

YETTA CHAIKEN INTERVIEWING DR. GOLDEN
FOR THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 7, 1991

YC: What is your full name?

AG: Abraham Albert Golden.

YC: And you go by Dr. A. A. Golden.

AG: Right.

YC: When were you born?

AG: 26th of April, 1913.

YC: Where?

AG: Brooklyn, New York. In our home off Bushwick Avenue

YC: Tell me something about your parents.

AG: My father, Isadore, came here when he was real young, a child, with his father from Kiev, Russia. My mother, very interestingly, came alone with here only sister from Bucharest, Romania. My mother came alone to meet an uncle in New York City for a visit and subsequently, they stayed. My father and his father and three brothers all came together from Russia, settled in Brooklyn, New York after they were processed on Ellis Island. My grandfather was a tinsmith and worked as a tinsmith. He had no trouble getting a job. He had to learn English, of course, but in those days, learning English was very simple. You went to night school. That was where they all learned English. My father became a naturalized citizen and so did all of the others. Mother also became a naturalized citizen and what English she picked up was also from night school.

YC: Did they have any education outside of that?

AG: Prior to corning the United States, my mother and her sister, had no school education at all. They could speak Romanian but they could not write. They could read a little bit, as I recall.

YC: But they learned to write English.

AG: Oh yes. Everybody went to night school.

YC: You were born in Brooklyn, New York. When did you come to Wilmington and why did you come?

AG: World War I was going on and my father decided to come to Wilmington because he also learned the tinsmithing trade, the sheet-metal working

trade, allied professions, and since they were building ships in Wilmington, Delaware, he felt he would go. So along he went with his wife, my mother, and three children, myself, and my two sisters. He got a job at Pusey and Jones Shipyard where he worked throughout the episodes in World War I, stayed there for a couple of years after the war ended and also learned the plumbing trade at the same time.

YC: Did he learn it while he was shipbuilding or did he apprentice for a while?

AG: He was an apprentice while he was there. Along with his regular work, he learned plumbing because he felt that it was a good profession to have.

YC: Did he find any discrimination?

AG: In my recollection, no. But nobody ever called him a damn Jew, I'll tell you that. He was a short man, 5'5" with very strong arms and a knack of hitting first in case somebody insulted him. As I recall, He didn't have a violent temper but he was easily aroused if somebody talked about his background.

YC: So your family came here and as a result, you stayed and raised your children.

AG: Yes.

YC: Where did you live in Wilmington when your family came? And what can you remember about life there?

AG: We settled at a nonexistent street now, I think. 623 W. Second Street. Marble steps and I remember my mother with a scrubbing brush every day to keep the steps on the outside clean. They weren't steps, it was a stoop. And I can recall as a youngster, drinking cocoa and milk on the steps before going to school. In the house we spoke Yiddish exclusively. I learned some odd Russian terms and Romanian terms but not much to carry on a full-time conversation. The same applied to my sister Rose and my sister Molly. My sister Molly was not born in New York. I just recalled. She was born on Parrish Street around the corner from 623 W. Second Street.

YC: So she was Wilmington.

AG: Molly was born in Wilmington, in the house. I was born at home and so was my sister. Molly was also delivered at home. No hospital here. Next door to me was German by the name of Hitche, who raised a son that became a civil engineer. Mr. Roy Hitche was a harness maker and his trademark was facsimile of a harness.

YC: As a sign?

AG: Yes. Next door to Mr. Hitche was the original bakery of Del Campo's

bakery. And I went to school with all the Del Campo children. The school was on Jefferson Street between 2nd and 3rd and was Number 3 school. When I started school, I didn't know a word of English.

YC: Did you have any Jewish neighbors at all?

AG: Yes. Up the street was the barber shop with Ben Kaney and his brother, Manuel. Manny and Ben were barbers up the street on the corner of Parrish Street and w. Second Street. Manny later on left his brother to barber on his own and opened up a clothing shop on Market Street. Up the street from us on the corner was Mr. Weintraub. What did Mr. Weintraub have? A grocery store.

YC: Was that the same Weintraubs that had the fish?

AG: Wait a minute. Just a moment. I am trying to think. Next door below Mr. Weintraub was the furniture store of the late Harry Kauffman. He had a furniture store and then moved away. But his furniture store was there for a long time. Across the street was an Italian couple that had a shoe repair place, who had children who became a couple of lawyers and engineers. Strange to say, across the street, directly across the street from where we lived, were four black families whose names I never did know. They drove Pierce Arrows, the two men. Why did they drive Pierce Arrows? Because they were chauffeurs for somebody in the DuPont family and they were given the privilege to drive back and forth in the car to work and to home. The oddest thing that I can recall, also, either in grammar school or the first year in high school, I asked the question, where did the black kids go to school. It never occurred to me that there was then a distinction. All I know was there were no black kids in school with me and I never gave it a thought.

YC: That is very true.

AG: I never thought about it until I was in high school. Then I found that they had their own separate schools. That gave me the idea, who are they? I didn't know a thing about black people except that their color was different. We were raised without any discrimination at all. As far as I knew, people were people.

YC: In your neighborhood?

AG: In my neighborhood. I had Italians living around there. The Del Campo's that I mentioned. Around the corner there were three Spanish people, one of who went to school with me. His name was Lorca. He died about a year ago, a schoolmate of mine. I still carry a scar from a fight that we had because he called me a Christ killer and I never knew was a Christ killer was. I heard the term but I felt it was a bad thing. We had a fight and he pulled a little penknife on me and here is a scar on my right hand. We were fighting on the ground. That went over.

