

A Social History Of The West Second Street Jewish Community - Wilmington, Delaware 1930-1940

by Marvin S. Balick



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE

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Jewish Community–Wilmington, Delaware
1930-1940**

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Jewish Historical Society of Delaware
Wilmington, Delaware
1997

The cover is an
artist's depiction by
Lauren Phillips

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Dear Reader:

The Jewish Historical Society of Delaware (JHSD) is very pleased to be able to participate in the publication of this volume about the Jewish neighborhood of West Second Street in Wilmington.

This work would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of JHSD Board Member Marvin Balick. His love of the subject and his dedication to the work of the Jewish Historical Society is always visible.

Though the physical surroundings of West Second Street have changed dramatically over the years, the treasured memories of the people and institutions of this important Jewish neighborhood will remain alive through this publication.

The Jewish Historical Society of Delaware welcomes additional photographs, oral histories and memorabilia of West Second Street as we continue to document this important part of our Community's history.

Enjoy

Helen Goldberg Julian H. Preisler

President Archivist

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF DELAWARE IS A BENEFICIARY
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Introduction

The purpose of this book is to facilitate a nostalgic reflection of the Jewish residential, social, religious and business community that existed on Second Street during the decade of the 1930s and the first half of the 1940s.

This community, which was west of Market Street, was concentrated primarily in the one hundred and two hundred blocks. The buildings on this street were constructed, in most cases, during the latter part of the 19th century. The neighborhood was comprised of approximately forty separate homes and businesses, of which about 90% were Jewish. If you wished to purchase kosher food, you had to go to Second Street. Butcher shops, bakeries, delicatessen stores, dairy stores, a fresh fish store, and a place to buy a Jewish daily newspaper were located here — to mention a few.

The people interviewed were between the ages of 69 and 98, with an average age of 78. Eleven participants are first generation American. Their parents were from Eastern Europe. One person came to this country as a very young child. The remaining two were young men at the time they entered the United States.

Not a single person interviewed had negative feelings concerning their living experiences on this street. Even though it was not an easy life, everyone spoke with warm memorable nostalgia about Second Street. They all talked of a happy childhood and close family ties. Here neighbor helped neighbor. Everyone felt that growing up on Second Street had many positive advantages — most of which, unfortunately, do not exist today. These were the experiences of life that “money can’t buy,” the result of close family living and interdependence with neighbors. It helped to establish a way to live a caring Jewish life.

Living, working, growing up and socializing within and among the families was described by the following highlighted comments:

“You always had that closeness there, and you could always communicate with your

friends and neighbors. You just don’t have that type of closeness today.”

“Jewish people were closer together than they are now.”

“We didn’t have anything wonderful, except our parents.”

“There were friendships that were made that were just unbreakable. There was just a closeness. You were in a close knit community. It’s not like today. People don’t even know their neighbors.”

“We were a close people, and I think that Jews, as a whole, were most closely knit than they are now”

“It was like a wonderland.”

“I think it’s important for Jewish people to grow together, develop together, and look after each other like they used to do when I was young.”

“Neighbors were like family.”

“We had the most fun with nothing. I had such a happy childhood, I can’t begin to tell you. I lived in a house with six children, a mother and a father. And I just knew, felt, and had a great deal of love.”

What came out of this “Jewish ghetto,” this “American shtetel,” was warmth, love, a desire and necessity to help one another, and deep lifelong friendships. You learned to understand your communal and family responsibilities.

When you look at West Second Street today, it is bereft of its history. You are unable to tell that these few blocks were once the focal point of Jewish life in Wilmington. However, Second Street “still exists” in the hearts and minds of the people interviewed herein — and many others.

Hopefully, after you have read the interviews, you will be able to recall West Second Street. Even though life on this street was a generational stepping stone, there are some lessons to be learned concerning the type of Jewishness this neighborhood engendered.

It has been written, that in order to know where you are going, and what your destiny may be,

you must understand and learn from the past. The advice given herein to future generations should be of particular interest and possibly some guidance.

Research, interviews, writing and editing by:

Marvin S. Balick,

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Frances Blatman Bellak

About the author:



Marvin S. Balick, retired public school principal, is a graduate of Pierre S. duPont High School (1950) in Wilmington and the University of Delaware, BS degree (1954), and M.Ed. (1957). He worked for 34 years for the State of Delaware, retiring in 1988. He is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honor society, the Wilmington Lions Club, Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth Congregation, and the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware. He is a life member of the National Education Association. He was born in 1933 in Brooklyn, NY, and has lived in Wilmington since childhood.

Dedication

To all of the people who ever lived, worked, and grew up on West Second Street — and left such a warm, memorable Jewish legacy

Sketch Map of West Second Street

Tatnall St Orange St. Shipley St. Market St.

3rd St.

200 100

2nd St.

WEST EAST

Front St. PR Station

iv



Frances Blatman Bellak

“Mutzie” Bellak

Born 1927, Resident

Frances Blatman Bellak: I’m Mutzie Bellak. My full name is Frances Blatman Bellak. I was born in Wilmington, Delaware at 213 W. Second Street on September 11, 1927. I am 69 years old. Today is November 19, 1996.

Marvin Balick: How long have you lived in Wilmington?

My whole life.

Were you raised on Second Street?

I was born on Second Street.

When did you leave?

When I went to nursing school in 1945.

Who were some of the people who lived there, some of your neighbors?

First of all I have a twin sister, her name is Rosalyn Blatman Epstein. When my parents came to Wilmington, Delaware in 1926 they had two boys, Morris Blatman and Arthur Blatman, and two girls, Ida Blatman Geller and Doris Blatman Himber. Then my twin sister and I were born. There were six children in our family plus my mother and my father.

Next door to us on the left lived the Stromwassers; they had a grocery store. There were Hattie Stromwasser, her son Louis Stromwasser who became a pharmacist, a daughter Dora, a daughter Lillian, and a daughter Clara who later married a man by the name of Ben Bloom.

Next to them was an egg store owned by a family called the Grubers. I don’t think that they lived on Second Street, but they had a store there.

Next to them, now I am going down the street toward Orange Street, was Isaacs & Bank which was a butcher shop.

Next to them was a fruit and a grocery store owned by the Finemans.

Next to them was a corner store. When I was a child some people by the name of Zelins owned it and they had two sons, I remember them, Marvin and Herbie.

After the Zelins there were a lot of different people that owned that little candy store. There was also a pool room.

Now I'll go the other way, to the right of me. Next door to me were the Glucks, Dave and Tilley Gluck. They had three daughters: Selma, Fay and Bea. The Glucks had a bakery, like we did.

Next door to them were the Browns and they had a used-old furniture place, and one of their sons was a politician, Fred Brown. They had a son, Israel Brown, and another son who is Harvey Brown's father. They also had a daughter, Rose, who was married to Harry Katz, who owned the little candy store on the corner. He was also from the bath house (schvitz). Then they had another daughter, Yetta. Her name was Ziskin, and she moved to Philadelphia.

Next door to them were the Lundys: Morris and Jenny Lundy. Their children were Lillian Lundy Freid, Jack Lundy, Jacob Lundy, Dave Lundy, Rebecca Lundy Davidowitz, and Fay Lundy Galperin.

Next door to them was an alleyway (Smith's Court) and we used to play around there. It went around the corner to where there was a place where they slaughtered cattle. Mr. Waldman and Mr. Garber did this.

Next door, now we are continuing toward Tatnall Street, there was a butcher shop. When I was a kid, Harry Cohen and his brother (later on the Sirkins) had a delicatessen there.

And then there was some kind of store on the corner, a pool room, and a little candy store. Those people were the Diamonds, Sadie and Louis Diamond.

Across the street on the corner there was a little candy store owned by Annie Saylor. I used to be there all the time getting candy, naturally, and ice cream. And now there were some businesses, and a man by the name of Mr. Foreacre.

The Goldbergs lived next door to him. There were Alec Goldberg, Sammie, Ida Goldberg Glazier, a daughter Evie, another daughter Sarah, and a son Morris.

Then, of course, there was Miller Brothers furniture warehouse. And next to Miller Brothers warehouse there were the Blooms, and they sold the "Forvitz" (*Jewish Daily Forward*), the "Toog" (*The Day, Tageblatt Daily News*), Sunday papers, and all kinds of things. Their children were Ann Bloom Gruberman, Betsy Bloom Goldberg, Leon Mike Bloom, Harry Bloom, Joel Bloom, and a daughter my age (I was very friendly with her) Ethel Bloom Cantor.

Next store to them was Rips Delicatessen. Rips Delicatessen was there when I was a child and there was Blanche, Sophie, Molly, and a son Julius. They moved to California.

After they moved the Shapiros moved in there, and it became Shapiro's Delicatessen. Here were Mm Shapiro Lundy, Dan Shapiro, and Edye Shapiro Wishnow.

Next door to them was a butter and egg store. It was owned originally by Mr. Paul. They

had Rachel, a daughter who was my age, and I am sure that they had at least one son. I remember when he was little, I think his name was Aaron. When they moved away Mr. Ferber, the jeweler, moved in there; Leo and Ethel Ferber and their daughter, Florence Ferber Green.

Next door to them was an alleyway, and when I was real little there was a lady (who later was Jenny Clossic) named Jenny Spire. I used to hear people say that her father was an undertaker, but I don't really remember the parents. It was a long time ago.

Next door to them were the Weintraubs. They had a fish market. Let me see if I can remember all of the Weintraubs. They had a daughter Anna Wish now, a daughter Esther Fineglass, a daughter Mary Weinstein, a son Joe, a son Sam, and a son Morris. Now, that's the 200 block. Do you want to go to the 100 block, which is between Orange and Shipley?

Yes, please recall the best you are able.

Continuing on that side of the street, which is the south side of the street, there used to be a fire station or a fire hall on the corner. Next door were the Steinbergs. They had a butcher shop. There were Mr. and Mrs. Steinberg, their son "Smoke" (he was Louis, but we called him "Smoke"), a younger brother (but I don't remember him) whose name was "Little Smoke" (he must have died before I was born), a sister Dorothy Steinberg Klein, and a brother Ruby. I think everyone is dead in that family except Dorothy.

Next to them were the Malofskys. They had a butter and egg store. The daughters were Mildred Malofsky Kasser and Marian Malofsky Weissman. And there was Molly and Izzie, the parents. Later on, about 1937 or 1938, they moved next door to me when the Stromwassers moved away. p

Next to the Malofskys were the Clossics. They also had a grocery store. There were Mr. and Mrs. Clossic, a son Alec, a son Joe, a son Sammie, a daughter Bert Clossic, and a daughter Yetta Clossic Jaifrey. Next door to them, I don't think were Jewish people.

On the corner lived the Skluts. Now there are a lot of Skiuts. But when I was a kid, Soloman and his wife lived there. Their children were Louis and Frieda.

Across the street there was a big long building and there was the Delaware Hardware, which was a big business. Next to the Delaware Hardware there was a little entranceway. Up there lived a family called the Hirschmans. There was Mrs. Hirschman, but I don't ever remember Mr. Hirschman. Mrs. Hirschman had two sons, Paul and Joe.

