

Interviewed by Sharon Fahrer

BOBBIE SIEGAL: I am Bobbie Solomon Siegal. I was born May 25, 1942. And I live in Birmingham, Alabama now. I grew up in Asheville, North CarolinaBOBBIE

SHARON: And what did your parents do in Asheville?

BOBBIE: My dad went to war when he was 37 years old and had two children. So they had to sell the jewelry store that they had in Kingsport, Tennessee. And then he went to the Philippines; Mother moved back to Asheville to with her mother and father and her sisters and sisters-in-laws, during the last part of the war. I was 3 years old. Daddy came back, and was in the plumbing and supply business for awhile; he also was in the drugstore business with Ben Kline. He did some other things like that, but the War really kind of messed him, in terms of having one steady thing in Asheville.

SHARON Well, let's go back a little bit more: your mother's family: where were they from?

BOBBIE Originally, from Richmond, Virginia. My great-grandfather was born in 1857, in Richmond. My great-grandmother was Eva Whitlocke, and I don't know if she was born in Richmond or not, but my guess is yes, that she was. The family dates back, in this country, a long time.

SHARON Do you know where they came from before they came to America?

BOBBIE I know Solomon Lipinski was from Poland. I don't know where Eva Whitlocke was from.

SHARON Did your grandparents meet in Richmond, and then move to Asheville?

BOBBIE Great-grandparents?—I don't think so, because I remember reading that Solomon Lipinski lived in Tarboro, North Carolina for four years, and then moved to Asheville and lived in a boarding house. And started a business with his half-sister. Surely they must have. They must have married before they came.

SHARON So when did Solomon Lipinski come to Asheville?

BOBBIE Came to Tarboro in the 1880's?—earlier? Four years in Tarboro. Came to Asheville around 1880; he was married to Eva Whitlocke, from Richmond; and they lived in a boarding house, with his half-sister, Ellick.

SHARON She wasn't in the boarding house, actually. It was A. Whitlocke that was in the boarding house—the three of them. Although I didn't look for Eva Ellick. She could have been in there.

Now, Bobbi Whitlocke, would that have been a relative of your great-grandmother's?

BOBBIE INAUDIBLE ANSWER.

SHARON So when they came to Asheville, what did they do?

BOBBIE I had always heard my great-grandfather was a Polish merchant, that had one of those carts. But it is my understanding now, that he had a store, in the 1889, he started a store on Main Street, which is Biltmore Avenue now. And then in the 1911, moved to Patten Avenue, down from the Square; and then in 1923 moved to where Ivey's bought out the Bon Marche, on the corner of Battery Park and Haywood. And Mr. Grove built it for him, I do know that. Then they moved, after the Depression, Ivey's took over the Bon Marche location, and the Bon Marche built a new building, across the street on Haywood, on the right, cattie-corner to the Ivey's building.

SHARON So what was the name of the store, and what did they sell?

BOBBIE Bon Marche, and I have no idea—I asked mother, and she didn't either—how they came up with the name Bon Marche. I mean, you know, that is not exactly their typical Jewish merchant's name, for a store. But that's what it was. And they sold merchandise at first, mercantile things—hats, lingerie, whatever—and then, when it became a really big department store, they had lots of departments, millinery, lingerie, dresses, all kinds of departments—just a

typical department store in a small town in the South. Department stores in the small towns of the South were Jewishly-owned. I can name a bunch of them in Alabama. Just all over Alabama. In Birmingham: Pizitz Department Store, Loveman's, Blacks', Parisian—these were big department stores. None of them exist any longer as Jewish merchants. They have all been sold out. Either don't exist, or are—for instance, Parisians is now Saks. In Selma, Alabama, they had them—even in West Blockton—one of my husband's relatives had a small department store in West Blockton, Alabama. And it is a tiny mining town between Birmingham and Tuscaloosa. I know in Delson, Alabama there was a big department store called Blumberg's. And I know the family that owned it. I don't know if it exists any more or not, but just across the South, a whole lot of the Jews were merchants.

SHARON What kind of stories did you hear about your great-grandfather?

