

ED PETERSON

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Interviewed by David Schulman

EP: Of loyalty that existed in families, especially among the immigrants that came here. My grandfather on my mother's side came to this country and finally landed up in Kentucky in a little, small town. And my father came later. My grandfather landed at Ellis Island. My father landed in Boston maybe 6 or 8 years later, something like that. And not either one knowing any English. They corresponded with each other, how those things happened. And my grandfather was a miller by trade and this little town in Kentucky was near Somerset. And he told my father to come on down. And my mother had only been here about a year or two. My grandfather came first by himself. And, of course, in the old fashioned there was a _____ made and they were married in 1903 in Cincinnati by somebody who was very much interested in all the Jewish people in that particular area.

I: And your parents names were?

EP: My parents names were entirely different than the English version, that's another story. My grandfather's name was Pilshman the last name. And my father's last name was Batlis. So after they came down they made this ____ and I was born nine months to the day after they were married. I was born December 13, 1904. I was born in Somerset, Kentucky. And meanwhile my grandfather had, there's a picture there of my ancient uncles. My mother's not on that. There's one older sister, she wasn't on that picture too. And I was younger. The one on the chair in the middle there is my Uncle Jack who now is 90 years old, I'm 89. I'm 12 months younger than he is.

I: Now does he go under Petterson?

EP: He went under the name of Pilshman. But by that time they were both, my father and my grandfather, were citizens. So they went to the court and they said, they ask my father what his name was, he said Batlis. The judge says, that won't suit, we always call you Pat, we'll just name you Petterson. In those days they were really dictators, there's no question about it, the federal judges. And they went to my grandfather and they said Pilshman, who ever heard of Pilshman, we always call you Fred, so they gave him the last name of Fred. I think I've run into one other family in the United States that has the last name like Fred. That's been an unusual thing. And that's the way the names came down. So when I was 18 months old, my mother developed tuberculosis and in those days the only cure or relief to tuberculosis was two factors, rest and high altitude climate. It seems that there was alot of tuberculosis in Kentucky in that particular area. In fact there was alot of natives that came down at about the same time when we did and everybody was going to Asheville. I don't know whether you knew this or not, you probably did. Asheville was a center of eastern America.

I: For TB recovery and sanitoriums.

EP: But for some reason or other there was a doctor over here by the name of Kirk and he had tuberculosis and he came down to practice. So they came to Hendersonville and even though my father had a very successful business. It was started like all old timers with \$75 and the help from this guy in Cincinnati. It was an old barn but he felt like he had to be here and so he went into some kind of

a business. Now Ann remembers about her father. Her father came she says when we came to Hendersonville. This now is 1906.

I: Ann, your father's name was...

AP: Harry Motsman.

EP: His mother was a Petterson.

AP: Yeah, she was a sister to your father.

I: And the sister's name was...

AP: She never came to this country. Her first name was Leah.

EP: Incidentally, there was a bad history in our family of malignancies.

AP: My father's mother died at the age of 40.

EP: Everyone of them, as far as I know, that were left in Europe died of malignancies, of the Petterson family.

AP: Some of the Motsman family lived until Hitler's time. And Hitler took care of them.

I: Do you remember what town in Europe that your parents came from?

EP: She's got a history there if you want to make a copy of that. It would mean nothing to you except there's one interesting thing there, that we supposedly had a great-great-great grandfather that lived to be 100 and some odd years. He had his second barmitzvah when he was 113. That was in Europe. The only ones that came out of this family were my father. And, of course like I said at the beginning about the feeling they had for their family, all these refugees or whatever you want to call them, they were worried about taking care of their family. So from both sides of the family, it happened in your family too, that they made it a point to see. From Ann's side of the family, she had two great-uncles that were so _____ and they brought over alot of the families.

I: But your mother and father came first.

EP: They came to Pittsburgh. So they came first. I was 18 months old. The only thing I remember is that we stayed at a place called the Kentucky Home which was on 4th Avenue right off of main street. It was run by a woman that had come from that same area. She was a very fine woman and they had a very big reputation and we stayed there for a certain length of time. And then this is what I'm talking about Ann, they moved into a little house on 3rd Avenue East where they're building the new county courthouse. And that's where we lived until, there was a fine person, her name was Mrs. McDowell. And do you remember Miss Bessy Steadman who was the principal of the school, well that was her aunt. Miss Bessy never did marry. And she was kind to my father and he bought that house on Grove Street next to them, it's right back of Merrill Lynch, that area. And we lived there for years and that's where everybody in the family lived from time to time.

AP: After my father learned the cleaning and tailoring business, no he

didn't learn tailoring, my mother taught him cleaning and pressing, he went to Brevard too. Some of the Fred family was there and he went up to Lake Toxaway and worked in the summer time at that hotel there. And then he came back to Brevard.

EP: Do you know anything about the Lake Toxaway area?

I: No.

EP: You should, that was a multi-millionaire place. They ran a railroad there. We called it the Swamp Rabbit. Now that's something of interest. They used to come down here in their private cars.

AP: My father said that they would bring whole truckloads of clothes and he would work at night pressing those clothes. And then he stayed with a gentile family in Brevard and there were alot of girls. And your father and Aunt Becky were afraid he was going to marry one of them so they talked him into going up to visit his uncles on his father's side in Pittsburgh so he wouldn't marry one of them. I wasn't born. I just remember hearing my father telling about it.

I: Tell me about this hotel in Lake Toxaway. Was there a name to it?

EP: Yeah. It was destroyed by flood. Have you had any history on the flood?

I: No.

EP: I've got some stuff that you ought to research. The flood in western North Carolina. It started at Lake Toxaway. When it got big, the French Broad at Biltmore it killed 7 people.

