

7:30am-8:00amA. I am Dorothy Zagier Fligel. I was born in July 1 of 1925.

A. I am Joan Zagier Rocamora. Born September 23, 1927.

Q. You are the older sister?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, this interview is not just about your father; it is about growing up in Asheville. So we are going to ask you a bunch of other questions before we get to the downtown part. But the first part is about your family history. Do you know where your family came from and how—when they came go Asheville?

A. My grandmother was born in Chicago—my grandmother on my mother's side. I don't know where my grandfather was born. He came to this country though, through Texas, with his brother, Uncle Max.

Q. Was that grandfather a Zagier?

A. A Breeman (?)The Breemans. We did not know the Zagier grandparents on that side. My father's parents were gone. He had a sister, Aunt Sally. And a brother, Uncle Bob. And another brother, Uncle Phil. All Zagiers.

Q. Now, was he the youngest or the oldest?

A. Baby. He would tell you he was the baby.

Q. Now I heard, from Marilyn Patton, that your father was the first Jewish baby born in Asheville.

A. Yes, and Aunt Frieda—that's what Aunt Frieda always told us. And it's too bad she's not alive, 'cause she's the one that could tell you a lot of stories.

Q. Now she's not really your aunt?

A. No, but we called her Aunt Frieda. She was my husband's aunt.

Q. So you don't really know how the Zagier's got to Asheville or when they came or anything?

A. No.

Q. Do you know when the Breeman's came or anything about the Breeman's?

A. They came—let's see, Mother went to college—they lived in Atlanta. And my Uncle Bill Breeman, he went to UN Chapel Hill College. They got married in 1923 or 24.

A. Mother must have come here in '21 or '22. They met in Asheville. Definitely.

Q. So again, we have no idea about the Zagier's—when they came, how they got here?

A. Well, Father was born here in 1895 or '96. So they were here before that.

Q. So he was the youngest, so the other brothers and sisters probably were not born in Asheville?

A. No they were not.

Q. And you don't know where they were from?

A. No.

Q. So you had some family—the Breeman's—who lived in Atlanta?

A. Yes.

Q. Were there relatives anywhere else in the South—on either side of the family? Did you have any Zagier relatives anywhere?

A. If we did, we didn't know it.

A. My father's brothers, none of them had children. But there were relations or cousins or –

A. Bessie and Jeanette are—

A. Yeah, but these were older, they were like my father's age.

Q. And where did they live?

A. They lived in Asheville, until they left to go to work. One cousin worked in New York at the Radio WOR. Was there a WOR radio station in New York? (yes) Jeanette worked there probably until retirement. She was Jeanette Finestein. She was a niece of my father's. His sister's.

Q. So she was from here and she moved to New York. And she was your father's generation—

A. Closer to his generation. Because it was a much older sister. And then she had sister-- Jeanette, named Bessie, Bessie Metz. And she left here and went I think to Ithaca, New York. I mean all these people are all gone. They do have children, but we are not in contact with them.

Q. I was trying to think, before that, like whether or not your grandparents had brothers and sisters throughout the South?

A. Not in the South. My grandmother had many brothers in Chicago. All in Chicago. On the Breeman side. My uncle Max, my grandfather's brother, lived in Atlanta.

A. He started the Breeman Steel Company that my Uncle Bill eventually had and sold. ????

Q. O.K. So there were some in Atlanta and some in Chicago?

A. The Breeman's.

Q. What did the Breeman's do when they came here?

A. Retire. My grandfather was retired from Atlanta. My father's family?—I have no idea.

A. Except for one brother, Uncle Bob, had a men's clothing store. He was a Zagier. On Biltmore Avenue. And this was during the time I guess, when my father was in the first world war. My father came home from the first world war, or shortly thereafter is when he opened the men's store.

Q. Do you know what the store was called?

A. The Man's Store.

Q. No the Uncle's store.

A. The only thing I know is they use to say \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. That was like a slogan? (yes) We can find that out because—in the city directory, look up his name and the time period and see what—

A. Robert D. Zagier.

Q. And we'll tell YOU the name of the store!

A. It was before our time.

Q. So do you know how your parents met?

A. They just met. Somewhere here in Asheville. I don't know exactly how they met, no.

Q. So, when you all were born, where did you live?

A. When I was born, my parents lived on Merrimon Avenue. It's up near Colon Avenue, on the other side of the street, there was like a duplex—it's still there—it's like a grey-looking building.

A. It's near Compliments to the Chef.

A. Yeah, that's where, when I was born. I don't know if they moved into the house—then they built a house on Minnie Avenue, when I was probably a year old or less. And of course that's where Joanne was. And then they lived there until probably 1957 or '58. '56. \_\_\_\_\_

Q. Did they then move in with you?

A. No, no, no. They had their own house. They got their house up on Windsor Road.

Q. It was kind of around the same time that you—

A. It was within 2 years.

Q. So how many people live in your household? Was it just the four of you? Did you take in any boarders or –

A. No, no, no. We did have a maid, a live-in servant.

Q. Was that a person that turned over a lot?

A. No she was there a long time—Estelle.

Q. So she was sort of part of your family?

A. Yeah. And Mary was there too, remember her?

A. I remember Estelle more.

Q. Well do you remember: Was there a Jewish neighborhood in Asheville?

A. Not really. Our family was a very reformed Jewish family. Very reformed. I mean we had many non-Jewish friends. And we didn't—we weren't just "Jewish" people. So, I don't know exactly what you call a Jewish neighborhood. There were 3 families that lived on our street at that time, but I wouldn't call that a Jewish neighborhood.