YC: Where did you go to school, high school?

AG: Wilmington High School. From 623 W. Second Street, things improved. Pop opened up a plumbing shop on his own at 311 Shipley Street.

YC: Were there other Jewish plumber?

AG: He was the only Jewish minster plumber in the State of Delaware. He was held in high esteem by the Plumbers Association.

YC: How about by the Jewish Community?

AG: Oh also. He was active in Katz Shalom on Shipley Street, which incidentally started as a synagogue.

YC: In what year?

AG: 1914.

YC: Was your father a charter member?

AG: He was one of the early members.

YC: Like my father.

AG: The Chaiken family was. The tall, tall Chaiken who used to run the Jewish legion in World War I, in Israel as part of husky man. I remember the British Corp, I think. Tall, him. I forget his first name.

YC: He was a cleaner.

AG: Right. He opened up a cleaning store on Orange Street. What else can I say? Several things.

YC: Did you have religious training?

AG: I had the late Harry Bloom come to the house to teach me to read Yiddish, which I knew anyhow. The books I had were by Jewish authors like Paritz, Osh.

YC: Were your sisters educated also?

AG: Not to the degree that I was. I was a man that had special home lessons. I was bar mitzvah in Wilmington. There was a Rabbi Sobitzki then.

YC: Was this before Rabbi Forsch?

AG: This was before Rabbi Forsch. He came after Rabbi Sobitzki. After we moved to 311 Shipley Street where Pop opened up his own personal shop for plumbing and heating and passed his boards, so to speak, to be a licensed plumber, the Berger family lived down the street from me with

12 or 13 kids. When I first went to visit the Bergers, Simon went to school with me all the way through to high school, the third floor was where they slept. I thought I was in an army barracks. There were bunks all over the third floor where all the kids slept.

YC: Simon is the one that became a doctor.

AG: Simon became a radiologist and now every time I see him, God forbid, is when one of his brothers die.

YC: The Bergers lived on that block. Who else?

AG: At 3rd and Shipley Street. My mother, we lived above where the synagogue was.

YC: You lived above?

AG: Oh yes. At 311. The Synagogue was at 223, don't ask me how I remember that.

YC: There was a Schvitz and Katz. A Turkish Bath.

AG: Every Saturday night, Pop, I and my uncle went to Schmitz. Most of the time, even though I lived up the street, we stayed there all night.

YC: Was that a common practice?

AG: Oh yes. Eating pastrami sandwiches that we got from Rips Delicatessen store around the block. Eventually, I don't remember when, I said we lived next door to Del Campo's bakery on W. 2nd Street, next door to us was Carp's Bakery on the corner of 2nd and Parrish. Mrs. Carp, the late Mrs. Carp may she rest in peace, was so enamored with my sister Molly, that she offered my mother a terrific sum of money to adopt her. Well naturally you know what the response of a Jewish mother would be. No way! She loved her daughter, my sister Molly.

YC: You have two sisters. Who did they marry?

AG: Rose married Leon Horowitz. Molly married Benjamin B. Cohen, whose parents had a grocery store at 12th and Walnut Streets. My sister Rose died a year ago. Her husband, Leon, died 8 months prior to that. Thank God that my sister Molly is still alive and active and so is her husband, Ben Cohen. I married Netta, a Jewish girl who had relatives here known by the name of Raphaelson. Lou Raphaelson had a scrapyard.

YC: How did you meet?

AG: I was in the Navy in World War II. My mother had died in 1941 of a disease that today she would not have died from. No antibiotics, no dialysis. She had strep throat and died of acute renal failure. I was so unbelieving that this could have happened to my mother so fast in 8 days that I gave permission for an autopsy, which was contrary to my

Jewish thinking. But I wanted to know and so did the family doctor, the late Dr. Jacob Kaiser. It showed swollen kidneys. It proved the diagnosis. Anyhow, I went the Philadelphia Hospital of Osteopathic Medicine.

YC: What motivated you to go into medicine.

AG: MD's won't like this but my father a stomach condition of some sort and he went to doctor after doctor here in Wilmington and Philadelphia. He went to the best. He went to Bochus, Everhart (who was known as the guy for stomach disease), nobody helped him. He went to an osteopathic doctor here in Wilmington, the late Dr. Theodore Steigler, and he went just for manipulation because the doctor felt that this was what he needed. He felt the medicine was of no value to him. After I had graduated high school and was deciding what to do, my classmates were all going to college and then to Jeff, he said to me, "You be a doctor." So I went for 1 year to college. In those years you didn't need to go to an osteopathic hospital for four years, all you needed was one year of college and chemistry and biology.

YC: Would you have had any trouble getting into a medical school?

AG: No, I wouldn't have had any trouble. I was a good student.

YC: There was discrimination and there were quotas.

AG: My cousin, Lou Schinsfeld got in. He is retired now. My best friend Simon Berger got in. I was just as good. I would have gotten in. Even then they were starting to give a little extra credit to Delaware students.

YC: At Jefferson.

AG: It was at Jefferson. I never applied. I just went straight to the Osteopathic College. First, I had to dress because in those days, Osteopathic doctors were not considered physicians. I would just go through life and make it.

YC: Did you feel got a good education?