BOBBIE That he was very distinguished...I loved going into the Bon Marche, but—the one I remember was on the right side of Haywood going up from the Square. And that is the only one I knew. And you would walk into the door—and it was one of those electric doors, the first one in town—everybody loved going in there, especially me, as a little girl. And I moved there when I was 3 and lived there until I was 16. There was a big portrait of great-grandpa over the front doors—over those electric doors. And he had a white beard, and a very distinguished-looking—a very handsome man. And I always heard that he was a wonderful man. And my mother adored him. And apparently, she was his favorite. She was the oldest grandchild. She had _____ the most favorite.

SHARON Do you know if he was active in the Jewish community?

BOBBIE Yes. He was the founding member of Temple Beth Ha Tephila and helped bring the Rabbi there, and was its first president. And so yes, he was very active in that.

SHARON Do you know when that would be that he was the first president and founded?

BOBBIE Late 1800's or early 1900's.

SHARON And how many children did he have?

BOBBIE He had three. Morris, Jr., who was my grandfather, and my mother's father. Louis Jr., who played basketball at University of North Carolina. Tall fellow—6'3 or 4, and whom I think the auditorium was named after at UNC Asheville. Morris Sr. and Louis Sr. and Uncle Whitlocke, Sr.

SHARON And did your great-grandfather have any other relatives in Asheville?

BOBBIE His half-sister. Eva Ellick.

SHARON Do you know anything about her?

BOBBIE She married Morris Meyer, who opened the store on Main Street as well. But she died shortly after, a couple of years after. This was in the late 1880's.

SHARON Do you know how they were half-sister or how they were related at all?

BOBBIE I don't know nothing about that.

SHARON I wonder what the age difference was.

BOBBIE I don't know that either.

SHARON Do you know where your great-grandfather lived?

BOBBIE On Cumberland Avenue.

SHARON And what about your grandfather?

BOBBIE They lived all over the city, at different times. And my memory of my grand-father, and where he lived, was West Avon, in a big stone house, with seven bedrooms and five bathrooms, and all of us living there together, when I was three. All the women, because all the men were off to war. And they tell me—and I believe it—that if I didn't get my way with one person, that I would just go to the next. So apparently, I really was able to get my way. But I

think having that much attention really helped me, because, I have had a wonderful life. And I really think that part of it was that I had so many adults, looking after me.

SHARON How many brothers and sisters did your mother have?

BOBBIE She had two brothers, and two sisters. Morris, Jr.—we called him Junior. And he went into the business. He was an executive of the Bon Marche—the one I remember on the right of Haywood. And Stanley, who—Lipinski—who moved to Chicago, and married and had two children. Morris, Jr. had three. My Aunt Sally, who was born in 1916—the year of the flood—because they couldn't get to the hospital, she was born at home. And my Aunt Betty, who was the youngest, about 12 years younger than my mother. In fact I believe she is 82 I guess, now.

SHARON What was your grandfather's name?

BOBBIE Morris, Sr.

SHARON Now, of the three of your grand-father and his brothers, did they all go into business with your great-grandfather?

BOBBIE Yes. However, Louis had the store in Charlotte. So he did not live in Asheville the whole time. He did live in Asheville sometime, because I remember going into their home. It was up on the corner of the street that the Rifkins lived on. Right across from that house that looks like a Spanish house, with the balcony, that I thought looked like Humpty-Dumpty must have sat there. It is in Beaver Lake, right off of the main road—Midland. And this house was off of Midland too, sort of across the street from each other, but it was a cross street. I don't remember, but I remember going to their house.

SHARON Going back a little bit—you mentioned that Grove built the building for the Bon Marche, which was at the corner of Haywood Street and Page—

BOBBIE No. Haywood Street and Battery Park.

SHARON He built that for your grandfather? Sold him the building? Or rented him?

BOBBIE Yes. I don't know the details, but I do know that they tore down the Hill, and great-Grandpa wanted a store there, and must have been able to borrow the money, and Mr. Grove built it for him and Mr. Grove spoke and dedicated the building. They were friends. Grove and Lipinski. 1923.

SHARON OK. And what happened when the Depression came?