Q. Who else did live on your street?

A. There was the Goldsteins, Mildred Goldstein. Isadora—Izzie. And Ida.

A. They weren't there when we were first born. They came later.

A. The Gross's, Fannie Gross. I don't know when they moved there. The Chissicks.

A. But I mean this was not a Jewish neighborhood, so to speak.

Q. O.K. So you said that you were pretty reformed. So I guess your family didn't keep Kosher or anything?

A. No. A. No.

Q. And who made the decisions in the family, your mom or your dad?

A. Jointly, I guess, more or less.

A. Maybe Mother more, because Dad was always busy. You talking about us? Or overall?

Q. Family decisions.

A. We are talking about our parents, when we were growing up? Together.

Q. Well, these are some identity questions: Do you consider yourself a Southerner?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you think the Jews in the South differ from other Southerners?

A. Not necessarily.

Q. Do you think that Southern Jews differ from northern Jews?

A. I don't know. The accents. (laughter) People are people. I don't know if I am different.

Q. Did you all ever, when you were growing up, work—like outside the house? Or in your dad's business?

A. Worked—when I came home from college, I use to like to work in daddy's store at Christmas-time. It was a stint when I came home, because it was during the war. The Air Force had the Arcade building. I worked there just a really short time.

Q. What did you do?

A. I don't remember. Typing papers or something like that.

Q. Where did you go to college?

A. Ohio State.

Q. And did you ever work (other sister)?

A. Only worked at Christmas-time at the store. I never worked other than that.

Q. So, I guess—let's talk—do you—this is more about the community-life of your parents. Do you know what civic organization your parents or dad—

A. Dad was a member of Kiwanis. Shriner. Big in Kiwanis.

Q. Was your mom involved in organizations?

A. Asista (?) --something like that.

Q. O.K. Were there organizations that were restricted to Jews?

A. Sure, like the Rhododendron, like that. They were all restricted.

A. Well, back then, Junior League was restricted. And the Rhododendron. \_\_\_\_\_

That didn't bother us too much.

Q. Did you have Jewish organizations that you were involved with?

A. Well, the Sisterhood. We went to Sunday school. Over at a big stone house, a block over from Moffat.

Q. Chestnut and Cumberland?

A. Yeah.

Q. Well there was a sorority—remember they were talking about that sorority—were you in that?

A. \_\_\_\_\_ or something? No.

Q. Did you remember if you experienced or if your parents ever experienced any anti-Semitism? Maybe any incidents or anything anybody ever talked about?

A. Well, I mean it was like, we both went to St. Genevieve's and I mean we weren't invited to the Biltmore Parks Country Club. The parties or things like that. But I never seemed to—it didn't leave any powerful impression on our minds. Because we knew that—my father was a Jewish member way way back in the Asheville Country Club. I mean Daddy was one of the old old members, and yet when we first applied, we were turned down—

Q. You and your husband?

A. Yeah, in fact at that time, most, like Marilyn and Buddy were turned down. And then they came calling me and came to my house and begged us to please reconsider and would we join.

Q. Who did the begging?

A. The members. I mean, I think Manley White. Bill Hackney—he used to be with Sears Roebuck. But there were several of them that came and asked us to please reconsider.

Q. Was that in the '50's, the '60's?

A. No, we didn't join until it was in the '70's, late '70's.

Q. So they had that meeting that was in the '70's?

A. Yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ 1979 we were still at the old place. Say '75, '76, '77.

Q. When was your dad a member?

A. Way back.

Q. When they needed the money from the Depression?

A. Well, there were a lot of Jewish members at that time. The Lapinskis, Kromes, Ellenback, Alfred Hoss, who was Jewish and worked for my father, that lived here. They had Jewish members back then.

Q. So they didn't continue their membership?

A. They did not stop their membership. They continued in as members, but they did not let any other Jewish people in.

Q. So your Dad could be a member as long as he wanted?

A. Yeah, sure.

Q. But not letting new people in, not even you?

A. Right. I mean we grew up over there. "Cause when we were little, before we were married—we grew up there.

Q. And yet they wouldn't let you join, when you got married?

A. No.



Q. So, when you applied to join, when you were married, was it when you were first married, or in the '70's?

A. In the '70's.

Q. So, a lot of time had gone by?

A. Much time. For as long as I could ever remember, he was a member.

Q. Did people just stop applying because they were Jewish? What happened there?

A. I think you probably couldn't get in and knew not to apply. Yeah, after a certain period.

Q. I mean you grew up there--it would be natural that you would want to—

A. We were there, but we knew that we were not going to be members. It was just a given.

A. And we were invited there, like golf tournaments—I played in many guest golf tournaments.

Once we were married, we were no longer considered members. You could go, with the family, you know. But we weren't members at that point in time. And I was over there, many times, I was invited—we played golf over there.

Q. But your dad kept his membership the entire time?

A. Oh, yeah. Daddy was different. Daddy had his membership forever.

Q. So, you went to St. Genevieve's the whole time?

A. I just went through the whole grammar school. What was that? 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

A. 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> back then.

A. I went to David Miller one year and then I went to Lee Edwards.

Q. The same for you?

A. No. I went to 7<sup>th</sup> grade to David Miller; went a couple of years to Lee Edwards; and then they shipped me to Facifern (sp?), which was a boarding school in Hendersonville.

Q. What was it called?

A. Facifern?. (sp?)

Q. Were there other Jewish kids there?

A. Yes.

Q. From all over?

A. Yeah. I said they were the Jewish kids I don't even know. I don't remember.

Q. Now why did you go there?

A. Because my dad said I was going.

Q. What was it like?

A. It was fine. I mean, I got along with everybody. I had a good time. It was a girls' school.

If you go in the old way, by Five Points, I think Eagles Grocery Store is up there. It was real nice.