AG: I feel that I got a very good education. Let's go back to 2nd Street, shall we? Pop was a well-known bicyclist in Brooklyn, New York. He belonged to what was known as Century Road Club of America, of which my son and I have mementos of this. Especially my son who is a teacher in New York City, a teacher on the Board of Education. Many and many a ride with Pop's racing bike, sitting on the handlebars as we went down 2nd Street to shop. We shopped at Fishman's Bakery when it was there. Then, of course, Blatman came there. The grocer, Milinsky was there. Across the street was Ritz Delicatessen Store. Pop would ride me on the bicycle and I was scared stiff. We had no brake, it was a racing bike. He would put his foot on the front tire to slow up and there was a hill on 2nd Street from West Street down to Tatnall Street.

YC: That's rather steep. AG: Oh yes.

YC: How was he able to bicycle up that?

AG: He just pumped away. Pop was a very strong man. He lived and survived a stroke for seven years. I had him in the Kutz Home.

YC: How old was he when he died?

AG: He died at age 89. His father, Harry, that he came to this country with died at age 91.

YC: Sounds to me that you have good genes.

AG: Yes, I hope so. I am not going to tell you how old I am. You know how old I am and I'm active. I don't intend to rust out. Anyhow, that's 2nd Street and I remember the bicycle. I remember Brody's and Smedley's Lumber Yard on the corner of 2nd & Madison. I remember the Ostrom family who had a linen shop also on the corner of 2nd & Madison Street.

YC: Where was their store?

AG: They had a daughter, Hillerson, she was a schoolteacher, a violin teacher.

YC: She became Ann Frankel.

AG: Yes. That's it. So they were down the street from us. We didn't know them too well, but they were down the street. I'm trying to think of another Jewish family. I don't think so.

YC: You were well acquainted with the families of the stores on 2nd Street.

AG: Oh sure.

YC: You did all you shopping there?

AG: All of our shopping there.

YC: Was that the place to meet? Was it social?

AG: Kibitz on Sunday.

YC: How about Saturday night?

AG: Saturday night sometimes. On the corner of 2nd and Orange Street, it was owned by a Jewish fellow, his name I don't recall, but I remember I learned to play poker there as I got older, I think the man's name was Friedman, I forget. He was related to the Rubin family in Wilmington.

YC: So what you are saying is that it was a wonderful growing up period.

AG: I had a happy childhood. As I say, relatively no dissension, that one episode. And I didn't allow it to go any further. Oh, Harry Bloom, my Yiddish teacher, his son, Saul was a student with me. I don't know whatever happened to him.

YC: What that from Bloom's ...

AG: Bloom's that had the coffee deal.

YC: Did he have a store on 2nd Street?

AG: No. I forgot. Thanks for reminding me. Abe Bloom had a grocery store. That was where we got the papers. That was another grocery store. The girls went to school with me. I can't think of their names, but a youngest son's name was Mike Bloom, who I think used to do work with iron pipes.

YC: I think he's still around town.

AG: There was a daughter named Ruth or Anna, I'm not sure. Anna, I think.

YC: So you are saying really that everybody got along well.

AG: Family wise. Of course, we were marrying Jewish people. We knew that there were Jews living elsewhere in Wilmington but they -were the rich Jewish people and we did not know them.

YC: They didn't come down to 2nd Street?

AG: Not that I can recall.

YC: Did you ever go to the YM YWHA.

AG: Oh sure. That was where my folks had my bar mitzvah party. I gave my bar mitzvah speech there.

YC: But you didn't do it a hetlah shlemich?

AG: I was bar mitzvahed hetlah shlemich. Once you go in there, you know it was because the bimah was in the middle of the congregation and the women sat on top. When I married my wife back in 1943, we were married in Norristown. Rabbi Forsch was dead then. She went with me to Shul twice. And she said, "Abe, I'm not coming here again. I can't sit with you like I did with my mother and father in Norristown. I'm not coming here. We'll join Beth Shalom." Which I followed the rules of my wife and we joined Beth Shalom. But I never gave up my membership. Even today Adas Kodesch Synagogue on Torah Drive, half a block from where I live now and I also a dues-paying member at Beth Shalom. I just felt a sense of allegiance.

1. You asked me before how I met my wife. I was in the Navy. I was based in a Naval Hospital in Philadelphia. My rank was Chief Petty Officer. I could not get a commission like they do today because I was an Osteopathic doctor. They called me in and since I was a physician even though they didn't recognize my rank as that, I worked on the ship where I got my first taste of doing anesthesia and helped to do electrocardiogram laboratory and the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia was a big, big place. They were expecting so many casualties that besides the hospital, they build extra barracks on the outside. That was way down deep in South Philadelphia, across the street from League Island Park, or something like that. 17th and Passyunk Avenue, I think was the address.

So, I said, "I don't want to go to the wedding. My mother has only been dead four months." "You don't have to dance. Just go in and maybe you will meet some people." I said, okay. So, I went. This was in 1941. And as I walked in, the wedding was taking place at the Broadworth Hotel. I hope I am not insulting anybody giving family secrets. It was at the Broadworth Hotel. As I walked in, (to anyone that is familiar with the Hotel), there were about three little steps, turn to the right and then you were in the main ballroom. I saw a stage, and on the stage, I saw three women. One young woman and two older women. I looked at the younger woman and I said automatically, there's the lady I'd like to marry. I walked over the them and introduced myself and I was from Wilmington, Delaware, I was Dr. Abe Golden and I take care of the injuries the Lou Raphaelson's scrapyard had and I was asked to come to this wedding by Lou Raphaelson. One of them women introduced herself as Mrs. Helen Raphaelson, the wife of Lou Raphaelson's brother, Charles. The other woman was Beth, I forget her last name, from Atlantic City. And, of course, her daughter, Cissie. So, I made a couple of remarks and looked around the tables to see where I would sit. Then I looked around the other tables to see where Cissie Raphaelson was sitting. I changed her little place setting so I would sit at the same table. That was then. I want to go back a little bit if you don't mind. After I got through with Osteopathic Hospital College and I was in practice for one year as a single man.