I: That was about 1914 or somewhere in there?

EP: That's right. So anyhow, my father, he didn't make a success of it. And he started back up and he got to be very successful. And he started bring over and he brought his sister, my Aunt Becky. Her name was Brenner, no, that was her married name. It was all Petterson. And several years later he brought over a nephew, a cousin of mine. His name was Alex, that's the father of Ben and Alvin. It was their father, Alex.

I: And your father was Harry Petterson and your mother's name was...

EP: Minnie Petterson. And there was about 12 or 13 years difference in their age.

I: Tell me a little bit about your immediate family, your brothers and sisters.

EP: I have one brother. His name is Joe, Joseph. And he's been a very successful pediatrician in the city of Atlanta. In fact he was one of the most important men on the faculty at Emory.

AP: Wasn't he in charge of pediatrics department there?

EP: It's in conjunction with Emory. It's really the Egleston Hospital. And he was the head of that. That's one thing I can brag about is my brother. There's not alot of things that people talk about, but he is some guy, such respect and

he's done so much. Even after he's retired.

I: Is he younger than you?

EP: He's 9 1/2 years younger than I am. He had to be younger, he couldn't be older because I was born 9 months after my parents were married.

I: Yeah, that's true, that's impossible. What about sisters, did you have any sisters?

EP: No. See my mother had tuberculosis, the doctor didn't want her to. Incidentally, that has nothing to do with the history, but Dr. Kirk only delivered two babies in his life...

AP: I remember going to Dr. Kirk myself.

I: Did this Dr. Kirk come from that area of Kentucky too?

EP: He might have been from Lexington but it was all in that particular area. It was just like a hotbed of...

I: And so your parents started bringing cousins, so can you tell me some of their names? Did they marry here mainly?

AP: Yes, I think so. And in addition his mother had several sisters and a couple of brothers.

I: Minnie Petterson. Were they here too?

EP: Let me explain that to you. When Grandpaw Fred left, he left Grandmother Fred and he left his daughter, my mother, and he left her sister by the name of Rose. He left grandmother with 2 girls. And after, I don't know how many years it was, then he brought them to Kentucky. And then after he brought them to Kentucky, there's one younger child that should have been on that picture, but he wasn't born yet. He's dead now. In other words, I had one uncle a year older and one uncle a year younger and I was in between. But they were living in this little town. Then my grandfather, after my father got established, he followed him everywhere.

I: That's Grandfather Fred.

EP: Yeah. So he came down and he stayed around here, then he went over to Brevard, run a business, then he came back _____. And then he went to South Carolina, Union, South Carolina. That's a very interesting thing I'll have to tell you and opened up a laundry. My mother's sister that was the stable one, she married a guy from Philadelphia by the name of Sprintz. So anyhow, I won't tell you that story. And then he came back here and he went somewheres with his younger son and opened some kind of shoe store, then he'd come back. He was just that kind of a person. He finally ended up in the last 20-25 years as a manager of The Basement, a big department store.

I: And was it always called Petterson's?

EP: Always called Petterson's. It got to be an institution.

I: About 80 years.

EP: No, it wasn't that old.

AP: Here's a picture of when his father had been in business here 50 years. He was a real sweet man.

I: So tell me a little bit more about some of the other family connections. We've got the Freds and then I understand there was Brenner in Hendersonville.

EP: Aunt Becky went away to Cincinnati and Aunt Rose went away to Cincinnati. So Aunt Becky found her a husband by the name of Brenner. Nathan Brenner. And he came back to Hendersonville. He never was a good businessman.

AP: My aunt was though, my great aunt.

EP: She died with a malignancy, all of them, the whole family.

AP: My father had a sister who came here later. Lazarus, she married here. Her husband was working for him. And she died of a malignancy.

I: So the Lazarus family was connected through marriage?

EP: Yes. Now the Lazarus family, I have to tell you this, I don't want this on tape.

I: Now, we're back taping again. We're going to be talking about what main street looked like 20s and 30s and so many Jewish families. Can you kind of give us a mental picture, just sort of go down main street and tell us the stores or who the families were that ran it, can you give us some of that, both of you?

EP: Yeah, I can give you some of it. We really never had a big Jewish population.

AP: But there were alot of stores on main street that were Jewish.

EP: Going back a little bit talking about main street, I thought you'd be interested in this. I don't think you've run into this. There were two prominent Jewish people that ended over in Asheville and they originally were from Hendersonville. One of them was Lou Pollock, the founder of the Pollock Shoe Stores. He originally came to Hendersonville. And a fellow by the name of Freidman and I don't know what he did over here. The old man and he had a son who was very close to the young uncle of mine. And he went to Asheville and Freidman for years, he was a real artist. He ran Susquehannah Furniture Co. Nat Freidman. He was the son of this man. Well they originally came to Hendersonville. Later on in years there was only 3 or 4 Jewish merchants on main street. There was the Pettersons and the Lewises and later on came the Calons.

AP: There's another Jewish family had a store on main street right next to the drug store. She lives in Atlanta now. She married a doctor.

EP: The Schas. They have relatives in Asheville or did have relatives in Asheville.

I: And then what about, I think about ____ Rosenberg, was he a tailor or something?

EP: _____. Mack's father-in-law. His wife's father, he had a men's shop. He wasn't a member theoretically of the synagogue. Mack has been.

I: I'm thinking of Markowitz. And he had like a tailor's shop.

EP: Yeah. He had a tailor's shop.

AP: And when my father came here, that's what he had at first.

I: So there were alot of just individual tailor stores, people would just bring things to be altered.