Q. Were you a boarder?

A. Yeah.

Q. And were there many people from Asheville there? Did you know people before you went?

A. I don't recall. I don't think so.

Q. Did you go for one or two years?

A. One year, graduated from there.

Q. You didn't really keep up with anybody that you were friendly with?

A. No. I kept up with this one girl—I don't keep up with anybody—I am pretty bad—but I kept up with this one girl for years and years and then all of a sudden it just kind of went by the wayside.

Q. Where did she live?

A. Down at Fayetteville.

Q. Was she from Fayetteville?

A. As far as I know. She didn't live here, just went to school at Facifern (sp?). She moved back to Fayetteville.

Q. Was she Jewish?

A. Uh, uh.

Q. So it kind of like being at St. Genevieve's, but being a boarder?

A. Well, we boarded at St Genevieves because mother and father would go away every winter for 6 weeks. We boarded at Genevieve's.

Q. But you didn't board all the time?

A. No, when they went out of town and weren't home. We were in the main building. The real old building, yeah. And the chapel. Everything was right there, at that time.

Q. The old building wasn't there when I was there. So you lived in the old building?

A. Yeah, upstairs. Above the chapel.

Q. It's a beautiful building. But, they said it was a fire trap. It was gorgeous. People didn't think about that in those days.

A. St. Gevy's use to have an old cabin camp too.

Q. Was it at St. Genevieve's or in Hendersonville?

A. It was on the way, like about where Fletcher—out that way. There was a camp. It was called Little Flower Camp.

Q. And it was a day camp?

A. No. It was a sleep-away. For 4 weeks.

Q. So were you there when Mildred Pollack—Evelyn—who is the one that got killed?

A. Maxine? She was later. Kenny's sister? That was after. It was a lot later.

Q. You had already said that there were blacks employed in your home. What about your father's business? And what did they do?

A. Yes. They were up there in a tinker shop. And a boarder who use to run errands and help—Harry—Barry. Then he finally had someone working back here on Members Lane.

A. Oh yeah. Mr. Davis. This guy is still around. I don't know his name. I think he is a preacher. He has worked in a lot of stores, like a salesman. But I don't know if that was after daddy left and Zachary's had taken it over. I don't think he worked for daddy.

Q. Did your Dad own property or have any tenants or businesses on the side?

A. No. But he owned the property The Man's Store stood on.

Q. But he didn't own like rental houses or anything?

A. No.

Q. So, the religious life of your family: (laughter) I can ask you specific questions: How would you describe the religious life of your family?

A. We knew we were Jewish. We went to Sunday school. I was confirmed. I was confirmed, I think, with Ann Goldblum. She just died. I don't know if Daddy was in that class or not. Fayla-Mae Robinson was in my class. Michael isn't here is he?—I'm trying to think who else...

A. In mine was Betty, Angel—

A. I think it was Betty Ann Goldblum—the three of us.

Q. Just 3 people?

A. It made sort of a confirmation class, 'cause there wasn't anybody else.

A. What's his name—Laurence Riciberg was in our class?

Q. Was that Buddy? Buddy's brother?

A. Just a minute, I may come up with somebody else. I mean there has got to be others.

A. There's got to be other girls. I guess Tango (?)—they were in my—but they weren't confirmed. They were Bar mitzvah.

Q. Well, do you think that the religious life of your family was different than your grandparents? Were they more observant, or—

A. They might have been a little bit more. Papa was active in the Temple. Papa Breeman, that is.

Q. I think he was the president.

A. Yes.

Q. But your father was too, wasn't he?

A. No.

Q. So, getting back to your, the Breeman side, they were just retired when they came to Asheville, didn't have any kind of business?

A. Grandfather had made money in the stock market, and still had some interest in the steel company in Atlanta, which his brother had at that time. Grandpa still had an interest too. Do you know who Ben Graham is? He is a guru of all investors.

Q. So where did they live when they came to Asheville?

A. Kenilworth. They had a beautiful home. Today that makes me sick when I look at that area. That use to be a very beautiful area, on Child's Avenue, use to be gorgeous. And Grandma's house was a big grey stucco Spanish-looking house on a corner lot. And it was gorgeous. I go out there and look at that today and get sick.

A. And the Pollacks lived across the street. And the Robinsons were living on Forrest Hill Drive. But the area where the Pollacks lived and my grandparents, that is pitifully-looking. I mean it hurts you to go and see it. My mother and daddy were married at—it as the Candleworth

Inn, it was called back in those days—it was a fine hotel—the Candleworth Inn, which became Appalachian Hall and is now condominiums. They were married there.

Q. What year were they married?

A. They got married in '23 or '24?—you were born in '25?

A. '23.

Q. So they were wealthy? That was a nice neighborhood?

A. I wouldn't call it a rich rich neighborhood. It was a very nice neighborhood. Jack Bloomberg had an apartment building over there.

Q. He didn't live there then. Then he lived up on Cornhill Place, when he was married.

A. Jack Bloomberg?

Q. When he was married. After his store burned in 1927 and his wife left—

A. See, I don't remember that. B.C.—

Q. They left when they were small.

A. No, I remember—they weren't that small, because I remember—Lois was here.

Q. Lois came back when she was 17.

A. Oh, I was going to say—I knew Lois when she came back.

Q. She came back because her mom died. And she was living with her mom in Buffalo. When her mom died, she got sent back here.

A. I know Lois met her husband Ted here. In Asheville.

Q. Has the Jewish community changed over the years?

A. What do you mean? Well there are a lot more Jewish people and families and young people here than there use to be. I mean there was a time when there wasn't hardly a Sunday school. I mean that's back.