YC: You didn't have to do a resident internship?

AG: In those days you couldn't get one. They were all taken. There were only 8 hospitals in the country then. Now there are loads. So, I felt I needed more attention. I liked Obstetrics. I sent off a letter to Rotunda Hospital in Dublin, Ireland. They didn't ask any questions. I wanted to apply there because I knew a doctor who is dead now, the late Dr. Bowen, knew he had been there and he was born in Canada. So, I wrote a letter and I got back an application blank to enclose the equivalent five guineas as a registration fee. In those days, the guinea was worth \$5.25. I might say that the pound was worse then. The English pound and the Irish pound was worth \$4.78, as I remember. I got accepted and so I packed my steamer trunk and went all alone.

YC: Now this was prior to your marriage.

AG: Yes, prior to my marriage.

YC: So you went to Dublin to get more experience. Was this hospital a good hospital to train in?

AG: It was founded in 1745. It was the largest lying in hospital or maternity hospital in the British empire. And there I met fellows from India because Great Britain supplied doctors in what was called the Indian Medical Service. Doctors would work like they do today in the Indian Service and get their education free like they do from Uncle Sam. I met English men from India, Indian men from India, both Moslems and Hindus. As an addition to my talk in the hospital, we had three separate messes or dining tables. One for those who ate anything, that was English, American. Those who were Moslems and only followed the diet they ruled, and those that were Hindus that were primary vegetarians. The Hindus did not get any cow meat or lamb.

YC: Did you eat with the Moslems?

AG: I ate with the Moslems. They knew I was Jewish.

YC: So you didn't eat pork.

AG: No pork. In fact, there were three Moslems who learned that I was going over to Paris and Venice. They taught me conversational French in four months that I can still carry on today. No grammar. I went to Paris afterward.

YC: So it was a great experience.

AG: It was a great experience. I was in Dublin, Ireland when Hitler marched into Poland. The ambassador said for all Americans to get back home while you still can. By that time, I was on my way to Paris because I had an aunt and an uncle who came from Romania years before and were living there. I had their address and while I was in Paris, I went there. My aunt, when I knock on the door, they were near the bad section of Paris, she wouldn't open the door. So, I knock again and as she opened the door slightly, I saw a picture of my uncle. I says in Yiddish, "This is your nephew, Abe Golden from America." Then she let me in and her son had met me at the railroad station. We had a good time and I stayed for two weeks there before I had to leave because of the impending war.

YC: What happened during when the Germans marched in?

AG: I went back to Paris after the war with my wife. My aunt was alive and well. She died subsequently of hypothyroidism and heart disease. I could see the diagnosis on her face. My two cousins were taken prisoners. But they survived. They survived World War II. One was in the resistance, Jon, the older one. Where Al was, the younger one, I

don't know. I still treasure the bar mitzvah presents that they sent me when I became bar mitzvahed. That was background. So where are we now?

YC: Now you just finished, you went to Dublin and now you are on your way back to the United States.

AG: We get a lot of home deliveries in Dublin. There was a total of 7,000 deliveries a year there. That was why various Englishmen came from all over the world to review Obstetrics. In England, at that time, the students had to have 23 deliveries. So, having 22 labor beds, all separated by curtains with no anesthesia, you hear mothers, you have natural childbirth, in one week all of them could complete their 23 deliveries. I met Scottish people, English, the whole works.

YC: You came back to the United States to stay.

AG: I did home deliveries. I drew plans of what the hospital used when the students went out on home deliveries and Pop, being a tinsmith, he made the instruments. And, since you have to have sterility, I went over to the old Homeopathic Hospital. Below Lovering Avenue. They were very friendly to me because other doctors who were Allopaths, didn't like them.

YC: What is an Allopath?

AG: They are the ones who felt that the Homeopathic doctors were not real doctors and they trained at the Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. That changed after a while. But all through Wilmington and the Eastern Shore all you found were the Homeopathic doctors who had graduated from Hahnemann. The only other Homeopathic college, what was then known as the Fifth Avenue Hospital, somewhere in New York City, which is also now gone. Hahnemann very seldom, I don't think they teach Homeopathic medicine at all. They were the doctors they call pill doctors. They were the doctors that carry black bags with little pills. They would try to get pills that would produce the symptoms that the patient would feel. Anyway, they felt very friendly to me and so their operating used to sterilize my equipment.

YC: They sterilized your equipment but they wouldn't let you use their facilities?

AG: No. I did home deliveries. I was not an M.D. Incidentally, St. Francis recently revised the standards for D.O.'s, officially, so that they are a medical center.

YC: It's taken a long time.

AG: It's taken a long time. I never regretted what I was doing.

YC: Did you find that you felt discrimination because you were an Osteopathic?

AG: Only from lay people. Jewish people didn't come to me. In my older days they began coming to me. I have a slew of older Jewish people now. But I had Jewish people then, too. They came to me only for backache. And, incidentally, I am not going to mention their names, three Jewish families who sent their fathers to me because their fathers had a backache and I would X-ray their spines before I would treat them, all had malignancies. They had been going to other doctors. So, that was a little feather in my cap. One of the families I still see. That was that. That would be a minor thing. I was happy and I thanked God I was alive. Incidentally, while I was in the Navy, I got my shipping orders to join a landing ship that was going to North Africa.