EP: And I'll tell you who was a big one in this town was the Cooley family.

I: Which Cooleys were they?

AP: He's married to Ruth Baer now.

I: Harry Cooley's father?

EP: No, it was really his uncle. His father was the third partner. Fred and George started the business. Fred Cooley and George Cooley.

I: Now they're uncles to Harry?

EP: Yeah.

I: So there were three brothers really, Fred Cooley, George Cooley and then another Cooley, Harry's father.

EP: Sam Cooley.

I: And they had a cleaning and tailor shop. And all these were on main street.

AP: That's right, everything was on main street in those days.

I: Of course the Weisbergs had a furniture store.

AP: That was in later years. Now Ann Caplan's father, had a business down on 7th Avenue.

EP: He had what we call a junk business. And there was another business on main street beside that. Morris Weisberg had a furniture store.

AP: In later years. I sold him my first car.

EP: He was connected with the Williams family. There was one before him and he was a Michalove.

I: Let's talk a little bit about the Michaloves.

EP: Before you get into that, let me mention one other merchant while I'm thinking about it. A fellow by the name of Cantowitz. He ran a shoe store.

AP: One of the boys was married to a Michalove girl.

EP: The father married a Lewis girl, a fine family. The Lewis women were top women, there's no question. One of them, I know you know of was married to Joe Patla.

I: So one of the Lewis daughters married Patla and one of the Lewis daughters married Cantowitz. And were there more daughters?

EP: No. And they had one son. That was the old family, that wasn't the real old family. The real old family, I did not know this, did you write the article in Saluda?

I: Yes.

EP: They were a nice family, especially the old lady Lewis. The old woman was just a fine person.

AP: My first husband's father used to peddle with a pack on his back when he first came to this country. And there's a lot of Levis here down on Bob's Creek. But originally they were two Jewish men who came from England and intermarried here. But they were already here too.

EP: They were here with the Revolutionary War.

I: So actually the Levi family would have been before the Lewis family.

EP: That had nothing to do with this situation because every one of them turned out to be a Baptist.

I: And they were peddlers too?

AP: No.

EP: You wanted to know something about the Michalove family.

AP: S.H. Michalove came to this country, came to Asheville in the late 1800s. I got a newspaper article here. They had a Michalove reunion and I'm the one who had to tell them where to find them, they even found one in Sweden. But Fred Pearlman wrote this in the paper. S.H. Michalove was the first one of the Michaloves that came in 1889. He came to Asheville. In 1889 six brothers and three sisters left, one of the brothers immigrated to Sweden and when Shirley Henry Michalove, he used to live in Asheville, his little boy lives in Atlanta. I told them about them about the family in Sweden and they came over here for that reunion and since then they've been going back and forth and visiting.

EP: Were the Bloomberg's ahead of them in Asheville?

AP: The Bloombergs, I think they were already there. My mother-in-law lived next door from the Bloombergs.

I: You're talking about Harry Bloomberg's father?

EP: Yeah.

AP: There was more than one Bloomberg family there. There were a couple of

them. I've forgotten their names. But my mother-in-law, when she first came to this country, she lived next door from the Bloombergs.

I: S.H. Michalove...

AP: He was the first one. He's Kenny Michalove's grandfather.

I: Tell me the connection between the Michaloves and the Pearlmans.

AP: Mrs. Pearlman started the furniture business.

I: That's Barney Pearlman's wife.

AP: She was a Michalove.

I: She was a sister to S.H. or a daughter?

AP: She was his sister. No, no she was a niece.

I: Don Michalove's father was what name?

AP: Dan.

I: Dan Michalove and Patty Pearlman were brother and sister.

AP: And Mrs. Calin, the Calins used to have a store here too, she was a Michalove and she was a sister to them. Leah's sister-in-law.

I: That's right. There was Sam Calin and Marge Calin's still here. And Sam Calin was a brother to Morris Calin.

AP: And his wife was a Michalove.

I: Sam Calin's wife, and what was her name?

AP: I can't think. And when Patty Pearlman and Barney first got married, they had a grocery store in a black neighborhood in Asheville and they lived upstairs over it. And then she started buying up the stuff from the railroad that was damaged and called it Depot Salvage. And when Dan Michalove first opened up a business here too, he had a Depot Salvage too. They used to buy things that were damaged.

I: Dad always said that Barney Pearlman's wife was sort of the originator.

AP: He was a very nice person but she was a businesswoman. She was tough. But they were always nice to me.

I: Dan Michalove and Mrs. Pearlman were brother and sister. What about the other Michaloves?

AP: My father-in-law's name was Lewis. In 1889 six brothers and three sisters left Lithuanian. One of the brothers immigrated to Sweden. The other eight children came to the U.S. At that time they could purchase storage on a vessel from Hamburg, Germany for \$35. Two of the girls settled in Baltimore and the other girl and her 5 brothers came to Asheville. One of the brothers, after a family dispute, disappeared into Virginia and has not been heard of since. When