On the corner of Second and Orange were the Wertheimers, Rabbi Wertheimer (I used to call him) and his wife. They had a daughter, Leah, and two sons.

That's all the people that I remember on Second Street. Now a few Jewish people lived up the street, like the other Skluts with the secondhand furniture store. They lived in the block between Tatnall and West.

Some people say that Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington during the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree?

I agree. Everyone came to Second Street. It's interesting that more men used to shop than women. Women stayed home with their kids and men used to do the shopping. I can remember all the men who used to come to Second Street and do the shopping. They would go from one store to the other.

Stores stayed open late then?

Absolutely. And for some people it was their social life. I'll give you an example. I have a friend, Florence Blieberg, who tells me that when she came to Second Street it was like going to Broadway. She lived in Browntown where she saw no Jews. The Baders were the only Jewish people who lived there. And she thought that when her father brought her to Second Street that's how she started to be friendly with Jewish kids. She once told me that when she met Doris and Marian they started to tell her about the Center (YMHA), and she began to go to the Center. Everyone came to Second Street. It's also interesting that people who didn't live in Wilmington, those who lived downstate or even as far away as Maryland, used to come here and sleep overnight at their friends or at the *schvitz* (Russian steam bath) and buy all of their things for a week or two. There weren't many freezers or things like that, and so much food was perishable. It's also interesting that a big Huber's truck and also Friehofers Bakery (large commercial bakeries, who served many small grocers) would come to our store late at night. Ten or eleven o'clock at night, my mother used to wait for them. They would take bread and rolls and everything downstate for stores. My mother used to call him the "Huber Man," she couldn't go to bed until he came to make his pick-up.

What did you do for social and recreational activities?

I spent every day of my life that I could in the Center. My whole life was the Center. I went (what is called today the Jewish Community Center) to the YMHA. I spent every minute I could at the YMHA. That was my entire social life. All my friends went there (at 515 French Street).

What movie theaters did you attend?

I went to every movie theater. My sister used to take me to the movies. I went to the Queen, that was on Fifth and Market. And I went to the Arcadia. The Rialto was on Market, between Second and Third. There were none on the next block. But starting at Fifth and Market there was the Queen, and up the street there was the Arcadia. Across the street there was the Savoy. Then you went up to Eighth and Market and there was the Aldine. (Later they changed the name to the Lowes Aldine.) In the middle of the block, of course, there was the opera house, the Grand. There was another movie theater on Tenth Street, or Delaware Avenue, the Warner. And then there was another movie theater all the way up by Wilmington High School called the Lowes-Ritz. There was a movie theater on North Market Street. It was called the Strand. Remember that movie? There was a movie on the other side



Uniformed ushers lined up under the marquee of the Aldine Theatre, located at 508 Market St., circa 1933. The Aldine Theatre was open for twenty years before it was taken over by Loew's in 1941. Photo from the collections of the Delaware Historical Society.

of town, I never went there, called the Ace. There was a movie on Fourth Street and Union (The Park). Sure I went to the movies.

We used to have wonderful recreation. In the summer everybody went to Brandywine Park. We had picnics. Every organization had a picnic. Every Sunday we went to Brandywine Park, and we brought our lunch or our dinner. Everybody was kosher, so that when the *shul* (synagogue) made something or the organizations made something (the Pioneer Women used to cook) they would sell the food. We would go every Sunday. If not, we went to Lenape Park (near West Chester, Pennsylvania on Route 100) and my mother packed a lunch. There were pavilions in Brandywine Park, do you remember them? And every single day I learned how to swim at The Center (YMHA).

Oh, and I also went to the Workmen's Circle when I was little. And in the Workmen's Circle they didn't teach you so much religion, they taught you Yiddish because they weren't much on religion. For my religious training I went to the Adas Kodesch (Congregation of Holiness) Hebrew School.

Do you remember any holiday celebrations?

Every holiday I remember my mother. Every Friday night my mother made *Shabbos* (Sabbath — Friday night to Saturday night), and every holiday my mother had people in our house galore, even though we had a small house. If necessary my mother made it (*Shabbos* celebration) downstairs in the store, and we just got tables. But on Passover our store was closed, and that was the only vacation my mother and father ever had. A lot of times we went away on Passover to my father's family in Spring Valley, New York. Our father died when Rozy and I were eleven years old in 1938. We were a very close family, my brothers and my sisters. I

Let's talk about public schools.

I went to kindergarten at Mary C. I. Williams School. It was a pretty new school, it was on Third and Monroe. It used to have a big playground. There used to be a terrible odor there because the Morocco leather shop was nearby, the Allied Kid. It was awful. After that I went to the No. 28 School, or the Willard Hall School, for a year. That is where the freeway is, on Eighth and Adams (1-95). They knocked it down to make the freeway. Then, I still wasn't ready for High School on Delaware Avenue so I had to go to Bancroft Junior High School (Grades 7, 8,9) for a year, then I went to Wilmington High School (Grades 10,11,12).

What newspapers were available?

Every day we used to read the *Morning News* and the *News Journal*, only it wasn't called that. It was called "*The Journal Every Evening*." On Sunday it used to be the *Sunday Star*. And they used to have a Jewish page in the *Sunday Star*, did you ever know that? There was a Jewish guy, his name was Saul Polotsky. He used to write the Jewish page. In fact, Rozy and I once had our picture in this paper because we were like an oddity, we were twins. We were about ten years old. Yes, I remember that. But do you know about him (Saul Polotsky)? His wife is alive, Betty. She lives in Forward Manor. She belongs to the Jewish Historical Society. Anyway, let's see what else shall I tell you about Second Street. I never knew there was a supermarket because you could buy everything you wanted to at Second Street, fresh. Also, oh yes, I forgot about the *shochet* (ritual slaughterer of cattle and fowl). That was next door to the Stromwassers, between the Stromwassers and the Grubers. In the Jewish Historical Society there is a picture of my sister, Doris Himber (see photo section), and she is pointing to the Yiddish writing on the window of the shochet. And that's why they wanted that picture. There is a whole thing in the Jewish Historical Society about the Blatman family. Now wait, there is somebody else who lived on Second Street. Oh, did you ever hear of the Waldmans? Rabbi Waldman and Mrs. Waldman, they had nine children, I knew every one of them. They used to live over Isaacs & Bank. When they first came here I remember my mother was hanging up the curtains to welcome them.

Tell me about family values.

There is no family in the world that could be any closer than my family. That is how our mother taught us.

What do you think, has that closeness been lost?

I know definitely that it's lost. I'll tell you why. I talked it over with my sister, Rozy. First of all, I have a daughter, her name is Lynn. She lives in Florida. She was married to a Jewish boy; they never had any children. She was married 20 years and they got divorced. But I have two grandchildren now and the only Jewishness they know is what they learned from me. My daughter-in-law is not Jewish; she is a wonderful girl. But the children don't go to Hebrew school, they don't know an "aleph" from a "bet." And all the Jewishness that they know came from me. And they are interested. I took them to Second Street, I showed them where I lived,

where I was born. It is a parking lot. They asked, "What were you doing here?" They had culture shock. Anyway, I think that today it may be a better world for them with computers. I have a sixteen-year-old grandson, he is very smart. He knows about everything in this world. But I don't think that these kids know what fun is. You know what they have to have for fun? They have to have computers, VCRs, and tapes. We had the most fun with nothing. I had such a happy childhood, I can't begin to tell you. I lived in a house with six children, a mother and a father. And I just knew, felt, and had a great deal of love.

What message would you care to give to the people in the future, let's say 50 years from now?

I think that people should do more for one another. I think that people should be a little kinder, nicer, caring. If they see somebody fall down, I think they should help them, not have to be afraid that somebody is going to sue them if they stop to help them. I think that what children need is love, If I were younger, I would be the first one walking up and down with signs for women's rights, I do think that some of it has gone a little too far. I think that if a woman wants to pursue her career, which is her right, she should do it after her kids are raised. I don't think that all these working mothers have to go to work, because they have to put their kids in daycare. They have to have two automobiles so that she has to go to work. I think that some of them go to work because they want to get away from their children. I think that if they would live differently, they could live ... I understand that a woman goes to school, so naturally she wants to practice her profession. But I think she should do that when her children are older. I think that something is missing when you take little kids to a daycare. I used to bring my kids every single Friday night to my mother's house for dinner. That's what is missing in life, instead they go to McDonald's. You remember in your house a *Shabbos* dinner and fun, and the Balicks are a family that get together even today. They have picnics and they know each other. Do you know that that is unusual? I talked to my sisters everyday. My sisters were both sick. My husband and I took care of my sisters. My sister died; I never left my sisters. I couldn't.

This concludes our interview.



Ida Fineman Goldman

Ida Goldman

Born 1912, Resident

With Aside Comments From David Goldman, Her Husband

Marvin Balick: November 20, 1996. Will you tell me your name, the year you were born and your age?

Ida Goldman: My name is Ida Fineman Goldman, and I was born at 203 West Second Street in Wilmington, Delaware in 1912.

Have you been living in Wilmington all your life?

That's right.

Do you remember some of the neighbors that lived near you?

On the left of us were people by the name of Simon. The first people that lived next door to us on the right side were Ashenbach. The second people were Loper, and then after Loper I really don't remember. Next to them (after Loper) were people by the name of Brown, and they had a beer saloon. After that were people by the name of Gluck and they were bakers, and then Mrs. Stromwasser who was a widow with three girls and a boy.

Tell me about some of the businesses on Second Street.

Let's start with the ones I loved the best, the delicatessens. There isn't a delicatessen in Wilmington today. I only wished my father had a delicatessen. There were Mr. Teitelbaum, the Rubensteins, and Mr. Rips. There were at least three, I don't remember if there were four or not. I think later on further up the street there was one. I was a little girl and the further away (in time) you were, you don't remember as well. The bakeries were Gluck's bakery and Fishman's bakery (well at least I remember two bakeries), and then a fish market, Mr. Weintraub. Then there were the Rubensteins, who after the milk store had the deli. I used to take the two Rubenstein girls on Saturday afternoon to the movies, to baby-sit. Their mother

would make a bag of corned beef sandwiches, a big bag, for all afternoon. That was a nice day, on Saturday. And let's see what other... Oh, dairy. First there was one up the street, I can't remember what that name was. The Rubensteins, I mentioned, were the milk store. I used to go with a bowl if I wanted a pint of sour cream. Mr. Spire was the undertaker, oh how the kids hated him. He lived next door to Rubensteins, the fish market was on the other side. Mr. Bloom sold Jewish newspapers and penny greeting cards for Rosh Hashanah, a little tiny greeting card. Then there was the factory, the cigar factory. Later on there was a woman by the name of Gross who was raising, I think, a grandchild. Her name was May; she was my older sister's age. I didn't even know that I would remember these things. On the corner was the only non-Jew. You know, after a while, I can't remember who. William Bank, the butcher, eventually moved in next door to our store. But after the Lopers and the Ashenbachs, it just seems to me there was somebody else, but I don't remember. Mrs. Loper was the only non-Jew. Oh, wait a minute, across the street from Mrs. Loper, were people by the name of... They had a beer saloon too, and I didn't think they were Jewish. After so many years, sometimes, you know, you're not really sure. Let's see, who did I miss? When I first remember, starting at Shipley Street, Mrs. Katz had a dairy store. I think maybe the name of the other dairy was Millman. They had a beautiful girl, I remember. She worked washing those big (*milk*) cans. But when she got dressed up to go out she was gorgeous, just gorgeous. Then Mr. Sklut, the butcher, was on the corner. Oh, and Hinden was a barber. The Glossies had kind of a grocery store too. Let's see, who was first in the dairy store there before Malofskys? I think Mrs. Sklut was first. Then the Malofskys had the dairy. Then Dorothy Steinberg Klein's father, Steinberg, had the butcher shop, and then the firehouse was next to that. At one time I think Altmans had a furniture store on Second Street. But I am not sure if it was Second and King or Second and Shipley.