YC: While you were Chief Petty Officer.

AG: I got shipping orders to go up to, I think it was New York, the ship was attached to H. Bliss, an attack transport. That was the name of it. But the week before, I had fallen down a ladder and they put me in the hospital. And I had some wonderful doctors from Harvard Medical School, and one of them listened to my heart, one listened to this, listened to that, and said "You know, you have a heart problem." I said, "I do?" He said, "You have a heart problem. I am going to write that up." So I was in the Naval Hospital for one month. Then I had what they call an interview. At that time the policy in the Navy was, if you weren't fit for sea duty, you weren't fit for the Navy. So, I was asked point blank by Dr. Landy, Captain Landy, chief of the Naval Hospital, "Do you want to stay? We have no job for you." I said, "Okay. Let me go." I had an honorable discharge, a medical discharge. I never got compensation, didn't even ask for it. I got out. They wanted to send me out. I wasn't fit for sea duty because that was the policy. Not now. Now you get a desk job. But then, you had to be fit. Anyhow, I came out. I had my first office when I got out at 1009 Madison Street next door to Sidney Schagrin, the dentist and had a combination office with the late Joseph Keil, also a dentist.

YC: So you shared the office with Joseph Keil?

AG: Yes. I had five rooms with the magnificent rent of \$25.00 a month.

YC: This was in 1940?

AG: This was in 1939, 1940 up to 1941.

YC: 1941.

AG: I may get my dates a little mixed. When I came back I opened up an office at 6th & Broom and I opened an office at 1009 Madison Street. Which is a magic number for me. I still own the building.

YC: How long did you practice there?

AG: 15 or 16 years. Then I moved to 502 Rockwood Road. By that time, I was only doing anesthesia.

YC: So, when you moved to 502 Rockwood Road, you were no longer doing private practice.

AG: Just a little bit.

YC: So, by that time there was a Riverside Hospital.

AG: Riverside Hospital, Clifton Park. Incidentally, learned my anesthesia at a place where nobody knew I was a D.O. A class A medical institution. Albert Einstein Northern Division. When I started there in 1949, my cousin said, "Listen, we need somebody. You can drop ether can't you?" I said, "Yes." "We need somebody to give tonsil anesthesia." They had no organized department as such. Only nurses and some of the nurses had quit. I went there and I was there for five years, from 1949 to 1954 when we opened up Riverside Hospital in Clifton Park. Lou knew I was a D.O., his partner knew I was a D.O. and the administrator knew I was a D.O. in those days.

YC: But no one else.

AG: No one else. Mr. Lakasy, who became the first Chief Director of that hospital, after the name was changed from the Jewish Hospital of Philadelphia to Einstein Northern Division because Sinai Hospital was at 5th & Reed and that was the Southern Division, which is no more. It was sold. Back in those days there was no Northern Division.

YC: What did you train in? You trained in Anesthesia?

AG: I trained in Anesthesia.

YC: At no place they did tests?

AG: There was no such things as looking up credentials.

YC: For instance, did you have to take exams?

AG: No. Afterwards, when I became certified.

YC: When you became certified by Einstein ...

AG: No. By the Osteopathic Board.

YC: Oh, by the Osteopathic Board.

AG: Our little hospital didn't have that many cases as in those days the examiner would go to whatever hospital you were in to give anesthesia and see what you knew. So, I had to pay the expenses of two of my

examiners at the Bellevue Stratford. They came up to Jewish and watched me give anesthesia.

YC: Before they certified.

AG: They I took an examination in 1953 and was certified before the hospital opened up. I was looking ahead. Maybe I was one of these guys...

YC: So you became certified before it was common practice to do that?

AG: MD's became certified.

YC: Oh, did they?

AG: I belonged the American Society of Anesthesiologists not as a certified member but just to join the Society and get their journals. But that was unbelievable. Nobody asked me where you went to school, where you interned. Nothing. No credentials. Today you couldn't do it. 10 years ago you couldn't do it. I gave up my work and I lectured. I gave anesthesia to two of my chief's parents. They picked me out because I was interested in geriatric anesthesia then. I even gave a paper in Jerusalem on anesthesia over the age of 70. Anyhow, the only way one of my chiefs knew I was a D.O. is I went to meeting in Jersey and I had my thing. I never was ashamed of who I was. Abraham A. Golden, D.O. She looks and looks. I said, "Lillian, I am the same doctor who gave your father the anesthesia." She did not know. None of the D.O.'s who sent kids over there, nobody said a thing that you have a D.O. on your staff. I saved the literature and the outstanding recommendations from surgeons then in Philadelphia. We were affiliated with Temple. I had the Chief of Neurosurgery give me a recommendation. It was proof. So, when I took my exams, I was in a medical hospital.

YC: Tell me something about the beginning of Riverside and your role in it.

AG: Well, Riverside Hospital was first a little hospital run by Dr. Davis at 10th & Madison. He converted his home into a little hospital. He had 10 rooms. We used to carry patients from the 3rd Floor to the 2nd Floor to an operating room where you spread your hands and you touched the walls. On a flexible litter, you know the canvas. After four years or three years, a Mr. Danby gave money to start the hospital, a Dr. Bradford, Sr., a nose and throat man, helped out. The place started at the old Sellers Institute that was converted. The old library became a delivery room. The ballroom became a four bedded room and then we had one or two private rooms. That is where we stayed and we grew.

YC: And you were there from the beginning?

AG: From the very beginning.

YC: And your role was ...