Paul was away in school, boys used to ask him about the beer company, Michelob Beer. I often wonder if that was him. But they don't know whatever happened to him. But the four brothers who settled here were S.H., Isaac that was my father-in-law, Lewis that was Patty Pearlman's father and then Abe, he died at a fairly early age. His wife remarried a rabbi in New Orleans. Some already had families. The sister, Annie, married Ike Swartzberg, a member of a good merchant family in Asheville. Asheville then was a town of 10,000 residents. The railroad criss crossed here and the city was booming. The Barry Park Hotel was 3 years old. It goes on and on. But the Michalove brothers rapidly returned to earning a living for their families by first peddling in the countryside on foot, on horseback and from wagons. Then they all got stores. As their situation improves, the brothers established small stores. The most famous was the IXL Store, that was Uncle S.H. He carried real fine China and silver and things like that. It became an Asheville institution known for its fine China, glass and silver. In 1889 the Michalove brothers took the time from their work to help find the first synagogue in Asheville. I told you that the first chauffeur, Paul has the first chauffeur that was ever belonged in Asheville. Uncle S.H. gave it to him rather than his own grandsons. My mother-in-law said they were friends and neighbors of the Wolf family when Thomas Wolf was growing up. In one of the books he wrote, I remember he wrote about my brother-in-law, Sam Michalove who's dead. He called him the pretty boy cause he used to like to dress up all the time and the girls liked him. He wrote about the Michaloves in Look Homeward Angel. The children of the Michalove families were educated in the public schools of Asheville and rapidly made careers for themselves. Most of them have become merchants. Some like Dan Michalove went in other directions. Then one of them became vice president of Twentieth Century Fox Studios, that's Uncle S.H.'s son. And also owned an Atlanta baseball club at one time. It goes on and on. Ken Michalove's father, W.W. Michalove, now he was married to a Pollock girl.

I: Lou Pollock's daughter.

AP: But then she divorced him and remarried.

I: Lou Pollock's daughter married Ken Michalove's father.

AP: First of all, Ken Michalove's father married a Pollock girl. Then later in life, she divorced him and married somebody else from Florida. I think she still lives in Florida.

EP: Incidentally, have you got anything on the Silverman family in Asheville?

I: No.

EP: God, you've got to have something on them. All I can tell you is that, I think I was the only young Jewish male in town and right before the first War it come time for barmitzvah and Uncle Nathan Brenner, he taught me how to read the Hebrew and everything else, but to do all the things. I used to have to take the Carolina Special to Asheville to go over to see if a rabbi, I think his name was Silverman.

I: I've heard of Rabbi Silverman.

EP: I think it's important because he was well respected in the community and that's Asheville history. It should be. And he died in the synagogue on a high holy day.

I: He just dropped dead in the synagogue.

EP: I'm sure that's right. And he's the one that taught me. I'd have to go over there.

I: The Carolina Special was a train right?

EP: That's my favorite subject is the Carolina Special. And you know why I say that? It's because it was the only means of transportation that we had out of here. That was before the roads were paved. The automobiles, we had one, an old European model with the funny kind of side doors and so forth. There was two trains that ran through here but the Carolina Special was the main one. My mother and father went to Cincinnati to get married on that train and then I had to go one time. I had an aunt that died, my mother's sister, during the days of Roosevelt when he went in they closed the banks, didn't have any money, they finally managed enough to pay my fare back.

I: The Carolina Special ran from Cincinnati through Hendersonville to Asheville?

EP: No. Came from Asheville through Hendersonville to Charleston, SC.

I: So that's how you got alot of summer people too, alot of people from Charleston?

AP: I have it written down. I tell you, in the summer time there was a big crowd came from Charleston.

EP: That's an important part, I mean that has to do with Jewish history too. Because that was the only means of transportation of getting in and out of here.

AP: You know your father went to Cincinnati to learn how to kill chickens. Because when we lived in Brevard he used to either come up there to kill the chickens or my father would bring them down here. I remember we had the kind of cars with a running board and my dog, Jack, would jump on the running board and lay there till we got over here.

EP: There was two trains. I think one of them came from Knoxville and went maybe to Spartanburg, maybe to Columbia. But this train came from Cincinnati and there was a place called Harmon's Junction in Tennessee later on that broke off and went the other route to Florida through Chattanooga. And then the train, later on, from Asheville to Salisbury to New York. The Carolina Special would pick up all that merchandise and bring it through to here.

I: That's how they shipped the clothing too?

EP: During the Depression days, you wouldn't believe it, but we used to get stuff overnight from New York. That's when the express company was so efficient. That's the God's truth and didn't charge anything to amount to anything. If a manufacturer put it on the Crescent Limited or the Piedmont Limited, put it on that train, it'd go to Salisbury and then that train from Salisbury to Asheville would pick it up and get into Asheville before the Carolina Special to reload it to come down here. But the thing that I think you need to know about, because I'm sure that that's an important part that you're looking for, is that family that I told you about, that rabbi. Maybe there's not enough older ones around Asheville to remember him.

I: I've heard the name mentioned but nobody's really brought it up that much. But he trained you, is that what you're saying?

EP: Yeah, you know, how to read the havtorah.

I: Do you remember anything about his family, was he married?

EP: I know his grandchildren. I don't remember his mother. Dan was one of them. He had a couple of sisters who were nice gals. For a short time, a chum of mine was Leo Finkelstein, is he still living?

I: Yes, he is. I talk to him quite a bit. He's got alot of information. He's got alot of scrap books. So you were barmitzvahed in Asheville?

EP: No, I wasn't. We went over there and I wouldn't go one Saturday and take the lessons and somehow, he came to the barmitzvah and we had it at the house on Grove Street with just a limited amount.

AP: I stayed at your house once when I was 4 years old one summer when you lived on Grove Street. My mother and Eddie and I. I remember going back to Washington and I got lost in Washington. I was born in Pittsburgh. My mother went to see some of my father's family in Washington and I wandered away, it looked like a city to me and I thought we were in Pittsburgh so I went to look for my father. I was always closer to my father than I was to my mother. And the police picked me up. I never will forget that. I had my fourth birthday at your house.

EP: How old are you?

AP: 81.

I: So you would have been maybe 11 or so, you're 88 now?

EP: I'm 89, almost 90. I must have been awfully young too.