Some people say Second Street was the center of Jewish life during the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree with that?

No, I don't because I don't think that business was as good. I know that we moved away to 803 N. Van Buren. My father bought a house because it had four bedrooms and we were a big family. And another thing was that he fell in love with a tree in the yard. There was no tree on Second Street. One thing I loved was *Yontif* (*holy day*). Every store was closed. You knew it was a holiday. And everybody was walking. My father belonged to the Workmen's Circle, and my parents were members of the Workmen's Circle, charter members. But I just always loved that, even when I was a little girl, that's what I guess you call really being Jewish. I think that is what a lot of kids don't get today.

I think you are right.

I think I am, I'm sorry to say that.

I understand that the social activities around there were places like the YMHA or the movie theaters?

Oh, I remember walking from Sixth and French to Eighth and Van Buren after we moved, but that was later, by myself after dark and not being afraid. It's a miracle, isn't it?

So, the synagogue you would visit would be ...

It was Chesed Shel Emeth (*Mercy of Truth*), below Third on Shipley At that time all the mothers and girls had to go upstairs and the men were downstairs. Right next door was the bath (*Russian bath house*), the schvitz. We didn't have a bath in our house, so my mother used to take us one day and my father would take the boys, and that is how we managed. I remember going to the YMHA, but I think I was older.

What public schools did you attend?

No. 3 and 4.

Where were they located?

No. 3 was at Second and Jefferson, No. 4 was at Second and Washington, and then Wilmington High. And we walked from Second and Orange to Delaware Avenue and Adams to the High School.

What year did you graduate?

1929.

What were the newspapers that your parents read?

Oh, the "*Forward*" and the "*Bintel Brief*" ("Bundle of Letters," which was an advice column in the "*Forward*"). We had a big table, and we had a wonderful life. We didn't have anything wonderful except our parents. People would come and see their photograph and say, "Oh, that's your mother, she was so sweet." She was. And worked, oh, did she work. But my father worked hard too. When they first came to Wilmington she ran the store and he worked in the Morocco shop in order to make a living.

The Allied Kid Leather Company.

I don't know if it was the Allied Kid, but it was on West Fourth Street. And my mother, sometimes if she was scrubbing the floor (we had a beautiful wooden floor, not hardwood, from washing it so many times) ... For one penny pepper she'd get up to go to the store.

Did any grandparents live with you?

Oh, never. We never had grandparents. But we always called people by the name of Cohen, who lived on W. Fourth Street, Bubbie and Zadie (*grandmother and grandfather*).

And you've talked to me about your brothers and sisters, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

There were six boys and three girls in my family.

What family values do you feel have been lost or gained from the time you grew up on Second Street until today?

Well, Second Street today is no more.

No, but what Jewish family values do you think are missing?

Well, for instance, I would never dream of not marrying a Jewish person. When our grandson was in college, my husband (who really should take credit for this) would write to him frequently. He always ended with, "Don't forget your roots." When he started dating he almost always told us the name of the girl. He never mentioned any that weren't Jewish. One time he said he was out with a girl by the name of Goldman, but no relation! I think I did get family values. Oh, I started to say about my father reading about the "Bintel Brief from the "Forward". We'd all sit around, as young as the kids were, and we had a big table and we always were there. My mother had three meals a day. We all sat down. Somebody watched the store. That's the way the family worked so that they could be together. I was the middle child, and it seemed to me that I did the most. But I didn't, it just felt like it to me, and I never resented it. But as I said, as a child from the time I could talk or walk I was working in the store.

Is there any message that you would like to give to the young people of the future? If someone reads this 25 or 50 years from now, from your experience growing up Jewish on Second Street, Wilmington, what would you say to them?

Well, to me it is like when the politicians want family values, we didn't need any family values. Because you can hear that I was always a part of a family, a big family. And no matter who it was ... One time my sister complained to my parents that I hadn't sent a card to my sister when she broke her arm. I said to her, "What could she do with a card? If she needed me, I would be the one that would go." When she had Alzheimer's, the same sister, I used to go every morning at nine o'clock. I was at her house to see that she took her medicine, to make her drink the orange juice, to give her cereal. She said to me one day, "Why are you doing this?" I said, "Because my parents would have expected it, and that's the reason I'm doing it."

So there was closeness in family responsibility that you had then.

I would not think of not doing it (*taking care of the sister*). But she didn't expect it of me. Oh, I did it for years.

Do you think any of this closeness is lost today with what you see in the Jewish community?

I guess I really wouldn't know. I just always figured that we were a lucky family.

Did you encounter any anti-semitism at that time?

Never to myself. When we moved to 803 N. Van Buren we were the only Jewish family on the block, and my mother said that my brother had a "problem." She said that a young girl had said something to my brother about being Jewish. My brother wasn't sure, but he didn't think it was right. He's ten years younger than me, so he came and told my mother. My mother told me to go and see. I said to her (*the young girl*), "What happened between you and my brother?" "Oh," she said, "I only asked him if he was Jewish. I didn't mean anything." So I said to my brother, "Now you tell her, 'Yes, I'm Jewish and I'm proud of it.'" And of course he did.

Dave Goldman, husband: Can I interrupt for a second? I was born in Philadelphia. I remember when I came back to Wilmington we wanted to buy a house up on Philadelphia Pike. We saw a nice house a couple miles north and it overlooked the Delaware River, just a wonderful scene. So we got in touch with a real estate man. We started to negotiate.

What year are you talking about?

Dave Goldman: I would say maybe in the 1940s or just about the 1950s. And he said to me, "I'm sorry. I was told by the realtor in that area, they don't want any Jewish people up there."

He told you this.

Dave Goldman: Yes. Then there is Brandywine Hills (*where they now live*). At one time they had a clause in their deed restrictions (*about Jews*).

Dave Goldman: Written somewhere, where people of Jewish faith were not allowed to buy a home in Brandywine Hills. Well, that was against the Constitution. It was finally broken up. That was as late as 1950; we moved up here in 1955.

Dave, don't forget we lived on 33rd Street before that.

Dave Goldman: Yes, we lived on 33rd Street, but as late as the late 1940s; and then in the 1950s, there was a written clause that no Jews were allowed to buy in Brandywine Hills. It was broken. We've been here since 1955. Before that time there was anti-semitism in the area.

Did you know that Rabbi Waldman broke it (an anti-Semitic clause) in Baynard Boulevard?

I recall that he lived on Baynard Boulevard.

They offered him more for his home than he paid for it. They just asked, begged, pleaded for him not to live in that house.

He lived on Second Street before that.

Waldman lived right next door to us, 205 Second Street, over Isaacs & Bank butcher shop.

What did Waldman do on Second Street?

He used to kill the cows. It was during the War. He did very well. I remember that people used to come bringing clothes and everything else when they first came. It was a big family, and very poor.

One other thing. There were a lot of stores on Market Street below Fourth at that time. Do you recall activity there?

Yes, they were Jewish people down there. Pogashes (locksmith) was one.

Any other stores you remember on Market Street?

I remember when the flu came. I was the only one in the family that didn't get the flu. I went to Danforth's drug store and waited in line to get the prescription.

This concludes our interview.

*Interior of Isaacs & Bank
Kosher Butcher. Left to right
in aprons, William Bank and
Louis Isaacs*





Fay Lundy Galperin

Fay Galperin

Born 1926, Resident

Marvin Balick: November 17, 1996. Tell me your name, present address, and your birth date.

Fay Lundy Galperin: My name is Fay Galperin, nee Fay Lundy. I was born March 13, 1926 on Second and West. At the age of two I moved to 221 West Second Street, between Orange and Tatnall, where my father had a kosher butcher shop.

How long have you been living in Wilmington?

All my life, I'm a resident of Wilmington, born and still here. I stayed on Second Street until I got married, and that was when I was 21 years of age (1947).

Tell me what it was like growing up on Second Street, memories that you have of a good Jewish life. What do you remember most about your childhood and being raised there?

I guess what comes to my mind most was the fun we had on Saturday nights when everyone came to Second Street to shop. It was the busiest street. People came from all over. The stores were closed as of Friday night and didn't open again until Saturday night. Everyone came on Saturday night to buy kosher deli meats and to shop. I don't think the delicatessens were closed on Saturday, but all the meat markets were closed during Saturday morning and afternoon. It seemed as though the busiest times were Saturday night and Sunday mornings. It was always fun watching the people. The streets were always crowded, and that was great. Holidays were also memorable. All the stores were busy. When the holidays finally came, we all got dressed up and we went to shul. We wore gloves, hats, and patent leather shoes. We played with nuts on the street on Passover, and really observed the holidays in a religious fashion. I don't think this happens today. It was something to look forward to, it really was. Then we would go to synagogue with our parents, and my mother would be sitting up on the second level.

Which shul did you attend?

Adas Kodesch. The kids would all come to visit their parents. My mother was always proud to say, "This is my daughter," to all her friends. We went outside and played and talked. We were always dressed up, hats, gloves, pocketbooks, and shoes. It was a lot of fun. Our fathers, of course, were downstairs. My father was a religious man; he was a kosher butcher. He went to synagogue every Saturday morning. I remember he'd come back, have his lunch, and take a nap every Saturday afternoon. That was his Sabbath ritual. Holidays, I remember Simchas Torah, he was a very happy man as he danced around with the men on the first floor. He would pick me up on his shoulders and carry me around with the Torah. It was really very, very nice.

Some people say, and you've apparently answered somewhat, that Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington during the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree?

I don't know if it was the center of Jewish life. It was the center of Jewish business. I don't know that people congregated there for social reasons or anything like that, I doubt that, but yes it was the center of business.

What were some of the businesses? I understand there were a number of bakeries, delicatessens, butcher shops?

You probably got that information from other people, better than from me. I remember, in my day, there were three bakeries: Gluck's, Blatman's and Cohen's. Cohen's was not on Second Street, Cohen's was between Front and Second on Market. There were five or six butcher shops; Harry Choen, I think, came in later. I remember my father's butcher shop, Bank's butcher shop, Wertheimer's butcher shop, and Sklut's butcher shop; that's four. I think Harry Cohen opened up later, but he did have a butcher shop there while I was still living on Second Street. There were grocery stores, Paul had a dairy shop. Before Paul it was a place called Baylor's. Next to Paul was, of course, Jack Lundy's. It wasn't Jack Lundy's, then it was Rips'. From Rips' it was Shapiro's. But then I remember Bloom being in there with us. They had like a sundry-type business with papers and stockings, stuff like that. Then they moved across the street where they opened a grocery. Somebody else moved in there with a paper bag place. Then there was Stromwasser's, which was next to Blatman's, that was a grocery business. Then Malofsky bought it from her. Also, right next to us there was a glass maker who made glass window panes.