AG: I started the Anesthesia Department. It became known all over. The M.D.s at the other hospitals respected me for what I was doing. As a matter of fact, when I went to Israel four different times and I had to leave the hospital, the guys from St. Francis and the Delaware Hospital, at that time there was no Medical Center, they stood in for me. They knew me and I knew them. They would go at night to examine the patients for surgery the next day. That is the relationship I had with them. I still have it.

YC: During these many years, you moved to Lea Boulevard then.

AG: I moved to Lea Boulevard. My wife didn't like the idea. It was a 1½ story house on Rockwood Road.

YC: I'm not talking about your house, the hospital.

AG: We stayed there from 1954 when it was started, until 1972. In 1972 the structure that you see today, became existing. Our extended care facility, which was dedicated 12th of October of 1981, is our building. I happened to be called upon to be the medical director.

YC: So, you have been with the hospital since the very beginning. First as the head of anesthesiology and now the director of extended care and now your practice has shifted over to geriatrics.

AG: That's right. Which means general practice also because the older people need a general practitioner. I don't call myself a family practitioner because that means taking care of the whole family. This I do not do. I don't belong to any of the HMO's in town because they want family physicians. And when somebody has called me, a patient, I say, "I will be glad to take care of you. Do you have any children? They say, "Yes, we have 3 children." I say, "I'm sorry. I can't do that." Because I don't want the responsibility. I've done enough work. How much can one do?

YC: Tell me about your involvement with the State of Israel and what interested you in the very beginning.

AG: I was always interested in Israel. As a little child..

YC: In Palestine.

AG: Yes. As a little child, we had a little box on the kitchen window and we put pennies and nickels in. You know, out of the little box, the piscah. My mother, we have the original charter of the Adas organization in Delaware. My mother was a charter member along with Mrs. Brotsky, there were two Brotsky's. All of the old-line Jewish families in Wilmington.

YC: All Jewish families were in involved. But they all weren't involved with the Adas.

AG: I know. But I am telling you the names I recall that were on the back of this certificate when they got their franchise, so to speak.

YC: Is it possible for us to have that in the Jewish Historical Society?

AG: You will have to ask my wife. She has had it exhibited as Adas meetings.

YC: Has she? That would be wonderful if we could have that.

AG: You will have to ask her. I love it. Mom, among others was a charter member of the Adas organization. I knew then what Adas was. Known as Palestine. I always wanted to go to Jerusalem. So I decided after the six day war, in fact only a couple of months after they were done, I wrote the director of anesthesia at the Hadas Hospital, Terry Davis who was a Glasgow-born Zionist. He says, "I don't know about Osteopathic doctors. Give me a resume of your training." So, I made photocopies of all my Albert Einstein Medical Center Northern Division papers that I had, gave him individual copies of all the papers. I had written 23 papers on anesthesia that were published in world literature. Sent him copies of each one of the papers. A photostatic copy of my Delaware license, my Pennsylvania license, at that time I didn't have a license in Florida, I just gave it up. I never intended to go there. But my wife wanted me to have a Florida license.

YC: Just in case.

AG: Yes, just in case. So anyhow. I sent him all those. And the first thing you know, I got a letter of acceptance. When are you able to be there? So, I went in April of 1968. The first of our 14 trips to Israel. I started from scratch. Like I'd been there all the time. A hospital is a hospital, an operating room is an operating room. I got the schedule. I was assigned to ...

YC: What hospital?

AG: Hadassah Hospital at Ein Kerem on top of a big, big hill overlooking... We stayed, Cissie was with me. We were given lodgings on Kennedy Building where the post-graduate students stayed. Since Cissie was always active with Hadas she became acquainted with the lady who was in charge of volunteer work there. They had a special name for it. Cissie could tell you. Anyhow, we slept on Army cots. The same low cots. You could touch the floor with your hand and also we had tickets to eat our meals. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. I used to eat breakfast. I was up early at 6:30 because the day started at 7:15. Before they fixed it up, in the operating room, you won't believe this, there were windows screened to let in some air. Not the place that you see today or the Mt. Scopus. Mt. Scopus was not there. It had been taken over by the Jordanians until the 6 Day War. It was ruined. Cissie and I went to the hospital. All we saw were bricks and barbed wire. One thing had not been harmed. That was in the lobby. I don't know, my wife could help me on that. We stayed there for 2½ months. I

got a wonderful letter and so did Cissie for the time that we spent there.

YC: So you periodically go there. Do you always go to the Hadassah Hospital?

AG: No. We have a cousin who was born in a displaced persons camp and who we used to send care packages there. We didn't know whether they got them because we used to correspond. Their names were Polish and Russian. Their name was Latooshka and then they changed it to Barisha. My cousin lived with us for 6 years. We brought him over here. He went to college.

YC: In Wilmington?

AG: In Wilmington. He went to Wilmington College and then went to Temple and took up courses in Communications but he went back to Israel and he was in the army in the 6 Day War. A young kid of 15 when we first met him. A green kid in a camouflage uniform. He was a member of the Golan Brigade who took the Golan Heights. When you see the Golan Heights, you wonder how they climbed up that steep. He had a machine gun and a rifle and a few things. We met him in his father and mother's home. Subsequently, his father died. A couple of years ago, his mother died. We went there for her funeral. We felt an obligation and we went to the funeral. They had two children, Isar and Katra. Katra married an Iraqi who was in part of the Jews in the underground who escaped from Iraq which was organized by a man, I should know his name. He organized it and most of the Jews had gotten out of Iraq. However, there were some unfortunates and the Iraqis do not like Jews. They were hanging Jews from the lampposts in Bagdad.