BOBBIE My great-grandfather was dead. He died two years after the new store opened, of a sudden illness, a heart attack. Then the Depression came in '29, and they lost the store—they went bankrupt is my understanding. Ivey's just came in and bought it. Ivey's was just out of another city in North Carolina.

SHARON And then you said they reopened?

BOBBIE They reopened a few years after, I guess—I am not sure when that store on the right side of Haywood was opened. I don't have the material on that. But they were able to borrow the money from the bank and open another store.

SHARON Now which of Solomon Lipinski's children was involved in that store?

BOBBIE All three of the sons.. Morris, Louis, and Whitlocke.

SHARON Can we have the names of the children of those other two sons?

BOBBIE Louis, Sr. had an adopted son, Louis, Jr. I didn't know that until my mother said that today. And then had—Clara was his wife—there were two Clara's. There was a Clara Thornton, who was the sister, and there was a Clara Lipinski, who was Louis' wife. Frank—Edwin—Jo Ann is one of them—that is mother's first cousin.

SHARON Was she adopted?

BOBBIE No. And I don't know who the third one was? I just know Louis Jr. and Jo Ann. Those are the two I know. And Whitlocke, he had three daughters, I know. And then a son, Whitlocke Jr.

All of these people had Juniors—they were Reform. LAUGHTER. They didn't mind doing that. Today, we don't do that much any more. Whitlocke died, I remember, of a brain tumor, when he was young. Whitlocke, Jr. And he was married to Nancy. And they changed their name to Lees.

SHARON Now, the Sr. changed his name?

BOBBIE Must have, because—OK, so there was Peggy—see, I didn't know these girls. These were all so much older than me. Except I did know the others, so I don't know why I didn't know—there was Peggy—mother said—honestly, I don't remember those girls.

SHARON So your grand-father—how long did they have the business, after they reopened Bon Marche?

BOBBIE Well, I know they had it when I went to college, because I bought all my wardrobe for college at the Bon Marche. I had to have dresses for Rush. And I remember going out to the store. We were living in Nashville, at the time. I moved to Nashville the middle of my sophomore year. I went to Lee Edwards for one semester. And we went back to Asheville for me to buy my wardrobe. So it was at least through the 1960. But I honestly don't remember. Let's see—Grandpa died—I don't know. But it was open for awhile after that.

SHARON And then did they open other stores?

BOBBIE Yes they did. Actually, they opened another store across the street. The Bon Marche store for homes. It was sort of a furniture store. I think it was in competition with Perlman's. But—'cause I think Perlman's was right over there too. So it was on the same side as Ivey's. I remember the store for homes. And they did have stores in other cities, yes, in several cities.

But again, those didn't work out. So I think it was just mainly the Bon Marche—the one I remember. Now I do remember this: Jan and I were talking about that—my sister Jan. We use to drive the elevator all the time. They had elevator-drivers. Women and men, who sat there on a little seat, and used a little—I don't know what it was, just a handle—and they would let us drive it all the time. And I would ALWAYS—I could never get it right on the floor—I would always have it either this much too high, or this much too low LAUGHING. At least I didn't go through to the basement, OR through the roof. I'm sure I tried it at some point. But this was way before the days of automatic elevators. And my skill, that I tried to develop, was to get it on the floor, evenly.

SHARON Did they have African-American sales-people? Do you remember?

BOBBIE I don't remember. I don't think so. I think they did though, on the elevators. I am not sure. That is a little unclear.

SHARON So what was it like growing up in Asheville?

BOBBIE I loved it. I loved Asheville. Now, looking back on it, and understanding how segregated it was, I have worked very hard in Birmingham on race relations, because I didn't stand up and do what I should have done, because I was unaware. Just like you know, you are just not exposed, and you are apathetic because you don't know. And I didn't realize that people were suffering, like they were suffering. And so, I loved everything but that, when I look back on it.

SHARON Looking back, what struck you the most?—about segregation?

BOBBIE That the worlds didn't—they just were so separate. I can't believe I lived through that, and didn't think about it, and didn't do something about it. It was so segregated, that, I never had black friends. And I think I missed something, terrible—not just for them, but for me as well, as a white person. And I sort of empathize, because I think that, you know, it is those of

us who stand by that are just as guilty as those who do bad things, because we let it happen.