Do you recall any of the businesses on Market Street between Front and Fourth?

Between Front and Second I remember Danforth's drug store, where we all bought our drugs. Everybody went there with prescriptions, and it was a real old-fashioned apothecary. There was something else next to it that we used to go to, I can't remember what it was now. On the corner of Second and Market was there a men's clothing store?

Somebody mentioned Goldenberg's?

Oh yes, that was on the other side of Second Street. Goldenberg's was right on the corner. Then there was a bank, Farmers Bank, on one corner. Next to Farmers Bank was a tobacco place. And next to it was a candy, and Kenyon's tobacco place. I worked right next to that for Joe Silver, Diamond Chemical & Supply Co., on Second and Market. Then there was the Rialto theater, and there were a couple of men's shops down there that Jewish people worked for. The Army and Navy store was there, Leibowitz, Buster Brown's was on the corner. On the other side of the street was an automobile supply shop, a saddle shop, and Joshua Conner's leather saddle shop on Market Street.

Joshua Conner's was located here for over 100 years.

Conner's, right. A little luncheonette was also there for a while. How about Levy's shoe store? Everybody bought their shoes there. They got discounts. I got all my Passover shoes there.

Let's talk a little about social activities. You mentioned the Rialto theater. Did you visit other theaters on Market Street?

The Queen theater was at Fifth and Market. In the middle of the block there was another theater, the Arcadia. Across the street was the Savoy theater; right next to the Savoy was an Eckerd's drug store, and I don't remember all the dress shops that were there. Then as you went up further you had the Lowes theater, and on Delaware Avenue you had the Warner theater.

You mentioned Adas Kodesch. Wasn't Chesed Shel Emeth close by?

Chesed Shel Emeth was on Second and Shipley. Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) was right on Second and Shipley, next to Chesed Shel Emeth. We used to go from one synagogue to the other to talk to everybody, to see what was going on down there and see what was going on up here. We'd walk around to both synagogues.

What public schools did you attend?

The first public school I attended was No. 3 on Second and Jefferson. I was only there for a half a year when it closed up, and we were transferred to Mary C. I. Williams. But I guess a lot of other people went there longer. That was the first school that I was registered at for a half a year, and then I went to Mary C. I. Williams. And then I went to No. 8 School on Eighth and Adams (I think it was No. 8), and finally to Wilmington High.

When did you graduate from Wilmington High?

In 1942, I was eighteen.

Will you mention some of the newspapers that your parents read, English and Yiddish?

My mother got the "Toog." There was another one, the "Forward," you know that. She would read that to us at night. See, I understand Jewish. There was something in there called the

"Bintel Brief that she read every single day of her life. Sometimes it applied to something that concerned us, like a mother and a daughter with a problem. She would read us the "Bintel Brief and we would discuss it. She read it from page one to the last page right up to the day she died.

So the Jewish paper was sent to her through the mail, or was she able to buy it?

Well, she bought it at Bloom's (on Second Street). When they closed, she got it by mail.

You've talked to me about your family, Do you want to mention any other members of your family, brothers, sisters?

Everybody knows Jack, of Jack Lundy's delicatessen. My brother Jacob ran the business after my father died. My father died when I was ten. He was only 47. My mother had to keep the business going. She had six children, and she had a lot of help from our father's brothers. My uncles came down and taught my brother how to run the business, and he learned, and my mother worked day and night in the store too. She ran the business; she was a strong woman.

It seems there were many strong women. It was a hard life.

When my brother Dave came back from the Army he took over the business, and my brother Jacob went back to college and got a degree.

You mentioned the Army. One of the questions I want to ask you has to do with life during the Second World War, from 1941 to 1945. Were there any changes that took place during that period or after?

Second Street was already falling apart.

After the War, or before the War?

By the end of the 1930s, people were starting to get out. I know that during the War it wasn't the same.

Where were the Jewish families moving?

Up to 22nd, 23rd, 27th Street. They were still, I think, moving into the city. I don't think they were going into the suburbs yet in the 1940s. That came after the War.

So most moved, as they call it, "over the bridge," or over the Washington Street bridge?

Yes.

Did you encounter any anti-semitism on Second Street?

Not that I knew of. I didn't notice anything. Who was going to be anti-Semitic? We were all Jews there.



*Jack Lundy holding
son, Michael*

Let me ask a question concerning family values. What do you feel has been lost or gained since the 1930s and 1940s? Compare Jewish families then and now. Any differences that you can comment on -positive or negative?

Well, I think that the security ... We had our parents with us all the time because they were in businesses together. The security, I think, was better than what the kids have today, when the parents are out working and away from home a lot. I think human nature is the same. The good parents are still good, and the bad parents are still bad. I don't know that there is a significant difference. Probably there is a lot more affluence today and the kids have a lot more. I don't know if that's good or bad. We were happy as kids, and we were very poor.

Do you remember any of the Jewish community leaders at that time?

Yes, I remember the lawyer, Phil Cohen. Braunstein is another that I remember, and also Keil. I recall Topkis was one of the community leaders.

If someone reads this 50 years from now, what would you want them to remember, to know about life on Second Street? Primarily, what advice and what observations would you want these people to understand concerning what existed when you were growing up?

I don't know what it's going to be like 50 years from now, but I think that life on Second

Street was very closely related to life on a shtetel (small Jewish village in Eastern Europe). Everybody was very close to each other. We knew everyone, we sat around and talked all the time. We were a close people, and I think that Jews, as a whole, were more closely knit then they are now. I remember in the old days, if someone got in trouble there was always someone Jewish, someone higher up, that was there to help. I don't think that exists today. There was always help if somebody needed something. I think the Arbeiter Ring was started for that purpose.

You're not the only one that mentioned the Arbeiter Ring. My father was a member.

So was my father. I know that there were a few times some Jewish kids got into trouble, and they were helped out by the more prominent people in the city, somehow or another. But I guess nothing is like that anymore.

Any advice to the Jewish community in the future?

Right now I have been tutoring a young lady who is 13 years of age. She is a Russian immigrant, very pretty little girl. She talks about boys that are asking her out. She doesn't know if she should go out with this boy or that boy, because she has never had that Jewish upbringing. Many young people today are thrown in that kind of a situation in schools. We didn't have that. We were in schools with many kinds of religions, but we had a nucleus of the Jewish Community, at the YMHA. When we went there we were together. We knew who we were supposed to go out with, and who we were supposed to dance with. I don't know, maybe they've tried this and it didn't work. I asked this little girl, "Does the Jewish Community have any dances at all for teenagers?" She said she didn't know. So, that's the only thing, I would like to see the teenagers have get-togethers so they could meet each other.

You mean places to go to talk to other Jewish teenagers?

That's right, like we used to do. It was so nice, everybody was at the "Y." Even on a weeknight, if we didn't have homework, we'd walk up and sit down in the lobby. There was always somebody coming in. I don't think they can do that at our JCC, can they?

This concludes the interview.



Saul Galperin

Saul Galperin, Born 1923 Lived Nearby, Frequent Visitor

With Aside Comments from Fay Lundy Galperin, His Wife

Marvin Balick: November 17, 1996. Tell me your name, your address, your age, and your birth date.

My name is Saul Galperin, and I live at 1208 Tulane Road in Green Acres. I was born at 1017 Bennett, Wilmington, Delaware in October of 1923. We soon moved (my father Israel Galperin, my mother Lena Galperin, and I) to Lombard Street on the East Side of Wilmington; first to 1017 Lombard.

When my younger brother Henry was born, we moved to 1003 Lombard; there we lived for many years until World War II broke out. While I was overseas in World War II, my parents and my brother moved to 2803 West Street. There's my itinerary.

Tell me about some of your fond memories of Wilmington during the 1930s or 1940s, or just talk a little bit about Jewish life.

I want to give you my impression of Second Street; because although there were a goodly number of Jews on the East Side of Wilmington, (the East Side being from Market Street towards the river), we hung around together and the young people were playmates. Going to Second Street was an adventure to us. I can very clearly remember what it was like to go there in the summertime. My father used to take me down there on a Saturday night. The street would be lit up at ten o'clock at night, and the sidewalks had benches and chairs with all of the people sitting outside. The doors to the stores were open, and you could smell the delicatessens. Rips had a delicatessen that was a pleasure to go into. It woke up whatever appetite you didn't have at the time, so you were hungry when you got out of there. Walking by the bakeries, the Blatman bakery and Gluck's bakery, you just couldn't walk by without going in there to buy something. It was like a wonderland or fairyland to us kids from the East Side. We looked forward to it. It was a weekly trip that my dad made, and took my younger brother and me on. The thought of all those Jews (young and old) congregating together, was really a delight to us. We made a lot of friends with them. They were the ones, as we grew older, that we met at the YMHA on Sixth and French. Regular social interaction between the East Side Jews and the Second Street Jews grew up, and they made friendships that lasted for many years. It was a very fond time in my memory.

So, would you agree with the comment that some people said Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington during that particular time?

It was a social center, as far as I was concerned. When my mother came down she talked to

the women there, even though she only came once every three or four weeks. She talked to them like she just never stopped talking with them. They caught up very quickly on the news of who had what, whose children were doing what, and the usual things that women talk about. So yes, it was the social center for the immigrant generation.

Did you visit the YMHA for social and recreational activities?

Oh, sure. I was at Tenth and Lombard, the "Y" was at Sixth and French, so it was about seven or eight blocks away, ten blocks at the most without calculating too closely. I walked it hundreds of times, and I went up there after school and to the Wednesday night dances. When I grew older and on weekends that was where all the kids from the East Side went.

You mentioned most of the businesses, bakeries, and butcher shops. There were quite a few; someone said there were as many as four or five butcher shops on Second Street.

Well, we dealt mostly with Isaacs & Bank and Lundy's. Speaking about other things down there, there was a dairy store that stands out in my mind, Saylor's dairy. All they carried were cheeses, butters and dairy products. You'd walk in there and smell that fresh butter and the cheese. It was just terrific. You bought cheese and butter by the block. They'd cut it for you and wrap it in white paper. That's how it was. We didn't buy at the corner grocer. We bought it at Second Street, that's the only place as far as my parents were concerned to buy that kind of thing,

Someone said once that was the only place that you could go for certain Jewish products.

All Jewish products, where else could you go? Second Street was the Jewish supply center for that.

Religious activities, Jewish holidays ... Any commentary about the synagogues? Where did you attend?