I: Were there alot of cousins when you were growing up? Who was your age in Hendersonville in school?

EP: I don't remember a damn soul. Oh, when Grandpa Fred came...

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EP: He had a son, Jack, he was Jake in those days, Jake Fred, he was one year older than I. But the fact that he had been away with grandpa for 1 year, he was 1 year behind me in school. So I finished the school year 1921 and finished Carolina in 1925. And he finished Carolina in 1926. But I don't remember any other Jewish boys. Leonard wasn't old enough then, he might have been in grammar school.

AP: He's in his 80s, he's older than I am.

EP: Is he still living?

AP: Yeah.

EP: Leonard Lewis. But there was nobody here.

I: What about your experiences, did the other kids accept you okay as far as being Jewish? Did you have any problems?

EP: No, I had no problems. The problems came later in older years and still exist as far as I'm concerned in the country club over here. They'll take a certain amount of Jews. I played golf out there with them for 5 years. But Don belongs to the country club because he had these friends out there and these guys keep on pushing him.

AP: I was asked several years ago if I wanted to join.

EP: Well, they ask but that don't mean anything.

AP: We lived in Brevard from '26 to Jan. '29. I was the only Jewish girl in high school there. I never felt any anti-semitism.

I: That's the way it was in Silva. Maybe once in a while some jerk would say something, but overall it was okay.

EP: I didn't have any trouble. They started a school up here called Georgia Military Academy and at first they had a summer camp and I came back and I wore that cap around the school and a couple of the guys got mad at me because I was wearing that cap, picked me up bodily and threw the cap away. That's the only experience that I had. Later on they acted like they were your best friends. But it always existed. It just depended about the number and how passive you were. The only one that I know that didn't have any kind of a feeling about this thing at all was my youngest boy, Allen. He had no trouble at all. He was a leader there, he and this fellow, young Wilkins, George Wilkins. The only bad thing we had, I've got to tell you about this. This is aside from the point cause you've already done this in another way. When Alvin Cartis was in Carolina, he was the biggest stinker that God ever made. When he came back to Asheville, he got to be a different person and he personally destroyed the Silver Shirts.

I: Do you remember anything specifically about that?

EP: I remember only this particular thing. They had a Methodist or a Baptist minister out in Mills River and his name was Sumner. Do you know anything about that group in Asheville, the Silver Shirts? The wife and daughter was a customer of ours, just as nice as they could be. And he would come in the store with them. Later on, _____, he told me that he and Ben Prince went out to see Sumner and told him to get his behind away and he left here, that they weren't going to put up with it. Now that's what _____ told me but I don't know how much truth was to that. But that's as close as we had to the Silver Shirts. Alvin did a tremendous job and he was the biggest stinker in school, honest to God, he was terrible. Not because he belonged to the other fraternity, but it was the truth.

I: He and Julius Levitch...

EP: Julius was an unusual guy. He had the respect of everybody.

I: And they sort of got evidence on Pelley for like stock fraud with his newspaper and that's sort of how they got him out of Asheville, do you remember any of that?

EP: I don't remember the details. There was another interesting experience.

There was another guy, they started this same thing here about 10 or 12 years ago, some other name, same type of organization, and this guy ran a filling station right in front of Harris Teeter where they had a Kentucky Fried Chicken, right next door and he was that type of guy. I went to see Mead Pearce one day about all these articles. He says, that's where you're wrong Ed, he says, that's just exactly what he's looking for, he wants you guys to start an argument with him to get the publicity. He says, I'm ignoring him. Two weeks later, he was gone. Mead Pearce, he used to work with a newspaper. He won't come near me for some reason. He's very close to the Shermans. Oh, we didn't mention the Shermans on main street. Then Ben...

I: Lessing.

EP: No. Ben Lessing was a brother-in-law to Markowitz.

I: That's right. Ben Lessing's sister married Markowitz.

EP: You're right when you figure out, the Shermans, the Pettersons, the Lewises, the Calins.

AP: And eventually my father too.

I: Was he in furniture?

AP: No, he was in dry cleaning and tailoring. Then I got him out of that. I saw him working too hard.

I: Tell me a little bit about Beryl Cone.

AP: He worked for the Lewises and then he taught the children Hebrew and he killed chickens here.

EP: He came out of that family too. But he was not...

AP: He was related to Mrs. Lewis. It was her brother.

EP: See there was 3 generations involved in the Lewises.

AP: But Beryl Cone was Mrs. Lewis' brother.

EP: There has never been a finer person in this world. All the kids just worshipped that guy. That's not my type. I'm getting away from all kinds of religion. It's getting to be a little bit too much for me, especially these fundamentalists. I can't stand anybody that's a fundamentalist.

AP: Have you met that new rabbi that's here?

EP: Yes, I don't like him.

AP: Jennifer, my granddaughter wants to come over every weekend, she just loves him.

EP: He's one of those mystiques.

I: I've interviewed him and his friend and then I've got some material but it's hard to understand, it's hard to follow. It is the mystical part.

AP: My daughter lives in Atlanta, well, she's not that kind but an extremely orthodox neighborhood on Saturdays you see them all walking to services. Well they're all professional people on the block where she lives, she's the only one that rides. But anyway, the men they have those ____ and the women wear these long skirts. And it's a nice neighborhood, beautiful homes.

I: I guess in all religions people get carried to the extremes or whatever. Did you read just last week that there's this lady and her husband in prison in Israel. They're part of this group that, you know, where that doctor shot the Arabs. She and her husband sent letter bombs to Arabs in Los Angeles and a secretary was blown up, anyway they murdered them. But she fought extradition from Israel on the grounds that you couldn't eat kosher in prison and she couldn't wear long sleeves in prison. But it's hard to understand how you could be that religious on one end and send a letter bomb on the other.