That's the only negative I have, and I would have that about any place in the South, growing up.

Because I grew up in the '40's and the '50's.

SHARON Did you have African-American help at home?

BOBBIE A live-in house-keeper. She lived with us. Full-time. She had Thursdays off. It never occurred to me that she might have a family. Well she didn't, but a lot of those people did have families, and they didn't get to see them very much.

SHARON What else did you notice that they did?

BOBBIE Mostly they were house-keepers, or elevator-operators. And that's how you came into contact with African-Americans, at that time. It's very disturbing to me, when I look back on it. BUT, the good part of Asheville was that people were wonderful. It was a city where—small enough so that you mixed with everybody. It was not a stratified-class kind of place to live. I went to Ira P. Jones, except it was called Grace School then. And what I remember about that were the wooden steps, real tall steps that we had to go up every day. And it occurred to me afterwards, that that was a fire wait waiting to happen. My God, a fire trap. But luckily, there was no fire. I remember, I learned how to clog, or buck-dance, as part of my education; and even today, people love to watch me do that. I can clog, and VERY few Jews can. So everybody loves it when I do that. I remember breaking my foot, and having to go to Grace School on crutches, and that was VERY difficult to go up all those wooden steps on crutches. I think I was in about the 6th grade then, the last grade. I walked to school every day, and I loved that. It was walking up and down hills, but I loved it. It was just really special. I lived on Lake Shore Drive, so there was a way to cut through somebody's farm across the street—had chickens and all that kind of stuff, and grapes—they grew grapes. I remember. And I cut through their yard and went down a trail, and came out right at the bottom of the street that Grace was on, and

there was a church right there, up on the hill. And I remember walking around that church on occasions. I loved walking to school every day. It was just special, walking home, by myself, or with somebody. Something that MY children never were able to do. Well, or course, they were able to do it in high school, but instead we took three cars, two blocks. But that is another time and another place. I just loved it. I remember there was an orphanage in Asheville. And there was a girl by the name of Anna Crown, I think. And she was an orphan. And I felt so badly for her, but I remember befriending her, and how that did impact me, because that was something I was confronted with. So I understood that there were people who were much less fortunate than I. And I had another friend—and I remember her name, and I don't know if I want to say it or not, because she took me to her home one time. It was a farm in Beaver Dam. Poor—I mean so poor, and I think she was abused. And I think that is when—in grammar school was when I developed compassion and empathy. Because I was allowed to be friends with people who really were different. And I think that that stood me in good stead, when I just received an award, and I thought back about my life—where did I get my sense of compassion, my sense of community? And I had it always, as a little girl I had it. And I can look back, and find so many instances where diversity really mattered to me. When I was in Junior High, one of my best friends was Tommy Sanuck, who was a Native American Cherokee. And his uncle was the chief out at the village of Cherokee. And Tommy—actually, I had a crush on Tommy—but he didn't have a crush on me. But I just always befriended people who were diverse. I think I must—I like to think after I read some things about Solomon Lipinski, that I inherited some of his genes, because people and their beliefs are very important to me. All people.

SHARON What was your connection to the Jewish community? Did you go to Sunday School?

BOBBIE Yes, I did. We were pretty Reform. But we went to Sunday School. And in my class I think there were ten guys and three girls. And then it ended up being two, because one moved

away—Nancy—I have forgotten her name. Lynn Lackman and I were the only two Jewish girls in my class. And I was in class with Dennis Winner, Paul Withgan(?), Michael Love, Michael Shulamson I think, Peter Feissman, Lowell Perlman—who am I leaving out? A number of guys. Nobody wanted to teach our class. Oh My God, we were the worst. Well, ten boys and two girls. I was good though. But those boys weren't. Nobody wanted us. We caused Rabbi Unger a great deal of trouble.

SHARON Who were some of your memorable Sunday School teachers?

BOBBIE Well, I guess Fred Cantor would be the most. I don't remember any of the rest, honestly. I guess we were so bad, we must have had four or five every year. We went through them.