We belonged to the Chesed Shel Emeth. The Chesed Shel Emeth was on Shipley Street, and that's the one we went to. We met a lot of the kids that we knew from the East Side and Second Street who also went to the Chesed Shel Emeth. The biggest congregation was Adas Kodesch, and we didn't have any qualms of going there and walking in and out. There was no one there to monitor you or try to stop you. I don't think they even wanted to stop anybody from coming in. I don't even think in those days they had such a thing as tickets for the High Holy Days, I think, if my memory serves me, you just went if you wanted to go to a different synagogue.

Which public schools did you attend?

We went to the William P. Bancroft school at Eighth and Lombard, which was only two blocks from my home. I went all the way through the first to the eighth grade. In those days that's

where grade school stopped. I went to junior high at P. S. duPont, which was both a junior and a senior high school (Grades 7-12). I graduated from P. S. duPont in 1941.

What do you think about anti-semitism in the city? Did you ever encounter any?

Yes, we encountered some, but it was mild. There were kids on the East Side; gangs were popular in those days. But we weren't armed like they are today, and it was never a really violent thing. We used to go to another neighborhood and throw rocks at the kids, and they'd throw rocks at us, and then everybody would go back home and that would be the end of the fight.

How about family values that you feel existed when you were growing up, that are missing today? Anything lost or gained over the years?

There was a stronger sense of community in those days. I feel very sure about that. We felt that the Jews were a cohesive group. We only dated Jewish girls, and Jewish girls only dated Jewish boys, as far as I can remember. Inter-marriage, to my mind, was nonexistent in those days, in the early days of my getting interested in girls.

Fay Lundy Galperin: The best part of the ways things were then was that we didn't have to carpool, we walked everywhere. During the summertime, part of our recreation was going to the Prices Run swimming pool. We walked to Vandever Avenue and Pine. We'd walk from Second Street up there and back afterwards.

I understand there was no such thing as taking a bus, you walked everywhere.

We did walk everywhere. I walked up to Wilmington High School, which was sixteen blocks. In the dating years I remember walking home (to Lombard Street) from Second Street after dating Fay, in the black of night, twelve o'clock, one o'clock in the morning, without any qualms.

I never was afraid, never. I walked home from the YMHA by myself.

Something you wouldn't do today.

No, wouldn't walk out by my own house today.

What would you say to someone who reads this 50 years from now, any advice, suggestions, observations?

My observation is that as times change and society moves around and changes, you have to realize that some things are just going to disappear forever. The urbanization of the early Jews, city dwellers, there was no question that's where people were going to live. You had a much easier time intermingling with your fellow playmates, schoolmates, social things, dates, and things like that. Here later, when everyone moved to the suburbs, young kids have to be driven everywhere. They are almost isolated at home. We never had that problem. We could go out of our house at any hour of the day or night and find fifteen,

twenty playmates in a matter of seconds. I don't know whether there are many communities today where you can do that. If there wasn't anyone around in your neighborhood, it was nothing to walk fifteen or twenty blocks to another neighborhood and find other friends. Pick up a telephone and see what's happening over there, and you'd go there. I think that's lost, I really do. I think intermingling with more people of your kind and your age is beneficial. I think that evens out the differences and the different ideas that you might have about comparative strangers, even among the Jewish people themselves. When you're in close proximity with a large segment of people your own age, I think you develop more completely than if you insulate yourself with a small group.

You just about answered the question that has to do with your wishes for the future. Is there anything else that you would like to see happen?

I'm hoping that in our case in Wilmington, Delaware that the JCC develops more activities that will attract larger numbers of Jewish young people and older people, so that this sense of a large cohesive group growing and refreshing itself carries on. I think it's important for Jewish people to grow together, develop together, and look after each other like they used to do when I was young.

This concludes our interview.



**Dorothy Steinberg Klein
Albert Klein**

Dorothy Klein
Born 1914, Resident

Albert Klein, Born 1913
Lived Nearby, Frequent Visitor



Marvin Balick: Today's date is December 12, 1996. I'm going to speak to Dorothy Steinberg Klein. Please tell me your name, your age, and when you were born.

Dorothy Steinberg Klein: I'm Dorothy Steinberg Klein. I'm 82, I'll be 83 in March, and I was born on March 24, 1914.

How long have you been living in Wilmington?

I came here when I was five years old.

When did you move to Second Street?

In the late 1920s.

Tell me about growing up on Second Street, some fond memories that you have. What was your address?

112 West Second.

What comes to mind about growing up on Second Street?

Everybody knew everybody else, we were all friends, and it was safe to walk the streets. I was very friendly with Mary Weintraub Weinstein. Mary and I used to walk up and down as far as Market Street, turn around and go back. And we could always walk uptown, which you can't do now.

Mention some of your neighbors.

Well, right next door was Malofsky's milk store.

Albert Klein: Flanzer was before Malofsky. Sklut was on the corner, and then the Hindens.

The firehouse was next to us, then the butcher shop.

Do you remember if there was more than one butcher shop?

There were two on that street. Sklut, that's Morrie Sklut's father... My father bought the butcher shop from Goldberg, and then Goldberg went into wholesale meat.

I understand there were a lot of bakeries and delicatessens?

There was Rips delicatessen, and then Shapiro. Now Edye Wishnow Shapiro's parents had the delicatessen, and across the street was a delicatessen by the name of Teitelbaum.

Some people say that Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington in the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree?

Yes, that's correct.

What was happening on Second Street that made it so popular?

Albert: Just the fact that they had all the stores there ...

Everybody came to Second Street. The butcher shop, the baker shop, and the delicatessen were there. Everyone was aware that Jewish people were there and they came down to Second Street to get their products. And that's what made it so popular.

What Jewish papers were popular? For you or your parents?

The "Toog" and the "Forward." My mother used to get the "Toog."

If you needed any food, any particular kind of Jewish food, I understand you had to go to Second Street.

Yes, if you were kosher and you needed food, and everybody at that time was kosher, you had to come to Second Street. You had your choice of the butcher shops; Bank was popular, also Lundy and Sklut. Then if you wanted a bakery you had to go to either Blatman or Gluck at the time.

How about recreational activities? Some people mentioned they went to the YMHA or the movies. What you do remember about just having fun?

At the YMHA you had to go up a flight of stairs.

Albert: Third and King, at Ben's Shoe Store. Bernie Mudrick had a shoe store there. As far as recreation and going to the movies, there was the Rialto theater, or at Fifth and Market there was the Queen theater. If you had a nickel you could go to the Grand and stay all day when we were kids. We used to sit through three cowboy pictures on a Saturday.

Tell me about religious activities or social activities.

We went to Chesed Shel Emeth.

Albert: A lot of social life for the Second Street gang was right up in Mary Weintraub's second floor. They had a big room up there where we would go to dance. They had a party and everything, when we were young.

We belonged to the Chesed Shel Emeth and they merged years later with the Adas Kodesch.

Who was the rabbi then?

Albert: Rabbi Rezits, and then Rabbi First.

Bergers were on Third and King. Before that they were on Third and Shipley. Then they moved to King Street.

So, even around Market Street below Fourth, I suppose there were quite a few stores.

Albert: All the businesses from Second Street. There used to be a candy shop right on the corner of Second and Orange where we could get a two cents plain fountain soda. My mother would send me after the soda with a two-quart pitcher.

What about the Jewish holidays? Can you comment on what happened on the primary holidays like Yom Kipper and Rosh Hashanah?

Albert: Everything closed, and people were strict. Everybody walked. Nobody drove. From our neighborhood you didn't have to drive, anyhow.

We walked up to Third and Shipley, that's where Chesed Shel Emeth

Tell me about some of the public schools you attended.

I went to No. 3 and then No. 4.

How about from there, where did you go to high school?

We went to Wilmington High and graduated in 1931.

Did you experience any anti-semitism?

No.

Now, here is an important question I want you to think about. What family values did you have in the 1930s and 1940s that you think are missing today in the Jewish community in Wilmington?

Albert: I think in those days that families were more together than they are today. Today they are spread out all over. You never got mad at anyone for long. If you got in a fight one day, you were shaking hands the next day.

So there was a closeness?

Albert: Yes, there was a close group on Second Street, and it was a good group.

Do you remember any of the Jewish community leaders?

Topkis was head of the community.

What do you want the Jewish community of the future to remember? Fifty years from now, if you were going to leave a message for someone, what would you want to tell

them? What would you want them to know, to remember about life in 1996, what advice would you give?

Albert: *As far as right now, you can't knock life now. Everybody was poor years ago and they stuck together; they helped one another out.*

Today they don't do that.

Tell me your name.

Albert: *My name is Albert Klein.*

And when were you born?

I was born December 9, 1913. I lived at 420 West Front Street. Then we moved to 103 West Front Street, where my father had secondhand and new men's work clothes. Outside of that, I spent most of my time on Second Street; between the Weintraubs and the Blatmans I practically lived there.

So you were where all the girls were?.

Dorothy: Of course. He went where all the ladies were. (LAUGHTER)

We had, all the fellows, a club up there, years ago, called the Green Lantern Social Club.

Where did they get a name like that?

Just a group ... When Benny Spector married Florence, we used to all meet up at Weintraubs a lot. Weintraub was a big meeting house. We always had fun up there, danced, and things like that. There are a lot of people that haven't been mentioned yet. As you go up the street, there was Millers' Warehouse.

Dorothy: That came afterwards. It used to be a cigar factory. And then when they closed, Miller Brothers took it over as a warehouse.

Most of the Jewish community centered around this whole area that you're mentioning, Second Street, Front Street, up to Fourth. When people started to move, from Second Street or Front Street, where was the movement?

Dorothy: They went over the Washington Street Bridge.

Over the Washington Street Bridge up the Boulevard. That became popular.

At what point did Second Street seem to "fall apart?"

Dorothy: They all moved away as they made a little money. Weintraubs stayed down there till the end. Of course, they (*Weintraub*) had their business there, and they had a place near Second and King Street.

Yes, between Second and Third and King, United Seafood. I gave him a ton of business when I had the Holiday Inn restaurant.

Tell me a little about Arthur Blatman, who lost his life during the Second World War.

He was a friend of mine, and when I got married he was an usher at my wedding. He went into the Service, and then he got killed. Blatmans were a wonderful family. We didn't have a telephone. When something happened, she'd (my mother) run up to the baker shop and use their phone, or they'd call for her. Blatman's was not only a real popular bakery, they were popular people also.

Everybody knew Arthur Blatman prior to the time he went in the Service?

He was a very good basketball player, and he was a real nice kid. You couldn't help but like him. The fact that you liked the Blatman family and he was one of those kids, you became attached to him too. Mrs. Blatman and Mr. Blatman were wonderful people.

What are your observations about Jewish families, then and today?

I'd say today the shuls are trying to get Jewish people together more than they did years ago. Today everybody is more business oriented than they are anything else. They've got their own lives. They move away and are in different businesses, and families become separated - large families and individuals.

Were families closer years ago?

Today when you've got three kids, one's in California, one's in New York, and one's down South. It's different all together today. Times have changed and business has changed. There are so many opportunities in different fields, and they all grow up in different fields.

I appreciate your views. This concludes our interview.



Lt. Arthur Blatman with his mother, Mrs. Lena Blatman. Lt. Blatman was killed in action during World War II.

Ida Blatman and Albert Klein, 1935.