Q. When we were growing up there was a lot.

A. Well, you can tell the change.

Q. But then it got little again in the '70's.

A. We were under Rabbi Unger. Do you remember Rabbi Unger?

A. Rabbi Jacobsen.

A. And then Rabbi Unger whenever he came. I mean we were a much more reformed congregation than we are today.

Q. Well, do you remember any of these things when you were growing up?—there were some Breeman's in Atlanta, right?

A. Right.

Q. Do you know what the Leo Frank was?

A. That's the reason Papa moved up here. He looked a lot like him, and they told him to get out of town...

Q. So this was your grandfather?

A. My mother's dad.

Q. And they told him you better get out of town, so he ended up in Asheville?

A. They came here for his health, actually.

Q. Did he have TB?

A. No. But he just wasn't, at that point, a well person.

Q. Do you know anything else? That was a little bit of an impact. The Klan, the Ku Klux Klan—did you ever see any of them or hear about them?

A. No. Well I mean we heard about them, but never had any problems or saw them.

Q. Did the Depression have anything—

A. We were here but too little to know anything about it.

A. But you know that 25 cents difference at the S & W?

A. Well, but that was, you know---

A. We were fortunate, in the fact that we did not...

Q. The rise of Hitler? You all weren't married at that time were you?

A. No.

Q. Do you remember if your parents were worried about it?

A. If they were, they never said too much about it in front of us. You know, when we were growing up, in our family, our parents didn't discuss anything bad with us. It was only the good things—we were sheltered, I guess you would say.

A. Well, Hitler—already, I was like—our second world war—I was like in college. I mean I know all the guys left college, and I came home. So it didn't affect us here, except for the people that you knew that had to go to service.

Q. Did you know a lot of people that went that came from here?

A. Not as many people I knew like when I was at college.

Q. Where did you go to college?

A. Brenau which is a little girls' school in Gainesville, Georgia.

Q. Did you go there because your parents wanted you to meet more Jewish people or how did you decide where to go to college?

A. There was a Jewish girl there, her name is Pat Daper , and Bernice Mitchell and—

Q. There were Jews in Gainesville.

A. Pat lived in Gainesville...



A. Well I went to Columbus because there was a cousin—not really a cousin of mine, but a cousin of Aunt Dea’s (?)from Buffalo, NY in that family. And they kept talking about how \_\_\_\_\_and to go away. And Chuck Golden. And so I went to Ohio State. And up there—well today even, there is a guy right now in Amostonville (sp?) that comes every summer that I dated when I was in college. But see, they all got called away to service.

Q. Did he know you lived here and look you up?

A. Yeah. He knew I lived here. He had come through here one time. And then when he started coming here in the summer he calls me. People call once in awhile.

Q. So what about the founding of Israel?—did –were your parents—

A. Our parents were not orthodox—they knew they were Jewish, they weren’t—I wouldn’t say they were not real temple-goers; and we weren’t brought up in real strict religious—we celebrated holidays, but we also celebrated Christmas. We were not brought up in any kind of strict manner at all.

Q. Did you graduate from Ohio State?

A. No. I went 2 years.

Q. And then you came back here. Why did you come back?

A. Well because of the war, everything turning around.

Q. Were you in college during the war too? Did you graduate from Brenau?

A. NOT AUDIBLE. I did come back to Asheville. I was going to go work as a social work, here. I got married instead.

Q. How did that happen?

A. Daddy sent me to Europe after I graduated. I came back, I had \_\_\_\_\_ and I decided to get married instead.

Q. Do you think maybe your daddy didn't want you to work?

A. No. He didn't care.

A. He wanted us to work. I use to work like during the war, I was a nurse—what do you call it? Nurses aide at the Old Mission Hospital. We did Red Cross stuff and that kind of thing.

Q. Were your friends home here in Asheville, or did they go to other places?

A. A lot of them still here.

Q. Now how did you meet your husband?

A. I met him here in Asheville on a blind date. Did you know Arnold Goodman? Arnold was a friend and he knew Sy. Sy came out of the service and got here to work for Pearlman's Furniture Store. And we went on a blind date, and I ended up getting married.

Q. So where was he from?

A. Oconosha, Wisconsin. His mother died before we were married. And his father passed away. He had some cousins. His sister lived there.

Q. Let's go to the topic of your dad's business. His brother had a store on Biltmore Avenue? Did he go to work in it? What happened?

A. Daddy was in the service, from college, Trinity. Then he came home after service and he opened his own store. Located where the main store was. 22 Patton Avenue.

Q. Who—from the very beginning, his store was always an upper end store? He did not—some have little stores and then get bigger—

A. Yes.

Q. Who were his competitors?

A. Cooper's. N. V. Moore. Fields Clothing was not quite the same.

Q. Who owned that?

A. Miriam Kells.

Q. Winners had a good men's department. And later Jay Presley. What about Kearn's?

A. That was John Carol's. That was women's. I'm trying to think when daddy was in business. I don't think he had too much competition. Barry Lewis had a store at one time out here, but maybe not at that time.

Q. Did your dad ever talk about business very much with y'all? Or you just worked and came home? He did have other Jewish people who worked for him?

A. There's a man named Alfred Haas, and he worked there. He was almost like a family member. And I don't know much about Uncle Alfred's background.

A. Marcus Stern worked there too. Married to Elsie Stern. They lived on Merrimon Avenue. In fact the same house that I am telling you, when I was born. They lived in that house. After. But he worked for Daddy. Al Diamond did work for Daddy. And Stan Smulin came in because—

Q. Where was Mr. Smulin from?

A. He came from Virginia someplace.

Q. They moved to Virginia.

A. Both of his girls. I don't know where Pat and Stan came here from. I think Washington—I don't remember.

Q. But they moved here specifically to work for the man's store?

A. Yeah.

Q. We saw him last year—did you go to our Loft Café (?) last year?

A. No.

A. Yeah, I did. It was very very nice.

Q. It was fun.

A. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Q. And Stan's mom and he came up and were talking to us.