SHARON Did you experience any anti-Semitism when you were growing up?

BOBBIE None. None whatsoever. One time, somebody made an anti-Semitic remark, but it was not at me. It was not directed at me. I don't remember what I did or said to counter it, but otherwise, never. The problem I had was, some of my dearest friends, who mostly were non-Jewish—in fact all of them were, except for a few. Since there weren't many of us—worried about my going to hell. And we had to work through that, and several of them had their ministers say “Bobbie will get into heaven, because God is not going to send her to hell.” So that sort of satisfied them, and it didn't bother me one way or the other, since I didn't believe in hell. However, I grew up saying the Lord's Prayer, not knowing that the Lord was Jesus. I thought it was GOD. So we automatically said it, because that was prayer in school. We had prayer in school in the South, and we always said the Lords Prayer and that was all. So I guess in that way—but it was not anti-Semitic. They asked me to—I remember reading a Jewish Psalm on the microphone from the office, that went into the rooms, in high school. I'm sure in

junior high and elementary school too, because until there was a ruling in the South, you did prayer in school.

SHARON Morning devotions.

BOBBIE But nobody ever directed us, or—I don't remember any anti-Semitism.

SHARON What was Downtown Asheville like, when you were growing up?

BOBBIE Well, there was Packs Square, with a movie theater, that we went to. And then there was another movie theater that we went to—maybe Patton Avenue? And I remember it cost 25 cents to go to the movies. And my hero was Roy Rogers, and the reason that he was my hero was because he had all those adopted children. He had Indian—Native American children, and all kinds of—see, this diversity thing was in my mind when I was a little kid. That is really amazing that I come up with that, that I have always been that way. Loved to go to the Bon Marche, and I would walk in there, and there would be Grandpa, greeting everybody at the door—he was the meter and greeter. And Mother says that was Solomon Lipinski's job as well. Solomon Lipinski knew EVERYBODY. And stood at the door. And Grandpa knew Everybody. Everybody knew Mr. Lipinski, or Mr. Morris. And Mother said when Grandpa and great-Grandfather went to New York on buying trips, everybody on the streets knew them both. Mother remembers going with Grandpa, my Grandpa Morris, and she was just amazed, because New York was a big city, but everybody knew who he was. So they were both very gregarious people, apparently. Um, I loved the Park, where we caught the bus. I took the bus every day to school, to David Miller. Pritchard Park. And so I went by bus all the time—to town, to school. And so, since I was right there, I would walk into the store. And I remember just going up some steps—I remember going into the store and turning left, and then there were these really steep steps up to the second floor, and some more really steep steps up to the third floor, and I think when I would take them, I would go through the department where they—the sewing

department, where they were fixing garments. So I got to know the sewing people very well.

And on the third floor, my Grandfather and Uncle Junie, and some of the other relatives had their offices—and I remember where they were. And I remember there was a service desk on the first floor, at the back. And I could always leave packages there, and I thought that was so neat, that I could buy something—now I wasn't a shopper—I'm not a shopper now—wasn't then—but when I did shop, I could always leave the package there. I thought that was great.

SHARON Did everybody in the store know you by name?

BOBBIE Yeah, they knew me LAUGHTER. Mr. Ashe had the shoe department on the third floor, right as you got off the elevator to the right. And he had one of those x-ray machines. Back then, they had the radiation—Jan and I, we saw our bones all the time. God knows why we don't have, haven't had more trouble than we have had, is amazing, because we have had our share of x-rays. I broke my arm when I was—a little girl, and riding up the sidewalk on my bicycle on Mt. Vernon. And I remember going to the store, and everybody thinking over it. And having tapioca pudding when I had to go into the hospital to have it reset, because it set wrong the first time. But the people in the store were wonderful.

SHARON Did other people in other stores know you?

BOBBIE No, I don't remember going—I remember Belk's was down near the one of the movie theaters. I don't think I ever stepped foot in Ivey's. I don't think I ever went to Winter's. I think I stuck to our own. I don't remember going to the other stores.

