful? Oh, that was – that got to me. That was just the cutest thing, and she was, she turned into a little beauty, because she was so happy and her ego just went up so much. That made my day.

Q. We're out of tape.

A. Good.