A. They come here now in the summertime. They have a condo here. Off of Sarnis Road. I don't know the name of that place. Stan came here to work for Daddy.

Q. Who were most of his customers?

A. Everybody in Asheville.

Q. Have you heard stories that people would tell you then and even now? What are some stories?

A. Oh yes. I know a certain individual who would say "Look where this coat came from." And I would say "Well, it's kind of old." (laughter)

Q. What year did The Man's Store close?

A. Daddy retired in '62. He sold it to Hart Schaffner and Marx. It was called Zachary's.

Q. Not in '62. '72?

A. He died in '75. He sold that store in 1962 or 63.

Q. But I don't think they changed the name until the '70's until they moved to the Mall.

A. That's right. Then they called it Zachary's. Yeah. Stave Smoley (?), and when he left, Al Diamond (?). \_\_\_\_\_

Q. So that's a really good story there about someone opening your coat. But you are not going to tell us who it is though?

A. A lot of people are proud to show you that it came from The Man's Store. A lot of young man came to the store back from the war and did not have money and he dressed them. And he told them pay when they could.

Q. And some did and some didn't.

A. And that didn't bother Daddy. He wanted them, when they came home from service, to have a suit. Anybody.

Q. Now, when you were growing up, where did you go—I assume you went downtown to shop?

A. There was Silar-Shay, Ally's, Gilton's, like a John Carol. (spellings?)

Q. Where was that?

A. On the corner of Hayward Street. There's a furniture store there now. A side street.

Q. Walnut and Hayward. Kind of near Malaprops. ?

A. Yeah. On the other side, across the street.

A. Gene West?

Q. Where do you all remember it?

A. The place was at mother's shop. When we were young, Mother use to take us to Bon Marche and Ivey's.

Q. Your dad must have been friendly with Mr. Lipinski?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you have particular people who waited on you when you went to these places?

A. I know there was somebody in that shoe department—

A. Mr. Ash. I can remember that. In the shoe department of Bon Marche.

A. One of the Sheptowitz.

Q. Yeah, Dessie worked. She was human relations. She worked in the baby department, that's what it was.

A. Yeah.

Q. And were there—did you go to the S & W?

A. Oh yeah, every Thursday night. It was like a meeting. They use to have flukies (?) upstairs, when all the children would go upstairs, and the women or parents would stay downstairs to talk.

Q. So you all went upstairs?

A. Oh sure, cartoons.

Q. So who would your parents be with downstairs?

A. Shirley Bloomberg was one. \_\_\_ Cooper. And Erma Horowitz.

A. The only one I really remember was Shirley Bloomberg and Julie. Bennie Gross.

Q. Well, Finkie—was she friends with Finkie

A. Oh yeah. They had a Friday poker game. Did you hear about that?

Q. Was your mom part of that?

A. Yeah. We have pictures. These women, we would come home from school, and we were shushed into the kitchen. They were in the dining room, all around the dining room table, each one, somebody had a scarf on their head, somebody had their skirt turned around backward. It was a Friday literary club. Different little things they would do for good luck. We weren't allowed to speak; we had to cakewalk through and get out of the way. But they played every Friday or Wednesday.

Q. Did they play for money?

A. Yeah.

Q. How much money?

A. I don't remember. Chips and cards, oh they use to have a ball.

Q. Was it a luncheon thing or—

A. I can't remember if they had lunch or not. Marilyn has got a good memory for all that. And her memory is better than mine.

Q. But she is older than you, isn't she?

A. No Marilyn is a lot younger than I am.

Q. Yeah, she was pretty funny talking about all that.

A. Marilyn is about 5 or 6 years younger than I am. Marilyn remembers and can tell you all those stories. She used to get everything from Aunt Frieda too. In fact, we sat here one day, and Joanne \_\_\_\_\_ and we had lunch; and we were really stupid, because we wanted Aunt Frieda to tell us all about it. And we sat here and had lunch with Aunt Frieda—Joanne and Marilyn and myself—and I said at that time it was a darn shame that we didn't tape the conversation. But you think of those things later.

Q. Well, do you remember anything she told you?

A. No. She just told us—just asked her about old Asheville—you know, my family and their family, they were close friends. And since Frieda grew up the same time that Daddy did, so—

Q. Was Frieda friends with your dad?

A. I think so.

Q. Well, they were born on the same year.

A. And they were neighbors too.

Q. I love that—the social club.

A. The literary club.

Q. You all went to the S&W with your family, but when you were like in junior high or high school or something, did you go downtown and hang out?

A. No. I don't remember doing that.

Q. Did you just come home? Were their clubs?

A. Yeah, I think we belonged to some clubs at school. I don't remember that that much.

Q. But you didn't hang out at the soda shop downtown or—

A. Yeah, we went downtown to \_\_\_\_\_ next to the S&W. I forget the name of it.

Q. There was like a soda shop next to the S&W?

A. Yeah. There was another restaurant, but it was different. The second half of the S&W.

Q. Oh yeah—the little annex.

A. But I don't remember what it was called. The kids went there.

Q. What other kind of shops were down there that you remember?

A. Everything was downtown.

A. We didn't have a lot of great shops, to tell you the truth.

Q. Did you go someplace else to shop, did you go to New York on buying trips with your Dad or anything? Did he go to New York?