YC: The first time you went you stayed 7 months. You went to various places but sometimes you stayed and worked for how many years did you work in hospitals?

AG: You mean in Israel?

YC: You went back more than once?

AG: Oh yes, sure. I went there one day. I was there before it became the first, subsequently, there was a raid on the PLO Camp in Jordan. After all, we were what, only 9 miles from the Jordanian border or something like that. Hadas had a heliport. The day I was there with my sister Molly and my brother-in-law Ben, they had an episode which I still remember as a loss for Israel. They took a terrible beating from the Jordanians who somehow had been informed that an Israeli force was coming there. The wounded were coming in like mad. The gynecological ward was all set up already to treat the wounded and the near dead. IV's on every cot and all that. Several times when we had been there before when things were ready for other episodes. In 1973 war, I called up from Pasadena, California where I was going to a medical meeting, and I spoke to Dr. Davidson and said I belonged to the

American Fellowship for Israel Medical Organization that gets called for promised volunteers. I said, "Harry, do you need me? I can come tomorrow." He said, "Abe, we have so many guys coming in from South Africa and France you would only be in the way. So, would other Americans."

YC: So, you didn't go.

AG: No. How could I know about the Mohammed in 1973? It was Yom Kippur. For me, it was an intermission. The man is sitting out on a chair. The Rabbi comes out and says I want everybody to forget this Yom Kippur. I know some of you have checkbooks with you, some of you have money and we have plenty of paper. I want you to write I.O.U.'s for a pledge. Do you know, in that 1/2 hour they must have collected about \$3,000.

YC: It was very moving.

AG: It was. The first time we landed in Israel, I could see why people felt they wanted to kiss the ground. Molly and Ben, they went with us of that first trip, we had arranged for a guided tour. I'll never forget, when we went to a place that was called, oh, they drilled for oil and found gas there. It was just a little hotel and a couple of houses. I said to the fellow in charge, "What do you do about the Jordanians and the PLO's?" He said, "Look up at that, see that? That's an armored personal carrier. That's the Israeli defense corp."

YC: So, your involvement with Israel has been long and very emotional.

AG: I spoke to Israel last week. My two cousins. One lives in Hidara and one lives in Haifa, who I guess had come home to get a couple of nights sleep and on his machine, he has an answering machine, there was a message from his commander, "Get back here as soon as you can." I have another cousin that lives in Pitzaria. You remember the Raphaelson family? Bernie Raphaelson who died. His daughter lives there with her husband, Abe Kiver, who lived here in Wilmington and worked for the DuPont Company. They live there with their three children.

YC: I know Sandy goes there regularly. You wanted to tell me something about Second Street.

AG: The drugstore at 2nd and West. When I was in high school, I didn't know what I was going to do really. At that time, my dentist was Matthew Isaacs. I went to him one afternoon and I said to him, "Matt, can I stay a couple of minutes and watch what you do? I don't know what I am going to be." He says, "You'll like it." So, in between patients he talked to people about the horses that he bet on, the stock market and I said this is not for me. This is confining. Then I went to the drugstore at 2nd and West. Later on, he moved on W. 4th Street, which is now an entirely Hispanic neighborhood. His wife died recently. What was that druggists name at 2nd and West? Anyhow. Al Bunnet. I said "Al, how about if I stay with you for a while and see

how your work." He says, "I can't afford to pay you." I said, "I'm not asking for money. I want to see if I like being a druggist." He taught me how to make medicine in paper and fold different things. I couldn't stand that. It was too confining. A doctor makes house calls. A doctor gets out more. I want to be doctor.

YC: You didn't go to watch a doctor?

AG: No. I just knew I wanted to be a doctor. I wasn't going to be confined in a place.

YC: You never wanted to be plumber.

AG: No. I had a scholarship to Carnegie Tech through my father's plumbing association. But, I said, "Who wants to go to Carnegie Tech?" They gave scholarships every year to the sons of master plumbers. While I worked with Pop at 25th & Broom, the tops are still standing, I and another man dug the ditches for the trenches. I mean, pick and shovel work. I could not stand the grease on my hands. I always had a rag with me to wipe it and the more I wiped it, the dirtier it was ingrained. Mione soap would cut the grease and all that stuff. It was like a sand. You put it on your hands and you used water and boy, you did a lather that would cut all the grease. I said, "That's one reason I don't want to be an engineer." Another is I'm not so good at mathematics. If you're not good in mathematics, you're not good.

YC: In those days when you went to medical school you didn't need that many sciences, did you?

AG: No. You need it. In school, before school, I had one-year credit by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of Chemistry, Biology and Physics. You had to have those. In school, we learned physiologist, more biology. The same as the MD's do. The courses were the same. Some of the guys I knew would meet and talk.

YC: You knew the same thing.

AG: Yes. No difference.

YC: So, your education was adequate.

AG: I think so. I felt in the beginning it wasn't. That's why I went to Europe for obstetrics. But I gave it up after a year because it took up too much time.

YC: Were you involved in any other activities in Wilmington?

AG: I always donated to Jewish causes. I was not active. In fact, people will say I am an introvert. And I would say that myself. I wasn't a social joiner. But maybe I short-changed myself. I don't know. As time went on, I became more outspoken. But, basically, I loved seeing patients, listening to their problems and trying to solve their

problems. That was my basic concept. Even now. Except, I guess, I always was compassionate. I feel very, very badly because so many people don't get the proper care. Especially those that run out of money and those that they call lower social economic classes.