AP: They still don't believe that my daughter is Jewish and I've told some of them, well, I'm Jewish, her father was Jewish, she's definitely Jewish. But she doesn't look it.

EP: I had a geology professor said, we are what we are largely because where we are. And that's exactly what's happening even to the Muslims. If you put them in America, in the second and third generation, they look more Anglo Saxon.

I: You were talking about how the people used to come in the summer, the summer visitors and I think the Freds had a boarding home.

EP: She was the one who started it.

I: Mrs. Fred.

EP: See when my grandfather, I told you he was a rogue in a sense, he used to say that oatmeal give you indigestion.

AP: He used to call my father in the middle of the night, _____, so my father would get up in the middle of the night.

I: That means he's dying.

AP: Yeah, so my father would get up in the middle of the night to go see about him. But what happened, he's eaten herring and gotten indigestion.

EP: But he said that didn't give him indigestion.

I: Oatmeal gave him indigestion but herring didn't. Tell me about how the boarding home got started.

EP: Well grandpa would go to Union, he do this and that. So grandmother decided she'd open up a boarding house. She opened up a boarding house on Grove Street behind, you know King Hardware is, well, Grove Street goes across 7th Avenue, back behind in that street, that was the first boarding house. Then she went to Main Street, you know where the Standard Oil, the Esso Station is, there used to be an old home there. Now this is really history, that looked like an old English home and she had that. That was the first boarding house.

I: Was this a Jewish boarding house?

EP: Jewish boarding house, kosher to the extent that my father killed the chickens. There's never been anybody that extreme. Then from that she went over and she bought the place on 5th Avenue. In the meanwhile there was a Mrs., I can't recall her name, she opened up a Jewish boarding house where the hospital is now. She was from Charleston. Then Horowitz came in and he went down on 3rd Avenue. Just before he came in, Mrs. Lipschitz rented the boarding house from grandmother. And she ran a boarding house there for a certain length of time. Then she went down there, that's right, she rented and she sold it to Horowitz. That was Mrs. Lipschitz place.

I: So actually that place was the Freds and then the Lipschitz and then Horowitz.

EP: Yeah. There were two or three Jewish boarding houses. There was one other that was later on came and he had a Jewish house, he was a nice guy, the Reubens boy's father in Oceola Lake.

AP: I'm trying to think of another one, when you go up _____ Street and you turn up on the hill. It wasn't kosher but it was Jewish. It was a big place cause we used to go up there for parties and things. Stewy Reuben owns that. It used to be a nice place.

I: What about in the winter, these places weren't open right?

EP: In other words, that was their whole economy.

AP: You'd either have to make it in the summer or you'd starve in the winter.

EP: Well, these farmers never were organized and everything and when the banks closed and my aunt died, it was like barter for about a year or two.

AP: I remember my father would come home, we never went hungry, we didn't have any money, he come home one day with a bushel of sweet potatoes, another day a bushel of Irish potatoes. I remember him coming home one day with a whole stalk of bananas. I went to school in Greensboro and I remember my father and another, this was a gentile girl, her father had a dress shop on Main Street, they sent a taxi after us. I said, how in the world did you pay for that? He said, we traded it out. But a few times your Uncle Jack Fred was working in Charlotte and I was in Greensboro and I'd take the train from Greensboro to Charlotte, like at Christmastime, and he'd bring me home. I remember that barter system so well.

EP: My father ran a business. He was a wonderful man but he was no businessman, no disrespect to him. But the reason he wasn't a businessman is because he could not understand. If he bought a suit of clothes for \$30, in those days you marked it \$50, somebody come along and offered him \$35, he'd take it. He didn't think it'd cost him 10 or 12 dollars, I got sick of it. He didn't like me til the day he died just for that thing.

AP: Ed changed the store all the way around.

EP: I had to. Then we started making a decent living. He had a good store but he just didn't, and he was a gambler in the sense that he went out and bought real estate. And in those days, I don't know if you've heard of this, this is an important part of history that most people don't know a damn thing about. In those

days they had what they called deficiency judgements. If you owned a piece of property and you owned a business or you owned a home and you could not pay for that piece of property, you had a mortgage on it, they could sue you on a deficiency judgement against the property that you owned, besides that, or your business. The bad thing was that my father induced your uncle to come down here and he lost a pot full of money and I was a youngster in college and begged him not to do it.

I: This is the land boom time?

EP: Yeah.

I: Why was it the land boom? People from Florida were coming up here and paying high prices or what?

EP: Here's the way that thing happened. Florida got to be known, for years they didn't have transportation. See, that's how the whole world has changed since you were a boy, transportation and communication has gotten so fast and everything. So anyhow, Flagler went down to Florida and he opened up the railroad. There were no such thing as roads in those days. And then it got to be a famous resort and then they started building roads. And they built up Florida and they got all excited and they got to making money so fast. There was a fellow by the name of Stows that came up here and he was going to put a big hotel up there at Laurel Park. I know you've heard of that, the Fleetwood.

I: That's all from the land boom time?

EP: Yes.

I: How did they find Hendersonville, because it was a summer resort?

EP: That's part of the Carolina Special deal. These people originally that settled Hendersonville as a summer resort came from Charleston. In those days when they first started coming, they would come by buggy and they'd take so many days and they'd bring their slaves with them.

I: And set up here for the summer because it was cooler.

EP: This was down above Tuxeda is the first high place all the way from Florida to that point, that's the highest spot, they take it. So naturally they settled in this part of the country. Then when these people in Florida wanted to get away from the heat, they started coming because that could be a little bit more that they could come back on. And the Carolina Special again comes into things.