A. Yes, he went. My mom and he went. They left us.

Q. Where did they go for five weeks in the wintertime?

A. They use to go down to Florida a lot. Boca Raton, Florida. Went to Boca, \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. So did y'all feel a little abandoned?

A. Nah. (laughter)

Q. You probably were glad.

A. No.

Q. Did you go on family vacation?

A. No. Not really. We went to camp in the summer.

Q. But was your dad—

A. Dad was a workaholic. He took one big vacation a year, period.

Q. Without y'all.



A. Usually we were in school. Although in later years, we did go down with them to Florida.

Q. Did they own a place there?

A. No, they stayed at a hotel.

Q. Now were you real close to your mom?

A. Yeah.

Q. What was your relationship with her like? And what did she do? What did she do?—she wasn't working.

A. They played canasta, they played bridge, they played—they knitted. They had lunch down at the Vanderbilt Hotel. They went for massages. They stayed busy, believe me.

Q. But with kind of all those same women who were in the literary club? Like a bunch of buddies?

A. Yeah.

Q. And they always had something going on?

A. Right. Believe me, they stayed busy.

Q. Did you all ever want to like, leave Asheville and live somewhere else?

A. I never would stay here!

A. Use to think, you know, before you were married and stuff, you would think “God!—to live in Asheville the rest of your life would be the worst thing that could happen. Asheville was just a different little quiet little nothing, you know, back then. You know, back then, things weren't going on, interesting or anything. Today, it's different.

Q. Well, how do you think it is different?

A. Well you have a lot more interesting things for everybody that you can take part in if you want to.

A. You have a theater. You have \_\_\_\_\_.

A. And you have got art and you've got many restaurants. And there is just a lot more activity.

A. You can also get around now. You know, everybody has a car. To do a lot of things.

Q. So when you were growing up—

A. You took the street car, or bus. Don't you remember going up to the Square?

Q. No street car when I was born.

#### BIRTHDAY TALK

Q. Sue Rocamora is Joanne's middle child, oldest daughter. And Jane is her youngest child, youngest daughter. And Lisa Strauss is close friends of all of y'all. You grew up with Sylvia, didn't you? You never mentioned her.

A. Actually, Sylvia is older. We were friends later. Growing up we really were not close friends.

Q. We have a picture of Sylvia at girl scout camp with Wilma Dykeman. And Wilma was born in—Wilma was 14 in the picture. Wilma is 85.

A. I was a couple of years younger than she.

Q. I wish we had those questions.

A. We didn't go to the same kind of schools, so.... Our parents were close. We weren't that close. Different crowds, growing up.

Q. Were there other Jewish children at St. Genevieve's when you went there?

A. Yeah. The Pollacks. I don't remember anybody except—Marilyn was younger.

Q. Did you go to the Pollacks shoe store to buy shoes?

A. Oh sure, yeah.

Q. So you kind of shopped at other Jewish people's stores?

A. That was because that was what was here. It wasn't because it was a Jewish store—that had nothing to do with it. It was just because it was a store that had what you wanted. We didn't shop at stores just because they were Jewish stores.

Q. You might have shopped in them because you knew them? Friends, or something like that.

A. We shopped at whoever had what we wanted. We shopped around. Not necessarily because it was Jewish. I mean that didn't make us special.

Q. So what do you think is the difference—there were a lot of stores downtown when you were growing up. A lot of them were owned by Jewish people. But now the stores—

A. Well, don't forget—all of downtown is not what it use to be. Now you've got the malls.

Q. Most downtowns are nothing.

A. We do have a lot of art galleries and art things. We don't have any find clothing stores or fine shoe stores downtown anymore.

Q. But are they anywhere in Asheville?

A. Well, no, not too many.

Q. But there did use to be some downtown.

A. Well, if you look at Tops—I mean there you have shoes. As far as dressy clothes, the only place I know of downtown is Lucy Ann's. It's the only place in Asheville, practically.

Q. But I mean—right—that was my question: Where else do you go?

A. In Asheville, you don't.

A. Lots of catalogs. I mean if you go to Biltmore, you've got Talbots, you've got Chico's. But those are not—

Q. And they haven't been here that long. And let's face it, they're chains.

A. Well, that's right. I mean, today you don't have a lot of Jewish merchants like you use to have.

Q. Or even any private merchants that are kind of like they use to be, Jewish or not Jewish.

A. If you go to Charleston, you've got-- TAPE OUT Start Tape

Q. So there is someone in Charleston who remembers your dad?

A. He's heard of The Man Store.

Q. And that's called Bob Ellis Shoes?

A. No, this is a men's clothing store. Bob Ellis Shoes is something else. We were just talking about you don't see stores like that any more. I mean, like say you go to Atlanta. The majority of shopping is done at malls.

Q. And most malls have chain stores.

A. I'm sure there must be some individuals specialty shops and all. But I don't know where they are.

Q. Yeah, I think that's kind of sad, actually.

A. It is. I mean like look at your mother's place. That's been there how many years?

Q. The dance store has only been there since 1978, but they sold men's wear in their other store since right after the war.

A. The one that was on the corner?

Q. Yes.

A. The art gallery.

Q. Since the war.

A. And then you opened up the dance place. Then the Leader's closed. That was Blumberg, wasn't it?

Q. That was S.I. Blumberg, right.

A. That was \_\_\_\_\_ too?

Q. They were related to you.

A. No, we are not related to anybody in Asheville. When we are with Marilyn, we are with all these people. She'll say they are my cousins; they are my family. We are not related to anybody. We can talk about anybody we want. (laughter).

Q. I do think—so what do you think about the idea that there aren't so many individual stores here—is that better or worse?

A. There's not no place. I don't think an individual today could be in business. It's most unusual for them to be able to compete.