SHARON I mean like, say if you went into the S&S Cafeteria, or a soda fountain to get something to drink.

BOBBIE Yeah, we went to the S&W all the time. And I took gymnastics, and ballet, right above S&W. It was a dance studio right above it.

SHARON Who taught that?

BOBBIE Yeah, most people knew they family. They knew us. In Junior High, at David Millard, I was head cheer leader. And we won, the year I was head cheer leader, we won the State Championship. So that was very exciting. And the neat thing about it was, that I got to show some leadership, because the next day—whether it was at Raleigh or where it was—but we went for the State Championship, and came back; and we all went to school the next morning—and we got back around 2 in the morning, and the school—it was the first time they had won it in a long time or ever—and they wanted to cut school or something—I have forgotten exactly. But there was a situation--Mr. Leonard was the principal—a little round guy. And he said “Now you have got to control this crowd,” and it was a couple of hundred people. And I said “Well we’ve got to do something,” because they want to go tear up the town. And so he said “Why don’t you lead them up to Pritchard Park, and then come back.” That’s what we did. We marched ourselves up by City Hall to Pritchard Park, and we yelled and screamed; and then we marched back to school, and went to class. So that was my real attempt at leadership, and it worked, so I was very proud of that.

SHARON What did you win this State Championship for?

BOBBIE Basketball. And my favorite teacher, my very favorite teacher, was Mrs. Clark. Although I had Miss Harris too. They both taught math. But Mrs. Clark—everybody was scared to death of her but me. I adored her, absolutely. And we use to go over—my home group, my crowd, use to go over to some teacher’s house-not Mrs. Clark’s—but we use to go and spend time at one of the teacher’s homes.

SHARON How big was your junior high school class?

BOBBIE This was David Miller. I don’t remember. But it was a couple of hundred I’m sure. And then at Lee Edwards, we were joined by West Asheville. And that was wonderful.

SHARON But you only went there one semester?

BOBBIE One semester, but it was a great semester. And I was just sick I had to leave. Because there were clubs, called Boosters and Cheerios. And my best friend, Pat Smith, who I am still very close to, and I saw two weeks ago in New York City—she and I—they weren't suppose to let anybody know which one picked you—but we both knew that we would get invited to both of them, so we called each other. Said "What are we going to do?" And my sister had gone to Boosters, so I said, "OK, I'm going to Boosters," and so Patricia said "OK." So we both went to Boosters. But that was kind of _____.

SHARON So what kind of club was that? What did you do?

BOBBIE You know, well, sort of like a Pep club I guess, Boosters. The other one was named Cheerios?

SHARON I didn't go to Asheville High. But they did have Seminets, Jaycettes—probably different clubs.

BOBBIE But anyhow, so I loved the high school for the little time I was there.

SHARON So do you remember like things about what your parents did? Who their friends were?

BOBBIE I do, yes, I do. I remember Mother was president of Council of Jewish Women for 3 years, at one point. And I remember Rose and Reuben Fran, very well. Because I must have gone with Daddy for breakfast, to their house. My mother slept late all the time. And the Sternbergs—Joe and Annette, and the Klines—they had a daughter, but she was much older. They lived next door to the Lackmans. Have y'all done anything with Lynn Lackman?

SHARON No, I don't even know where she is.

BOBBIE She is in Baltimore. I could find out for you.

SHARON Now where did the Lackmans live?

BOBBIE They lived on the street—in Beaver Lake, on the street right behind the golf course. Right on the golf course, sort of. Maybe Windsor, I remember near Catherine Algary, and right behind Martha Osmond.

SHARON Where did the Grahams live?

BOBBIE Well, you know, you'll have to ask GeorgiBOBBIE I remember the house, but I don't remember where the house was. It was in Beaver Lake, for sure. In fact it was off of one of those streets right up from the lake. But I don't remember the name of the street.

SHARON So what struck you about the kinds of things they did? Parties?

BOBBIE No, well I do remember them going to the Sky Club a lot. And they had—played bridge a lot. I was the one that always had everybody at my house. Mother and Daddy were always the chaperones. For some reason, my house was the gathering place. I had a side porch. A lot of times we were out there; a lot of times we were inside.