I: So they started buying property so fast that the prices went up.

EP: That's right. So along that same time comes this fellow Stows and he owned a big hotel in Miami. And mind you in those days it was on South Beach. So he had figured out that he was going to build a hotel where he could take his guests around all year long. He was going to build one here, he was going to build one in Chattanooga on that mountain out there. Anyhow, it was his idea. So they started a boom up here. And my dad just didn't have anything, he just thought that he could eat up the world. I begged him, I said for God's sake, you're just spending thousands of dollars and that's when 40 or 50 thousand dollars was like a half a million dollars. He'd say, you know the boy's right. And then he'd go ahead and do something. Finally at last, you know where Bubba Boyd's place is,

they bought that place and paid \$35,000. Harry _____ gave me it to me. And papa wanted to sell it to _____ for Bubba Boyd for \$2,000 and it was in my name because he was broke. And he got mad as hell because I wouldn't let him sell it. I said when you get a decent price for it, I'll sign the deed. I finally got \$3,500 and that wasn't a decent price at that.

I: But the land boom busted because of the stock market crash or what?

EP: It was the stock market crash and conditions too.

I: So everybody started dropping their mortgages and it all just caved in.

EP: So anyhow the economy couldn't stand it.

I: Was that the same time as the land boom in Asheville when the president of the bank committed suicide and all that stuff? Do you remember anything about that?

EP: Yeah, I sure do. I remember all about the flood. Don't you remember anybody in Asheville that remembers all stuff?

I: I just haven't found...

EP: Well you can just come over here and I'll tell you everything I know. And I'll say it will be 70% correct. I'm not going to tell you it's going to be 100% because...

I: There was that Battery Park murder, do you remember that where this black bellboy was accused of killing a girl from New York? Do you remember anything about that?

EP: No. I remember something about that. But I'll tell you what I remember. Later than that there was a white boy, his father was a contractor for shirts for Sears and Roebuck, that killed his wife. You don't know anything about that.

I: Do you remember his name?

EP: He had 2 or 3 plants around here. Fred Lewin worked for him, the father. The black boy, I remember something about that.

I: It was a girl from New York that stayed at the Battery Park Hotel but then they said maybe the black boy was coerced into confessing. Anyway, we'll talk some more in just a little bit maybe. Let's talk a little bit about the synagogue in Hendersonville and maybe how it got started and anything else you might want to say about the actual synagogue.

EP: We had no such thing as a synagogue in Hendersonville for the first 17 or 18 years of my life. The only thing I can remember the religious way was my barmitzvah in 1911 and it was held in my house. And on another occasion my aunt Becky, my father's sister, was married in the Woodman Hall over Jack _____ store, which wasn't Jack's store at that time.

I: That was the Brenner's did you say?

EP: Yeah the Brenners got married. And then on another occasion, I don't

know where the rabbi came from, but we had some services. I went off to college. I finished high school in 1921 and Morris Caplan informed me that I was the oldest member in Hendersonville of the original congregation that's living. By that time it apparently must have been either in my junior year in college, I would assume that was when it was, that would have been about 1924, they formed a synagogue. At that time there were quite a few families here if I remember correctly. There was the Pettersons, the Lewises, the Markowitzes and the Williams family. In fact, Mr. Williams brother, his name was _____.

I: That's Lou Williams' brother.

EP: Yeah. And he came down here and he was theoretically the only rabbi that we've ever had.

AP: No, we've had some since.

EP: And from there the synagogue grew. But the interesting thing was that they finally got enough money that they got together and they needed a place. And there was a place here right next to the Carnegie Library that was called the Home Electric and run by a very fine man. His name was Oates. And Mr. Oates had developed some kind of a local plant, I don't know whether he had a steam plant in town or what. Anyhow, in those years, Duke Power Co. started being a factor in western Carolina and bought out the Home Electric Co. And Mr. Oates sold the building to my father for a very nominal sum, which he of course had bought it for the synagogue. And then Duke Power Co. moved up on Main Street. That's where they were for all those years. And that's where the synagogue started. Well over the years we had one or two rabbis and then during the summer months we would have temporary...

I: Do you remember any of the names of the ones over the summer?

AP: No. I remember when I first started coming to services here was the year 1926 and we had Rabbi Hiam Williamofsky who was Ann Caplan and Sammy Williams' father's brother. But he went on from here. He went to Durham, then he went up to Washington, Alexandria, Virginia. But I remember him as being a very nice rabbi. Now they did have several summers, they brought a rabbi here from somewhere out in the midwest, but I don't remember his name.

I: They would stay here during the summer for all the summer people.

AP: Yeah.

EP: We had a very fine person here too from Mississippi. He was involved with something. He was a nice guy. I've got to get that name because that's something you should have. He stood up to one of those organizations one time, those anti-black things when all that stuff was going on. And we managed to get along. We didn't have any rabbi, you couldn't afford anything. And Ann had taught Sunday school and all of a sudden our young population disappeared completely.

I: That would be like up to the 60s you think?

EP: I think it was in the 70s. We had a fellow that came here by the name of Sam Fine and he owned a business, his mother's family was in a meat processing plant. And he got after me one day that we were going to grow and this and that and the other and we needed to go out and buy a bigger place. So he put so much pressure on me and there was a house on 6th Avenue.

AP: Was it near the Y?