Q. Well, what did you think of downtown when your dad's store was there?

A. That's all we knew. It was wonderful. When you don't know anything else.

Q. But you thought it was great?

A. Oh sure. Why not?

A. There was some nice stores back then. John Carol's and Perkinson's and Ian West's—N. B. Moore and Gene West and—

A. But today you don't find the stores of that type anywhere. I mean you do, but they are chains. You've got Nordstrom's or Syke's or Neiman's. They all sort of took the place of these kind of stores that we are talking about.

Q. Except those are mostly in bigger cities, whereas Asheville doesn't have any of those stores you have just mentioned.

A. We have Dillard—

Q. Yeah, but not of the same caliber though.

A. You go to Charlotte or to Atlanta. Or shop in Greenville. Greenville is not really that good either. I mean here is a big city like Greenville with all this industry and everything else; and if they have any small individual good shops, I don't know where they are.

Q. Do you go to Columbia ever?

A. Occasionally. But I mean when I go to Columbia, I would shop. Boston, I don't shop. I mean you don't shop with Jay. Because Jay is not a shopper. And now that she has got the baby, she is definitely not a shopper.

Q. So, you mostly—do you go to Hendersonville? Hendersonville actually has some really nice stores.

A. Like what?

Q. Elizabeth. There's a couple of new stores. I was just down there.

A. Clothing stores?

Q. Where Jolie DeShea use to be there is a pretty store. All just along Main Street. Mostly on the right side when you are going down. Did you all know Jewish people from Hendersonville?

A. The Kalins.

Q. I forgot about the Kalins.

A. And Michael Love.

Q. But they had—there were stores in Hendersonville too. But y'all never went there to shop?

A. Don't forget, we grew up when McCarter was not that much. And then with gas rationing—

Q. So you were stuck?

A. We weren't stuck. But you didn't travel.

A. At that point, we had better stores in Asheville than they had, so there wasn't any reason to go to Hendersonville. To shop.

A. We'd go over there to camp, or something like that. People would come up there. But this was after we were grown.

Q. Do y'all go downtown now?

A. Very occasionally. What's down there? You know...

Q. A lot of restaurants.

A. Cat Town (?) and Square, how's that. Have you been?

Q. Oh yeah. The people who use to own it were very good friends of mine. And I went there every night.

A. Who are the people have it now? A Jewish couple. Staff. From Prichatea(?)

Q. The Bistro is a really good place. So where do you go when you want to eat out?

A. We go to the Greenery, we go to Vincenzo's. Go out here to Tubby's??? Lodge.

Ever go there?

Q. My mom goes there a lot, I went with her once. We had an unfortunate experience there once...

A. Sunnyside Café is good.

Q. That Italian restaurant is good.

A. Otto's, on Longfellows. I think he is still there. We went there a couple of times. But we didn't really care—

Q. We went there a couple of times and didn't go anymore either.

A. The Italian place, remember?

Q. Use to be the Cyber Mill.

A. You know with all the spaghetti with the pastas. Remember that time we went they served you all this huge—

Q. It's at the Skyland exit. So do you go to south Asheville much?

A. You go to Essaville (?) to Expressions; Lark.

A. Yeah, they've got good restaurants there. That Lark and Expressions that—we were just there. Saturday night. We have eaten at the Wildflower. That's a good place. And go to Country club. You know, everything is wonderful, as long as I don't cook it. I mean I like Carraba's and the Outback and Bonefish. And I love the Chinese buffet places out here. The Asiana.

Q. So everything is more spread out.

A. Well sure, you get in your little car, and away you go. I mean you are not stuck anymore. You have gas and you have a car. And you can go anyplace you want. You are not limited anymore, as to what—you eat any place you want to eat.

A. There are nice little places downtown, like we go to the Marketplace. Tupelo Honey and all—but you can never find a place to park.

Q. I just park in the Rankin parking garage and just walk through that thing. What about the Grove Arcade—do you go there?

A. Mmmm. Gilberts closed there.

Q. No kidding?

A. It was in the paper. They are still open over on Montford.

A. I didn't see that in the paper. Was it a big article? Well I think that place on the corner, Anthony's—I don't particularly care for their food, a new type or—which I don't care for—I don't like those kind of foods.

Q. The problem with Goldberg's was you couldn't see it from the outside. That was a huge problem. Because people would have gone in there if they'd of known it was in there.



A. In other words, you made a special effort to go?

Q. You had to know about it to go. You wouldn't know about it.

A. Even if it was that great, we would have made an effort to go back; but it wasn't that great to me.

A. I can tell you a story: Dote and I went to Goldberg's and were sitting there having lunch.

And the tables are like this and this. And we were sitting here, and there was a young woman—

A. You don't need all this on tape.

Q. It's O.K. We'll turn it off.

Q. That happens to me all the time, that I meet people and they say "How long have you lived here?" and "Where are you from?" and they can't believe you are from here. And they always say "I never met anyone from here" and they make a big deal about it.

A. They say "Were you born in Asheville?" and then when I tell them my father was also born in Asheville, they can't believe the generations. And that my grandparents weren't born, but they did live here, so.

Q. What's her name?

A. Della Simon.

Q. And what's your doctor's office?

A. Cubachek. It's in Ft. Wick \_\_\_\_\_. On the top floor.

Q. It's next to where the credit office is?

A. You know where Closner's office is?

Q. Oh yeah. O.K. So how do you feel about still living in Asheville?

A. I would not like to live any place else. I wouldn't know what to do. I wouldn't move from the north side of town to the south. It would be like moving to a different city.

Q. Well, the south side is sort of like Atlanta, like a suburb.

A. In another couple of years, it's going to be solid from south to Hendersonville. But I mean we have lived on the north side of town all our lives.