YC: One of the stories I heard about you. Chuck Klein told me once he came in and you were giving anesthesia and a patient needed blood and you had the right blood type and you gave blood while you were giving anesthesia.

AG: It was written up in the papers.

YC: Tell us about it.

AG: Did you ever hear of Isaac ___?

YC: Yes.

AG: This was a relative of his whose doctor was Bernie Brackman. Dr. Brackman took care of him for a certain time and turned the case over to a surgeon/obstetrician that we had. He's dead now. The name was Wallace. No one knew the kind of pregnancy she had until the doctor examined her. He said, "Hey, where's the baby's head? It's so high up, what's wrong?" They did what was then rudimentary. Nothing like you have today. No ultrasound, no this, no that. "Hey, this baby is in the abdomen. In the belly!" So, a caesarean section was scheduled. In those days they used spinals. It was safe. It still is if the patient accepts. However, not knowing what was in there, could there be a pregnancy and a tumor also? I gave her a general anesthetic when I put her to sleep. I put a tube down her windpipe and breathed for her. Low and behold, the abdomen was opened up. The baby was not in the uterus as such. The placenta was attached to the intestines. So, she was bleeding like a stuffed pig, like the proverbial saying goes. We had a type RH on her anyhow. We called for blood and since I am right-handed, I had the anesthesia moved to my right so I could breathe. There was no automatic respiration in those days. I gave anesthesia with my right hand and got Mr. Dempsey, he took blood from me, a pint and a half. He said, "How do you feel Abe?" I said, "Fine." And that pint and a half was enough. They called all the hospitals. I had O RH Positive. The commonest blood. But the sub-type they didn't have. And I did. If you are interested, we have a copy of that.

YC: When you give me some material, I think that you should include that. I think that we would like to have that. Are there any other incidents that you can think about while you were in practice?

AG: While I was in practice? I loved being a general practitioner because the general practitioner listens to their patients, they can come up with a wonderful stock of stories. I mean, they are humorous but they are real. For example, I opened up a free clinic at the Asbury Methodist Church when I first started to practice to get something. What did I do? I spoke to the minister. He had to come in on Friday

night. I said, "Gee, I can't." But that's the only night you can be there. So, Friday nights I had a free clinic and I would accumulate samples of medicine. I treated those people with a demographic concept. They were all poor white people on 8th Street. Further down were black people. But people came in and I examined them.

YC: Did they both come, white and black?

AG: Yes. You know when I started... I am going to digress for one moment. Since this is a southern state, believe it or not, when I started to practice no hospital had a toilet or fountain for everybody. You saw for colored only. That was every hospital, St. Francis, the old P&S, Wilmington General, the Delaware Hospital. There was only white and colored. Below the Chesapeake Delaware Canal, I don't want to say anything derogatory, but it was bad. Anyhow, I had this clinic and I gave the people samples depending on their conditions. But everybody got it. From ingrown toenail to dandruff they got osteopathic manipulation. With my hands. And, strange to say, a lot of them got over their complaints. I could not understand why except that I was taught that. Even today, I don't know exactly how we do it. Osteopathic doctors do not treat just backaches. They treat a variety of diseases like any other doctor. A lot of them use manipulation. Unfortunately, today you don't find many doctors doing it. I am doing it. Some other doctors do it. Medicine is not the answer. One of the first things I do with old people that come to my office when I meet new people is say, "Give me a bag. Bring me all the medicine you are taking." And I found out something very horrible. They've been to two or three or more doctors and no doctor checks on the other medicine. I belong to the Committee on Aging for the Medical Society. We meet periodically on a Tuesday morning at 7:15. One of the first things that was done was to prepare things to find out what were these people taking? Today, in over the counter drugs, somebody is taking Motrin but had been to another doctor that gave them Matricin that's a non-steroid that you need a prescription for. You are taking two non-steroids. Is it any wonder that 20% of people coming into the emergency rooms are in bad shape? They have this, they have that, they have bleeding ulcers even. One of the first things I do with these old people is I chop their medicines in half. Other doctors are doing that. I am not a paragon of virtue. The one time I didn't know about it, I didn't bother. These older people whose bodies can't handle drugs because not only are they old in appearance, their kidneys are old. Their hearts are old. Their livers are old. Their organs that help transform medicines into innocuous substances to be excreted by livers or kidneys are old.

YC: I really want to thank you for giving us a history. I also would appreciate if you would go through your papers and see what you would like to share with the Jewish Historical Society. Since we have this, it would be very nice to have some things.

AG: Pop's picture with the boat. This I can supply. The picture that was taking in the operating room about me giving anesthesia while somebody

was drawing blood from me, I think that was in the morning news. Oh, I forgot one thing. When we moved to 311 Shipley Street, I learned to sleep with all kinds of noises. Why? My old bedroom which was a 2 x 4 room, was between and extinct paper called the *Sunday Star* and next door was the *Morning News* and *Evening Journal*. I remember as a kid watching the World Series on a manual operated board showing how the game was played.

YC: So, the presses were on both sides.

AG: Saturday night were the type workers from the *Sunday Star*. The rest of the week were the type workers from the *Morning News* and *Evening Journal*. You would hear the clatter.

YC: You must be able to sleep through anything.

AG: I can sleep through anything. The late A J Gross taught me how to catnap. I used to deliver babies at his private hospital. That is where I used to work, too. You have to makeshift with what you do. It was almost like the Israelis saying, "How come you're fighting...."

YC: You had no choice. I compliment you and I thank you.