Mary Weintraub Weinstein

Mary Weinstein
Born 1914, Resident

Marvin Balick: December 5, 1996.

Mary Weintraub Weinstein. I'm 82. I was born August 7, 1914.

Tell me about some of the people that you recall on Second Street and life as it existed when you were growing up.

All the Jewish businesses were on Second Street between Tatnall and Shipley. There were four meat markets. There were three delicatessens. There was one fish store and chicken store that was combined, that was my parents' store. There were fruit stores, a couple of grocery stores, and a couple of candy stores.

What was life like in an area that many people said was the center of

Most business was done on Thursday because people got ready for Shabbos. This was a meeting place where all the Jewish people came from all different parts of town and bought their fish, their chicken, their meat, and their delicatessen.

Tell me about Jewish life as it existed around the synagogue in that area. What synagogues do you recall?

Well, we belonged to the Chesed Shel Emeth, which was on Shipley Street between Second and Third. There the men sat downstairs and the women sat upstairs.

Some people mentioned that social life revolved around the Workmen's Circle also. Do you recall this?

No. We didn't belong to that. My sister-in-law, Bernie Fell Weintraub she belonged, but we were never part of it. We used to go to Hebrew school at Chesed Shel Emeth and also went to the Jewish Community Center, which was at Sixth and French.

What was social life like at the Jewish Community Center?

They had everything. High school sororities and fraternities met there. They put on shows, they had basketball games and dances. It was really the center of everything.

Mostly every evening, or a particular time during the week?

Mostly Sunday night, I remember.

You mentioned the director at that time.

Mr. Soiled.

Who were some of the Jewish community leaders that you recall?

The only one that I can think of is Mr. Topkis.

How about some of the businesses that existed on Market Street, between Front and Fourth Street?

Oh, there were Goldenbergs, Eppes, Leibowitz, Fineberg's furniture store, and Wax's furniture store.

Mention some of the businesses on Second Street, I understand there were many bakeries, butcher shops, delicatessens.

There were Blatman's bakery and Gluck's bakery. There was Rips, which then became Shapiro's delicatessen. There was Teitelbaum's delicatessen.

Were there any jewelers?

Mr. Ferber had a jewelry store next to my father's store. Originally the undertaker lived there. Also, I recall the meat stores. There were Bank, Sklut, Steinberg's, and Rabbi Wertheimer.

What public schools did you attend?

I went to No. 3 School and No. 4 School, and then Wilmington High School.

When did you graduate from Wilmington High?

In 1932.

What newspapers were available to read at that time? English and Yiddish ...

The English papers were the Wilmington Evening Journal and the *Morning News*. And my father subscribed to the "Toog," which was a Jewish paper.

Was there a Sunday paper?

Yes, the *Sunday Star*. It was also published by the *Evening Journal* which was the same company.



Tell me about your family, what it was like being Jewish in Wilmington.

Well, I never had any anti-Semitic troubles. We lived in a Jewish neighborhood and we were friends. We had Black friends and we had Polish friends. I never experienced it.

What family values, as you recall, have been lost or gained since the 1930s?

The closeness that families had before. There was always time to entertain, to have a party. In fact, ours was the only house that had a living room, and people had their parties in it, engagement parties, weddings. We had everything in that house. Most of the kids learned how to dance in our living room.

Who had a wedding in your house?

My cousin from California got married at our home.

What advice or suggestions would you care to mention to people who pick this paper up 25 or 50 years from now? Any commentary about Jewish life?

Well, Jewish life was entirely different. People really kept their religion. They didn't assimilate as much as we do now. We had friends that weren't Jewish, but you would never think of going out with anybody that wasn't Jewish. That was really taboo.

From talking to other people, I understand that there was very much of a closeness on Second Street.

My best friend growing up was Dorothy Steinberg Klein, and we are still friends (*both lived and met on Second Street*).

Many of the people I have been talking to know each other very well.

Yes, I know all those people. You more or less keep in touch.

I wonder why that is?

There were friendships that were made that were just unbreakable. There was just a closeness; you were in a close-knit community. It's not like today. People don't even know their neighbors.

No, they don't, and that's not good for the Jewish community.

Though I can't say that all neighbors were like that. Because right after the War, when we moved, everybody was in the same boat. We lived on Speakman Place. In the neighborhood we used to have block parties in different people's houses. When people are in the same circumstance, I think you stick close together. And I think that's the whole thing.

I believe you are right.

Oh, and another thing. People today strive for where they can get the most money. We used to go work at the Wilmington Dry Goods, make \$7.20 a week, and work from nine in the morning until ten o'clock at night. When the NRA (*National Relief Act*) came in we got a big raise, we made \$13.50, and we thought we were on easy street. (*LAUGHTER*)

Do you remember anything about Ben's Shoe Store at Third and King?

Oh yes, everybody went there for their shoes.

And, I understand that the Community Center was there, at one time?

It was on Third, right on the corner of Third and King. But I don't remember going there.

I want to ask you about the movie theaters, recreational theaters.

We had the Rialto, the Savoy, the Aldine, and the opera house.

Any other forms of recreation that you can recall, or religious activities?

No, I don't remember too much about that. We formed our own little club. We had the sorority, the Jewish sororities. The men had the Green Lantern Social Club, as they called it. A ticket to a dance cost a quarter.

This concludes the interview.

**Lillian Lundy Freid
Marian Malofsky Weissman**



Lillian Lundy Freid
Born 1917, Resident
Marian Malofsky Weissman
Born 1922, Resident



Marvin Balick: Today's date is Tuesday, November 12, 1996. We are at the Jewish Community Center, and I am going to ask some questions of two people: Lillian Lundy Freid and Marian Malofsky Weissman. How long have you lived in Wilmington?

Lillian Lundy Freid: When we came here in the summer of 1918, we moved into 213 West Second Street. My family consisted of my father, my mother and three children, of which I was the youngest. We had a butcher shop and we were there until we were forced to leave by the owner, but my father moved his business right up the street at 225 West Second. The store was always on Second Street between Tatnall and Orange.

Marian Malofsky Weissman: We came to Wilmington about 1925 from New York. My father was from Vineland, New Jersey, so we really come from both places. We moved to 110 West Second Street, and we were just two girls, my mother and my father. We lived there for about 13 years, and then we moved up to 211 West Second Street, where the Stromwassers used to live.

About how long did you live on Second Street?

Marian: I left Second Street about 1949 (after 24 years) when I got married, but my mother and father still had their grocery store there for a few years more before they left Second Street.

Please comment about some of the neighbors that you remember.

Marian: Across the street, when we lived at 110 W. Second Street, was Delaware Hardware, and that was one of the biggest wholesale hardware places in this area. It was owned by Finkelstein and Topkis. And when they went out of business, I think Henry Topkis, one of the sons, was the owner. This is where they presently have part of the Delaware Technical Community College.

What are some of your memories about Second Street?

Marian: It was nice because we were all young kids. You always had friends to play with, and

someone to walk to school with you.

Lillian: The first school I went to was No. 3 School.

Where was that school located?

Lillian: That was on Jefferson Street between Second and Third, and I went there for six years. They did away with the No. 3 School, and I went to No. 4 School at Third and Washington Streets for two years, and then I went to No. 15 School at Van Buren Street or Harrison Street, and then to Wilmington High. And we all walked to these places; there was no such thing as busing.

Marian: *That's right. There were city buses, but we always walked.*

Lillian: All the schools were within walking distance of Second Street.

What businesses do you recall?

Marian: *Wilmington had three kosher bakers: Cohen, Gluck and Blatman. And I think there were about five kosher butchers.*

Five butchers, within a few blocks?

BOTH: There were Sklut, Cohen, Steinberg, Isaacs and Bank, Lundy's, and later on, Isaac Walles.

Lillian: If you wanted any kind of Jewish food, you had to go to Second Street. There was nowhere else you could get lox. Now you can go into Pathmark and buy it. Couldn't do that then. You had to come to Second Street for your fish, for your meat, for your deli, for your bread.

Marian: *At that time there was maybe an A&P or a couple of markets, but the Jewish people didn't shop in the markets. They all came to Second Street for everything.*

Some people say that Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington during the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree with that?

BOTH: Absolutely.

What did you do for social or recreational activities?

Lillian: I remember going to the YMHA and seeing Jewish shows. Any time there was anything Jewish, the families always went.

That was when the "Y" was on French Street, between Fifth and Sixth.

Marian: *We had basketball games there every Sunday night. All the activities were there.*

Lillian: I remember when the "Y" was at Third and King, on the second floor.

What about religious activity? Tell me about school at Chesed Shel Emeth, Adas Kodesch, and about the Jewish holidays.

Marian: We all went to Hebrew school (at Chesed Shel Emeth).

Lillian: No, I didn't. I went to Sixth and French, to Adas Kodesch Hebrew School.

Marian: I also went to the Arbeiter Ring.

Lillian: I went to the Arbeiter Ring, but that was later on.

Where was it located?

Marian: On Shipley Street, between Second and Third. Near where the old Chesed Shel Emeth used to be.

Lillian: They didn't teach Hebrew, they taught Yiddish.

Marian: We learned Yiddish, and what you would learn as religion at Hebrew school we learned as Jewish history.

Do you remember Rabbi First? He was the rabbi that officiated at my Bar Mitzvah (Son of Commandments).

Marian: Oh, absolutely, a very fine man. His daughters live here in Wilmington, Edith Sklut and Grace Berger.

What public schools did you attend?

Marian: I went to Mary C. I. Williams when they opened up. I was in the fourth grade. I went to No. 3 School until Mary C. I. Williams opened. Then I went to Willard Hall, or No. 28 School, and then on to Wilmington High.

Can you comment about newspapers that were available for you or your parents, English, Yiddish?

BOTH: We read the News Journal everyday. We also got the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Wilmington Sunday Star.

Marian: The family read the Jewish paper, the "Forvitz."

Lillian: My parents read the "Toog."

That's what my father read. Do you remember stores such as Eppes, Leibowitz, and others?

Lillian: We were a few blocks from Market Street. At that time there were a lot of stores below Fourth - furniture stores, clothing stores, and Danforth's Drug Store.

Do you have any memories of life during World War II (1940-45)?

Marian: Well again, I think it centered around the Jewish "Y" (YMHA). That's where the soldiers would come to relax and meet people.

Lillian: The War really was the beginning of the downhill slide of Second Street.

Marian: Everything changed.

Lillian: We used to stay open, all the stores stayed open until eleven or twelve o'clock at night.

Marian: Especially Saturday night.

Lillian: That all changed after the War. Stores closed. Families moved away.

What family values, as you recall, have been lost since you lived on Second Street?

Marian: Intermarriage, because you didn't have that much and the Jewish people more or less stuck together.

Lillian: There were a lot of neighborhood marriages on Second Street.

What do you want the Jewish community of the future to remember about life during the 1930s and 1940s? If someone reads this, let's say 50 years from now, what do you think they should know?

Marian: I would say just the fact that the Jewish people were close, everybody knew one another, everybody more or less took care of one another.

Lillian: In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s it was possible to know every Jewish family.