I: It is the Y. And it was for sale. And he had shown me an idea that envisioned, I never was a good member of the synagogue, but I've always be proud of my Jewishness. And we figured out that he could have the synagogue and we could have a home built for people that wanted a Jewish home for _____. And we went out and bought that thing. And right after we bought it the synagogue started shrinking right just after we bought that piece of property. Luckily we had enough givers that it was all paid for. So one day Morris Caplan came to me and he said, he's done a terrific job incidently, we're going to do such and such but we're going to have to make some kind of provision. The way we're shrinking and everything else, pretty soon there's not going to be any Jewish people around.

AP: They thought they were going to have to donate it to the home.

EP: So we went to talk to the lawyer that we wanted to give it to somebody, not to the home, to some organization if it got to that point. And this lawyer says to me, I'm not going to let you do it. He's says, whoever heard of a church stopping like that. He says it's ridiculous for you to even give any thoughts to this thing. So in the meanwhile the YMCA came and wanted a piece of property. So I sold it to them and made a fair profit on it. I had to buy it and I had to do the selling. I wasn't that good a real estate man I tell you right now. Anyway, we sold it and made several thousand dollars. We had money that they could put in air conditioning in the synagogue, improved the place where we were. And then that's when the thing went down. So we didn't sell it. It wasn't two years after that that the people started coming here to retire, Jewish people. Of all these years we haven't had that and two years after that happened.

I: So then the congregation started growing again?

EP: Oh yeah and as a result, how many members do we have now?

AP: Well let me tell you something. This Saturday night they're going to have the first _____ out in Flat Rock across from St. Johns in the Wilderness. There will be approximately 139 people attending that _____.

EP: Now they're all not here all year round.

I: Beth Israel now maybe has 175. But up until 2 or 3 years ago, they only had about 100. Although they are year round.

AP: I was at Harris Teeter's the other day getting some passover things and two Jewish women were around me picking up some stuff. They didn't know much about the synagogue or the _____ or anything and I told them. They came last Friday night to services. They're coming out for the _____. And one of these ladies said she had lived in Brevard for 4 years. They're originally from New York and Florida you know. But they like it here.

EP: I tell you though, there's not the warm feeling that exist anymore as we used to have when there was 20 or 25 members. But it is growing there's no question about it. And we got a bad situation that we can't increase the size of it. And it really needs to be increased to about to hold about 50 more people. At high holy holidays we have to seat people upstairs and downstairs.

I: I came for a little bit last year and there was no room upstairs and I

was downstairs and viewed it with the television screen.

EP: We do need a spiritual leader. We don't have quite enough people. Dues are very unrealistic. Several of us ought to be paying alot more but that's all they're asking and they've got more money than they know what to do with.

I: How about the situation with the Asheville community and Hendersonville community just in general? You've generally done things separately right?

AP: Yeah. At one time we had Hadassah here. I was president of the Jewish Ladies Auxillary and Hadassh here at the same time for about 6 or 7 years. I think I retired about 1962 from it. We didn't have nearly as many members but Hadassh expected us, you know, each year we would meet the goals. Several times I got the Flat Rock playhouse to let us sponsor one of the plays there for fundraising. We did all kinds of things. But anyway I still belong to Hadassah in Asheville but I liked it better when we had it here.

EP: There's never been too much communication. The only person insofar as I know of that was a spiritual leader in Asheville, at least that's the way I felt about it. They had a reform rabbi who was there about 25 or 30 years and he was very much interested in our community, Rabbi Unger. And he would have been the type of person that could have brought us together but I don't think there's been anybody one way or the other. As a result I don't know what the situation insofar as, if we happen to have a funeral, Morris has done that for the past...

I: Morris ___ does the services right.

AP: Right now there is this rabbi has built, I don't know if it's a summer home or what, but in the nice area about 10 miles out of town. He's been here every weekend this month and conducted services. And he's going to conduct services Saturday morning.

I: Is there any one thing that you would like to say about Hendersonville? I know that's sort of a vague question. But just thinking back over it, is there anything that you remember the most or the most fondly or any particular event in the Hendersonville community that stands out in your mind?

EP: One thing that stands out in my mind is when WWII was over, the celebration we had. And I had a very unusual experience when I was a youth. That I'll have to tell you on a different occasion. The third experience that I remember so well and it wasn't very pleasant was that flood. That would be the three things.

AP: I've always felt that it's been a close community. There aren't many old timers left and it's a little difficult getting used to the new people. But I've been shocked to see how many people we do have coming now.

I: So it is sort of a rebirth even though it's a different kind of congregation but it is sort of a rebirth.

AP: I sometimes feel like maybe it's my fault too. Maybe we need to go out and try to be a little friendlier.

I: I guess when you've been together for so long, it's hard to do that.

AP: And it was always such a small, close community and we're not in the

habit of going out and trying to be friendlier with the other people which I feel I need to start doing.

EP: There's another situation too. It's not that close as a family in some instances. For instance, this is a new method of life, old folks now going to rest homes. They look for other places, for climates that suits them better, that you did not have before. It's a question not only as we talked about, transportation that you can get from place to place.

I: You don't have to stay in one place.

AP: We do not have any public transportation.

EP: I not speaking in that sense. I speaking about like an airplane, you can drive your car and so forth. That's what I'm talking about. I'm not speaking about transportation in town.

I: Some of the modern inventions have actually broken down the closeness. You had to be close then.

AP: And people lived close in town. The majority of people who come here now, well we do not live in the city of Hendersonville and the majority of people, there are so many new developments.

EP: We never had alot of Jewish people living next to each other. But it was in the city limits.

AP: They do not live in the city limits today.

I: I think we'll stop here. I want to thank Ed and Doris Petterson and Ann Koladkin. Again this is March 22, 1994 and I'm sure we'll probably do some more taping at some other time. Thanks Ed and thanks Ann.