A. I wouldn't know how to live anyplace except on the north side of Asheville. (laughter) I mean I would feel like I was in Hinterland or something.

Q. But what happened to that thing when you said didn't want to live here, it was like the worst thing—

A. That was the whole atmosphere of Asheville. You know, when you are growing up, you want to go someplace where there is excitement and something doing. And it wasn't like that in Asheville at that point in time.

Q. So when you got married, did you sort of make your own excitement?

A. Yeah, I mean well, we all had our own set of friends. And you use to get together and then \_\_\_\_\_. And we would get together on the weekend and we did a lot of home entertainment then.

Q. Did your father want either of your husbands to go into the business?

A. He may have at one time. But I don't think any of them were really overly—they weren't asked—but I mean they had their own businesses at the time.

Q. So just for the record, tell us what they did.

A. Billy still is with Asheville Showcase. He and his brother own that.

A. And my husband had with Harry Kulee had Artmore Furniture Company on Broadway. Just down from Bean Street. The big building in there. In the parking lot that is behind there, that was their parking lot. That goes right into the store. And I believe they have made condominiums on top of that building.

Q. What do you think about that?

A. I don't want it, but I don't know.

A. Well, I think it's great. This is something, people can live downtown.

A. I mean it'd be fun for you. I can see where you would live downtown.

Q. But I mean you know, it's interesting, a lot of people that live downtown are your generation, retired people and—

A. And a lot of artists live downtown. The Cravens, they moved their studio down to the river.

Q. I was just in there today. What an incredible studio.

A. Isn't it just wonderful? Gorgeous things.

A. We use to go visit them up in Ceilo. We met them going—because we would go up to this tour every year around Ceilo and the river. We would go there maybe once or twice a year, and they were on this tour. We'd stop at their place and we just liked their things.

A. They were up on Law Street.

A. I don't know what happened, because they were so excited. And then they had a condo in town and lived upstairs next to the old Woolworth building. Those condos. They had a lovely condo up there. They may still have their place up there.

Q. I don't think there was enough traffic at that end of Wall Street.

A. No, it was a bad location for them.

A. Well, where they are, there is no traffic.

Q. People have to know about it. Probably the rent is cheaper.

A. Like that Woolworth building—I don't know if people—I have never gone in there.

Q. I don't think the things in there are as nice as the Kress building. Kress has beautiful stuff in there.

A. I've never been in the Kress building.

A. We'd go, like for instance Saturday, we will be up in Penland. They have big auctions. We go every year. They have a big auction every year. And look around.

Q. Well, now the Penland people have a gallery on Haywood Street.

A. Well, those aren't all Penland. You are talking about Ariel? Jane Pizer owned it. But Susan Phelps—she's not Penland. The only one that is Penland is Jane Pizer. We'd go to her studio in Penland. That Susan Phelps, I think they have left there and gone down to Biltmore. She was somewhere else. I don't know where she is.

Q. But what do you think of downtown now?

A. I think it's wonderful for people. It's not my cup of tea. But I think—

A. I think it's nice to go through town and see people on the streets, and whatever they—if you are interested in art or anything, you've certainly got it around. And the Arcade building, I think it is a wonderful remodeling. I remember that building as a little girl. And I use to go in there shopping, and I can still remember going in there to shop with my mother in the Arcade building.

Q. What was in there?

A. Well there was a couple of very nice dress shops. One called Jean West. There was one called Perkinson. There was a cleaners called By Sadie Bell Hyman or—but I mean, there was some nice shops in there. And I can remember while Mother was shopping, just running up and down those halls. I don't know why; but that stands in my mind. And they did a nice renovation. But back then, as I remember it, the stores you could enter from either the inside or the outside.

Q. They went all the way through. I think that is the mistake they made. Chopping them in half so you can't get through.

A. That's it. Goldberg's and \_\_\_\_\_ went all the way through. And that's the reason, because once you go in—they are going to close up, because people don't know about them. They can't afford the rent in the winter. C.P. and L is doing very well. \_\_\_\_\_

A. I mean it's been a boon for Asheville, strictly as a tourist attraction. As far as myself being a local resident, I would have no reason to go downtown to go to the Arcade building. I mean there's nothing there for me.

Q. But when you were younger, it had offices too.

A. Oh it had everything. It had nice shops. It was really a nice building.

A. Well, like you said, everything went through.

Q. Would you say it was more upper end shops?

A. Well, for the time, they were better for those times. And this is when I was a little girl, and that is a long time ago. Today, it is nice. But it draws a different type of people—yes, tourists, right. It's a beautiful building, just to see the architecture.

Q. When you were little, you went downtown, because that was the only place you had to shop.

A. That's right.

Q. And now, it's just optional.

A. Now, you go where you want. Like I said also, today, transportation is much better than what it was.

A. Well, we always drove. We didn't have to worry about transportation. Mother always had a car. If we wanted to go someplace, we always went down and got the bus. Streetcar, whatever.

Q. I think that is probably—it's 6 o'clock... But if you could find any pictures, especially of the poker game.

A. Haven't we chattered enough for you? I will look. I don't think there are any pictures of the poker game.

A. Yes there are too. There's one of Fannie Gross with her handkerchief on her head. And one of the Wednesday night clerk, someplace.

A. You might have it, but I don't.

A. I've got a box of pictures that I emptied from my mother's house, we still have to go through them. We just emptied out, and I have got boxes and pictures that are sitting up in the attic.

Q. Those are really important, and don't get rid of them. We can take these things to Ramsey Library Special Collections. They scan them, and if you want them back, you can have them back. They are on the Internet, and people can— RECORDING ENDS