Marian: Or know of them. You just don't have that closeness anymore, you don't have it.

This concludes our interview.

Stanley Wishnow Edythe Shapiro Wishnow



Edythe Wishnow
Born 1927, Resident

Stanley Wishnow,
Born 1926 Frequent Visitor &
Part-time Resident



Marvin Balick: This is January 15, 1997. What is your name, your present address, age, and birth date?

Stanley Wishnow: Hi. My name is Stanley Wishnow. and my date of birth is December 10, 1926. My present address is 2514 Garfield Avenue, Claymont, Delaware.

How long have you lived in Wilmington?

Stanley: I've been living in Wilmington since I came out of the Service, which all my life prior to my going into the Service. My parents, at that time, were divorced and we were living with some people in Philadelphia. During the summer months, I always came to Wilmington. I stayed with my grandparents (*Weintraubs*) on Second Street.

And where did they live?

Stanley: At Second and Orange.

Tell me about growing up in Wilmington on Second Street. What memories do you have?

Stanley: Well, many things. My brother and I used to come to visit. My brother felt very close and friendly with Dave Lundy. We were always visiting, going over to the butcher and talking to Mr. Lundy. I remember my mother used to have card games at our house with some of the business people there in the neighborhood. There were card games always going on in back of the candy store on Second and Orange Street. My mother used to have people like Mr. Rosewitch and Mr. Bank over to play some cards, and also Mr. Lundy. It was interesting, I remember that on Second Street we must have had one of the largest homes in that area. My grandfather helped build the house on Second and Orange Street. It was a very unusual

type of house. Something that you wouldn't see, because we had ...

Edythe Wishnow: *Murals.*

Stanley: Yes, we had murals in every single room. If we walked into one of the bedrooms, there was a mural of a Zeppelin flying over the ocean. And in another room there were birds on branches. My mother told me a painter did this when my grandfather completed the house. I think it cost thirty-five dollars. At that time thirty-five dollars was a lot of money, you know. Oddly enough, when we came out of the Service we (*my brother and I*) lived in one of those rooms. We decided we didn't like the birds (*murals*) anymore, and we painted the whole room all over again.

What year are you talking about?

Stanley: It was sometime in the late 1930s because it was prior to my going into the Service. Another thing I remember was that my grandfather had a big truck. The Jewish people had community picnics sometimes at Brandywine Park; they would go to the zoo or they would go to Lenape Park (*near West Chester on Route 52 and 100*). My grandfather would always pile some of the neighbors in the truck and he would take them to the picnic. We would also go to Deemers Beach (*on the Delaware River*). Deemers Beach and Lenape Park were the two big areas that the Jewish people used to go to for picnics. They seemed to have an outing every year. My grandfather used to just fill up the truck with whoever wanted to go on Second Street. There was really a nice "togetherness" in the Jewish community.

So everybody within a couple of blocks knew one another.

Stanley: Oh yes, everybody from one corner to the next corner, and they seemed to know their place of business. Of course, everyone had a business there. My grandfather had a fish store on Second Street, and he had another one on King Street.

Your grandfather's name, again?

Stanley: Benjamin Weintraub. He was at two locations, but there was a time he eventually closed the store on Second Street and he just kept the business open on Second and King.

What social or recreational activities were available at the YMHA?

Stanley: We went to the YMHA on French Street. We met different people at the YMHA, and that seemed to be the only area for recreation, other than walking up and down Market Street. We used to just take walks. Just looking for different things to do, up and down, it wasn't anything rowdy, we just walked to meet people. We met people that we knew, then we used to sit outside and talk.

Edythe: *They had dances at the Community Center, at the "Y," and basketball games.*

What other recreational activities, like movie theaters, were available?

Edythe: *There were theaters up and down Market Street.*

Please recall some of your neighbors and friends.

Stanley: There was Alec Friedman who lived on Third Street. He was related to the Browns, who lived next to the Lundys. We always played together with Dave Lundy. Also, there was a missionary on Second Street, directly across from Lundys. There was a fellow up there that we were very close to. His mother was a missionary. I think he was the only gentile fellow that we got together with. He grew up almost like being Jewish living there. He became an engineer, his name is Bob Livsay.

Edythe: *There were the Blooms and Annie Saylor.*

Stanley: Saylor, right, She lived on the corner. We played kick the can. That was our toy. Also, we used to go over across the street and play darts on the board, and throw them at the doors of Miller Brothers.

That's how you make do with what you have.

Stanley: Yes.

What businesses do you recall? Do you remember any more vividly than others?

Stanley: Yes, I remember one, because Ferbers lived next door to us. It was funny. His daughter, Florence Ferber, always used to play at the piano. My brother liked to tease her because the houses were very close together. I reminded Florence about an interesting incident that happened when I walked into Ferbers one time. Ferber was a jeweler. I saw on his counter that he had a watch in a glass of water. I asked Mr. Ferber about it. He said, "Someone brought it in to me because they wanted to know whether the watch would rust if I put it in water." (LAUGHTER) So, he purposely kept it on the counter for people to see. I reminded Florence of that, because I never forgot it.

That was certainly a different story.

Stanley: I remember Mr. Bloom, God bless him, because my grandfather always used to give me some money to go over and get the Jewish paper, the "Forward" or the "Toog," and he sold newspapers. Another business was the butcher shop of Isaacs and Bank. When I first learned how to drive I remember taking Mr. Isaacs to Atlantic City. I thought it was a treat that he had confidence in me. I'd just got my license and I took him to Atlantic City and back. When we were kids we used to help Alec and Bob Livsay at Blatmans sometimes, where they would wrap the bread in a machine. That was another thing we looked forward to, we always used to like to get the hot rolls as soon as the rolls were done.

I bet you guys ate plenty.

Stanley: We would always go over to Blatmans to get the hot rolls, and sometimes I would help Alec (*Friedman*) with the bread wrappers that they would put on the automatic bread wrapper machine.

Edythe: *I remember Gluck's bakery too.*

Stanley: Another guy I used to like a lot was Mr. Malofsky. He had a grocery store. He was a very, very nice person. He always had some sort of joke, or some story to tell. There was another butcher up there at the other end of the street.

Edythe: *It was Harry Cohen.*

Stan, tell me a little bit about religious activities, the shuls, Chesed Shel Emeth, Adas Kodesch, and about the Jewish holidays.

Stanley: My brother and I both had our Bar Mitzvah at Adas Kodesch. I think it was Mr. Schoenberg that used to come around on Friday nights, and he would always try and get a minyon (religious quorum - needed for a congregational service) together, and would try to pull people in. My grandfather used to get mad at me because I'd try to get out of it. He used to say "Nisht can Yid" (not a Jew), "Nish can Goy" (not a Gentile). My grandparents (Benjamin and Katie Weintraub) had their fiftieth anniversary at Chesed Shel Emeth (in the 1940s).

Do you remember any of the rabbis at the time?

Stanley: There was Rabbi Philip First.

A number of people mentioned Rabbi First.

Stanley: Yes, Rabbi First was the rabbi. Then there was Rabbi Ebner who came right after Rabbi First at the Chesed Shel Emeth. Then on Second Street there was another one, which everybody knew who ran a slaughterhouse, Waldman. My grandfather eventually was very dissatisfied with the merging of the synagogues. So he left the Chesed Shel Emeth and he went to the one on Washington Street.

Edythe: *Machzikey Hadas Synagogue (Fortifiers of the Faith).*

Stanley: Machzikey Hadas, yes, where Wertheimer was the rabbi. His son and I became very good friends, at that time.

Where did you go to school?

Stanley: I didn't go to any Wilmington schools because I graduated from the Philadelphia schools, since I was coming here during the summertime. Then in 1943 I went into the Service. After I came out of the Service, it was right after the War, 1945, I stayed in Wilmington and started my life here.

Tell me about the changes that you noticed between the time you went into the Service and when you came out, the changes on Second Street.

Stanley: The big change you saw was that such things as food stamps that they had during the War were phasing out. I was on this 52-20 Club where they paid a person 20 dollars a week for supposedly 52 weeks. There was Smokey Steinberg's wife, who worked at the unemployment office ... Edith Steinberg kept finding jobs for me. And I didn't want to work.

Therefore, she took me off my 52-20. My brother was working for the railroad at the time. Do you remember who owned the candy store at Second and Orange?

Edythe: First it was Diamond, Sadie and Lou Diamond, who owned it. And then Rose Katz.

Stanley: Yes, the Katzes had it; Harry Katz. Then Mr. Bloom passed away, I remember that, and his store closed. That was another closing there. The missionary finally folded on Second Street. There was a mechanic at the abbey who always fixed the cars there. I recall he had one leg. Everybody who needed any car repairs went there. Eventually he folded. The other thing that I saw was the other delicatessen store there, which Joe Shur had and eventually closed.

Edythe: On Second Street there had been a store owned by the Clossic family. Rabbi Wertheimer also had a store on that block. Oh, you know who else? The Paul family. They were in the same building occupied later on by Ferber (jeweler).

Stanley: There was a cheese store and butter and eggs. And then Ferbers took over.

Edythe: There was another person across the street by the name of Gruber who also sold butter and eggs.

Stanley: *(Question to his wife)* Who did your father *(Shapiro)* buy out?

Edythe: Rips Delicatessen. Before Rips I think it was Rubenstein.

Stanley: I remember that we used to have some Orthodox Jewish religious people from New York who always were trying to raise money *(for charity projects)*.

Edythe: And they always seemed to knock on her door.

Stanley: My grandmother would put them up for the night sometimes, because it was an open door, you weren't afraid of anything. You could leave your door completely unlocked and wouldn't have to worry.

A number of people expressed that viewpoint.

Stanley: That's how secure they felt.

I understand. What other changes did you notice?

Stanley: The other change that I noticed was that they used to have a trolley running through Second Street. During the War they picked up the tracks because they needed the steel, and of course, this stopped the trolleys.

What do you want the Jewish community of the future to remember about life during the 1930s? What do you think has been lost or gained? If somebody reads this 50 years from now, what advice or suggestions do you have? Any thoughts about the way things were? Anything lost or gained?

Stanley: One of the things that I remember is that I felt strongly that neighbors were like family. These friends were so close and they were very friendly with each other, and I think these are the things that you don't have here *(today)*. Sometimes you're lucky if you know

your next door neighbor, but here was a community within a two block area. There was closeness.

Edythe: *Pook Brown was a councilman, I remember.*

Stanley: He was a councilman. If you had a legal problem to care of, you would go to Pook Brown. That's the type of relationship that you had because people were always there helping each other, whatever you needed. You always had that closeness there, and you could always communicate with your friends and neighbors. You just don't have that type of closeness today.

Edythe: *I remember when I was a child Mr. Blatman used to take me with his daughters, the twins, Mutzie and Rozy, when they went to a basketball game. It is a nice memory.*

Stanley: And I used to deliver the orders with Yankel Lundy for the butcher. I would drive around with him and help him deliver them. It's interesting when you go back and you remember these things. I hear from Alec Freeman, who now lives in Atlanta, Georgia. We talk so much about some of the things that happened years ago, and when we used to go out and play ball with the Blatmans.