SHARON What house was this?

BOBBIE 54 Lake Shore Drive. And this was in junior high and high school. And it was just a wonderful place to grow up. There was a mountain right behind us, and I would take my bicycle up there, and there was a girl that was a couple of years younger than me named Ann Snyder, who lived across the alley—we had an alley—and we would go up that mountain on our bicycles. And a lot of times we would go behind one of those big houses, which was right on the mountain side, and we would sit on a wall overlooking more mountains. But I remember playing hide and seek in that whole area. It was just a wonderful place to grow up. And I will go back to some them—that did have a profound effect on me. When I was a little girl—I must not have been but about 6—but on the street behind us—what is the name of that street?—it goes up to Mt. Vernon, but right behind Lake Shore Drive that sort of went parallel, up the mountain.

SHARON . Something like—not Briar Bridge, but it did start with a B I think.

BOBBIE Well, I've forgotten what it was, but there was a woman lived there, and she got me into her house with Bible study. Mother and Daddy were not too happy. She tried to convert me. She wanted me to come to Bible study. And I was a little confused. That was the only—wasn't anti-Semitic—it was just Bible study. So I didn't do that for long, when Mother and Daddy found out about, they told the woman to leave me alone.

SHARON Did you do a lot of things with your extended family, like holiday celebrations or birthdays?

BOBBIE Well, we celebrated Christmas. We did.

SHARON Did you have a Christmas tree?

BOBBIE Uh huh.

SHARON Did you relatives have Christmas trees?

BOBBIE Uh huh. Driving Miss Daisy—there you go, right there. Yeah.

SHARON Did your great-grandfather have a Christmas tree?

BOBBIE I have no idea. But I know a lot of the Jews in the South did. Because they were minorities. Most small Jewish towns, because they were such minorities—they—we celebrated Hanukkah—but we just also celebrated Christmas.

SHARON Meaning you exchanged presents also?

BOBBIE Yeah. I guess I shouldn't say this. Well my daughter-in-law coming around, I have to hide all the pictures of the Christmas tree from my daughter-in-law, the Rabbi. LAUGHTER. She knows about it.

SHARON Do you think it was mostly the Reform Jews that did that?

BOBBIE Yeah, not the conservative.

SHARON Did you have Thanksgiving with them?

BOBBIE Yeah. We did a lot at Mommy and Grandpa's house, because it was such a large house. So I do remember, you know, having—but the only other family that was there—not with the extended family—now with Louis and Whitlocke's families. We went to their houses on occasion, but it was not—but with Morris Jr., Julie and Joe Lipinski—my aunt who married him—she's from Savannah. And they had three children: Jeanne, Richard and Terry. Jean still lives there, and is married to Mike Moore. And Richard and Carol, who was a Perlman—related to Fred Perlman—and Terry—they live in Florida, in Tampa. And so it was the five of us—my sister and I, and the three cousins that lived there. The rest of them lived up in Chicago, Elizabethton in Tennessee, and New Rochelle, New York. So it was really a fairly small family group, when we did get together. They came to visit on occasion. But not all that much, 'cause they lived far away.

SHARON Well, Elizabethton wasn't that far away.

BOBBIE We went there more than they came to us. "Cause they had a houseboat on a lake and we liked that. And so we went there all the time.

SHARON But Whitlocke, Sr. and Louis Sr.—you didn't do a lot with them—do you think maybe the brothers didn't get along that well?

BOBBIE You know, it was a typical family problem, which is just, more normal than not, when you share a business.

SHARON They were a little too close?

BOBBIE But we were friendly with them, but we were not close to them. Yeah.

SHARON And part of them weren't Jewish? Was that—

BOBBIE The Lees, you know my Aunt Betty is good friends with those Lees girls. I think they are Jewish. Nancy wasn't, Nancy who married Whitlocke. But the others were, but they were my aunt's age, not my age. And I don't think they lived in Asheville when they had children.

The only ones that had children were Mary and Louis, Jr. And I did go and visit them quite often. I think you ought to erase the part about the Christmas tree. LAUGHTER

SHARON What did you do after school?

BOBBIE Went to Lord's Drugstore. Spent lots of times at Lord's Drugstore, because it was on the corner, right across from the Wachovia Bank. I go back a long way with Wachovia, 'cause I had a savings account in there. And every week, I didn't spend much of my allowance, and I saved it. And when we got married, at 21 years of age, I brought a lot of money, from my own, that I had saved. Not anybody else giving me money. That was that money I had put in that Wachovia Bank every—I remember walking there at least once a week. But we spent a lot of time at Lord's Drugstore, because they had a booth—booths. And a lot of my friends lived in the neighborhood.

SHARON So where was Lord's Drugstore?

BOBBIE Right on the corner of Merrimon and Graceland. Bob Long. A lot of good friends.

SHARON Did you know Bill Fishburn? He was friends with Peter Feissman. He was from West Asheville.

BOBBIE No, I taught a Bill Fishman here, but Fishburn... I remember being a little girl and going to Peter's house. It was a big house. And I've got pictures of me in pre-school. I went to Plunk for kindergarten. And the memory I have of Plunk, is giving a program and picking up my little chair and taking it and putting it down, and sitting in that for the program. I remember Plunk. I remember it was on Macon Avenue, it seems like. And then I went to Grace for the first grade, and I had a lot of substitute teachers that year. Miss Ali was suppose to be teaching us, but she never was there. So I ended up going to Country Day for my second and third grades.

SHARON At the Presbyterian Church on Graceland?

BOBBIE Right, on the corner. Then I went back in the fourth grade to Grace. Then I went to David Miller, a semester at Lee Edwards, and then the Peabody Demonstration School in Nashville, Tennessee, which was a private school. And it gave me a very good background, because I did very well in college

SHARON Why do you think your parents decided to move away from Asheville?

BOBBIE Daddy had the opportunity to open up this card and gift shop; and that was his home and where all his family lived. And we are still very close to them as well. In fact that is where Mother will be buried; that is where Daddy is buried, in Nashville. So we went back home, to his home. More opportunity, for him. I didn't want to leave, I can tell you that. It was a very difficult move. So I loved Asheville. I loved growing up in a small town. I loved the mountains. I loved everything about it; I wouldn't give anything for it, having grown up there.

SHARON Was your grandfather still alive when you moved?

BOBBIE Great-grandmother lived until she was 93. I think I was 16 when she died. She was the first death in the family, that I you know, was involved in. I was 18, I am pretty sure, when my grandfather died, and I was at Camp Osceola that summer. And I was assistant counselor, or something, so I had moved away by then. It's not Hendersonville—Brevard. It was Brevard. It is now Camp Judea. It was Osceola for years, and Parnell. There was a Jewish family that started it. It was a Jewish camp. And the interesting thing about that camp is, that there were a lot of Cubans, because this was 1959 and 1960, and they were getting out of there because of Castro. A lot of Cuban Jewish families. A lot of people from Miami came to Osceola. It was a Jewish Camp, like Blue Star, but much smaller.

SHARON So even though you moved away, you still came back to camp?

BOBBIE Yeah, and I came back, all the time, to Asheville. Even from Nashville. I took the bus by myself, and I came back all the time.

SHARON And who did you stay with?

BOBBIE Different friends, who I, you know, had contact with, throughout the years.

SHARON Oh, tell us about living on the Biltmore Estate.

BOBBIE OK. When I was in the 10th grade and my parents moved, I wanted to finish the semester out. So my best friend, Judy Christians' father, was the veterinarian for the cows on the Biltmore Estate. That was before it was anything like today. And they lived in a little log cabin right across from one of the restaurants. And I remember every day, her mother would have to take us to Lee Edwards, which wasn't very far, once you get to the gate. But she would have to take us to the gate. We would walk back down to the gate and call her, after school, and she would come and get us, because that was several miles up into the estate. And there are a couple of things I remember: One is, I am going to hear an opera star at the house. Her performance was outside. And her mother dropped us off. And then when it was over, we had to find the phone to come and get us, and that was not the time of cell phones, so we had to go into the caretaker's—

TAPE END.