That concludes our interview.



Jacob Jack Coonin

Jacob Coonin,
Born 1922 Worked on Second Street

Marvin Balick: Today's date is February 7, 1997. Tell me your name, when you were born, and your age.

Well, I was born Jacob Coonin, January 14, 1922 in a shtetel that I would compare to Second Street, in Poland. I am 75 years old.

Talk about your experiences on Second Street, what kind of work you did there, and what some of your remembrances are.

I went to Second Street to learn my trade with Mr. Ferber (jeweler) in 1939. At that point Second Street wasn't strange to me. I can remember going down to Second Street with a chicken in a brown paper bag with the head sticking out of the hole in the corner to go to the shochet. It was always a wonderful place. I was allowed to buy myself a corned beef sandwich, with as much as a quarter of a pound of corned beef. That was a thrill. A cousin, Merv Wahl, and I always knew that it was the greatest place in the world. It used to be Rips delicatessen, then it changed hands a few times since then, but we decided that when we got out of school we were going to live over a delicatessen. That never happened, but I worked at Ferbers and learned my craft (jeweler). Then I got drafted so I had to leave Second Street. During the almost four years in the Service, I saw the whole world and came back to work there again. Second Street had everything you would need: two or three kosher butchers, two or three kosher delis, three Jewish bakeries, and a lot of pretty young girls that walked by and watched me work. I don't know what they had in mind, but it didn't work. At any rate it was a real shtetel, that's how I can describe it. Everybody knew everybody, it was always a handshake and a wise joke, it was a great place to grow up. We weren't allowed to go into the pool room on the corner because they were shooting crap on the pool table. That's another thing, half a block down was Delaware Hardware store with the Topkis brothers, and that was a nice foundation for the shtetel. Many of the boys from there went into World War II and didn't come back. It always bothered me, because when I was commander of the JWV (Jewish War Vets) for a couple of years we had interred more than a dozen in the little plot that we were provided up at Lombardy Cemetery. I often think back on Second Street, a peaceful, idyllic place really. You never heard a voice raised. Maybe Bill Bank would holler at somebody but he was always hollering, other than that it was calm and collected. I don't know how many people around you can still remember these people. Bill Bank used to chase Mr. Garber around the block with a bone or something, I don't know what it was, but they carried on good. It was a happy place. I don't think anybody showed any jealousy, one to the other, it always seemed like a thing of cooperation in business. I

have a lot of good memories of Second Street.

Some people say Second Street was the center of Jewish life in Wilmington in the 1930s and 1940s. Do you agree?

It was a way to maintain Jewishness, I'll say that for it. It was like an anchor for the rest of the city. Hardly any of them lived there after the mid-1940's. And yet the Ladies Bichor Shalom (home foraging women) was only a few blocks away. A lot of the families lived on Third and Fourth Street in that area for a long time, before they started spreading out.

Was there a shul close by?

Chesed Shel Emeth was right there on Shipley Street, probably the closest. Mr. Bloom sold the Jewish papers and the candles for Yontif, and that was another busy little place.

You mentioned a few of the businesses. You mentioned Rips Deli. Do you recall any of the bakeries or butchers, any other shops?

There were Blatmans and Clucks, and then Percy Cohen who moved over to King Street later on, and there was S&S deli. And I still see people that "drag me back" to that era, and it's nice, it's nice. A lot of them stayed around. It may be the dream of some people to run to Florida, but this is going to be my home forever.

Where did you go to school?

I went to No. 9 School for elementary school, then I went to 24 School (it was razed for the expressway), and then I went to Wilmington High. That was one heck of a school (WHS). It was an old building, about four stories including the basement. I remember taking gym on the fourth floor and my next class would be machine shop and that would be down in the basement, so it was always a hustle to get down there. The teachers were great, and I learned enough in Wilmington High School to be a machinist and a physicist. I then went to MIT and helped make the radar camera that was used until the end of World War II. When the project was accepted (construction of a radar camera), we flew from Lovett field, which was an Army field, down across Cape Cod and Manhattan, to Langley, Virginia. Here we processed the films. We had an audience of admirals and generals, and you'd think we won the Oscar. They threw their hats in the air. When we got back to Boston, the head of our group said they accepted the project. "Now half of you get to go to England, the other half to China." I opted for China, figuring I could get to England later. So, I got my trip around the world, Panama, Australia, New Guinea, the whole place. I learned to speak a lot of languages besides Yiddish and English.

Some of the people I spoke to mentioned family values, and you touched on how close people were on Second Street. Do you think there are any family values that

have been lost or gained since the time that you were on Second Street, in the 1930s or 1940s?

I don't know, but I think I've shown the values that carry on with me. We have a great thing going. I have five kids, and my daughter Lisa has five kids, and we have seven grandchildren to play with - plenty of knee dangling, and we're pretty tight. I'm proud of the way the kids grew up.

If you were talking to people in the future, let's say 50 years from now, what would you want them to know about, or remember about the Jewish community as you knew it on Second Street?

That's a real poser.

Suppose you were talking to your grandchildren.

Well, I'd try to inculcate in them what I grew up with. More than that I can't do. I'm just so happy that I'm not trying to force them into any pattern, so they're doing well by themselves.

Just backing up a little bit, how long did you work with Mr. Ferber?

Well I worked from 1939 to 1942, and then when I came back from the Service it would be 1945 to 1947. The Service always came in handy because for a while I was an instructor at the Air Force in Photo School in Denver. I would get a morning class to teach and go in to work in the jewelry shop in the afternoon.

Did you have any activities at the YMHA at that time at Fifth and French or at the King Street Center?

I played handball at the "Y" and played volleyball. A couple of the guys are still around, Peeney Berger for one. I see him almost everyday. I even had a class in photography and general camera handling there. That worked out pretty well.

Tell me about some of the recreational activities.

Oh, when we were children it just had to be in the Center, that's all we ever called it was the "Center," and it was more than that. We didn't know any better so it was great. Like we didn't know we were poor, either. Nobody told us. There were movie houses up and down Market Street. There was one across from the shop here, Rialto. When I was a kid I worked for Tupp Studios and helped put the sign together. After the fire they took the sign down, and I have one of the initials. I have the "L" out of Rialto.

Did you ever encounter any anti-semitism, either on Second Street or anywhere around as you were growing up?

I don't think we were aware of it, if it did exist. It was our own little circle. I think because of the tightness that was there, that dispelled any possibility of anybody breaking in. It was our couple of blocks, two sides of the street, and that was about it. I've seen discrimination and I

think I gave it a cold shoulder when I could.

I'm about finished. Anything else you want to add about Wilmington or any of your memories either on Second Street or Wilmington in general? Anything you want people to remember in the future when we're both gone? Any advice to the young people of the future?

Get your schooling under your belt and absorb something so you can use it for a future, that's all. If you don't put something into it, you won't get anything out of it.

Any regrets?

No regrets. I've had a great life. I just turned 75. I feel pretty darn good. We've mixed work with recreation and with vacations, so there are not many bases we haven't touched without a whole lot of money.

That concludes our interview.



Isadore N. Silverman

Isadora Silverman - Born 1909 Wholesale Produce Business Nearby

Marvin Balick: Today's date is Friday, November 15, 1996, and I am going to talk to Isadore N. Silverman. First of all, I'd like you to tell me some of your memories of Wilmington in the 1930s and the 1940s.

We'll start off in 1940, actually it's right after the Depression (about ten years after the Depression) which was in 1929. It seemed like most of our community was located downtown. By "downtown" I mean centered from Front Street up to 18th Street. They were the years that most of the Jewish people were immigrants just from Europe, and most of them made a living by having small stores. You'd go to every corner and it had four little stores, and most of these people were Jewish. That's how they made a living. Now they call them "mom and pop" stores. In Wilmington at that time the supermarket had just started out. We used to have retail grocery chains located at Fifth and Walnut (R.G.E. - Retail Grocers Exchange). We had quite a few wholesalers that were supplying these little grocers. That's how they made a living. It was a hard living. After the supermarkets started to come in, first the wholesalers folded up, and then the little grocers went out of business. Some of them went into the liquor business, but most of them just folded up. Then we had the second generation move in who were mostly professionals.

Anything come to mind about Second Street?

Second Street was the place where we used to buy everything. We didn't have proper refrigeration like everybody has now. We had iceboxes and old refrigerators, little things, and we had to buy our stuff more often. As a matter of fact, we had to buy daily and Second Street was the location for the Jewish people. It was two blocks long. They had kosher butcher stores, they had delicatessen stores, they even had a shochet. You could buy your chickens from downtown, and you'd go there and there was a rabbi, name of Waldman, and he was a shochet. And it was life down there; you'd go down on Sunday and meet everybody. You didn't have to go to the Jewish Community Center, everybody went down and you'd meet them Sunday morning. Usually most of the stores observed the Blue Laws (no business on Sunday) at the time, and some of the businesses were closed. That's when they had a chance to go down Second Street and buy. And that's the way life was then.

What businesses do you recall on Second Street?

Well, there were Blatman's and Cohen's, those were the bakers. Delicatessen was Teitelbaum, and there is another one (Rips). The grocery stores there were Mr. Bloom and Stromwasser;

and there was a fish store, Weintraub. There were more butchers than I can remember, I just can't think of their names. It was a beehive there on Sunday. And as the community moved out of there, of course, things got different. But Second Street was really the hub of your life. The Jewish Community Center at that time was at Third and King.

Somebody told me the Jewish Community Center was over Ben's Shoe Store.

That's right. There was also a shochet and butcher who was located at Third and West.

Do you recall some of the businesses on Market Street below Fourth?

The only one I really remember well was Snellenberg's at Seventh and Market. It was one of the leading stores. Then there was Wilmington Dry Goods. Those were the two leading stores. Of course, there were a lot of little stores which is difficult for me to remember at this time. But there were many more.

How about commenting on the religious activity at Chessed Shel Emeth and Adas Kodesch?

Well, Chessed Shel Emeth and Adas Kodesch were really almost the same. They were two orthodox shuls. When I came (to Wilmington) I can remember the men and the women would sit separate in both shuls. In Adas Kodesch and Chessed Shel Emeth the women would sit upstairs and the men would sit downstairs. I would say the Chessed Shel Emeth was a little bit more religious than the Adas Kodesch. But they catered to the same thing. It was life. Sunday morning the people wouldn't really have much to do. We had no television so they had meetings every Sunday morning in the synagogue to argue about really nothing. You used to come there, and especially our people always used to love to argue. We also had at the time the Workmen's Circle. It was at 223 Shipley Street. And we had the Russian bath house (schvitz), which was within a block or two around the vicinity of Second Street. This was a hub of Jewish activity.

Who were the rabbis at these two synagogues?

The rabbis at Adas Kodesch were Rezits (1887-1919) and Shulson (1936-44). At the Chessed Shel Emeth I remember Rabbi First (1928-48). Those were the two outstanding rabbis we had. I also recall Mr. Shore, who was the shamus (custodian).

What about your memories of the YMHA at Sixth and French?

Before they built it there were stables (horse) there. And there was an argument, I'd say a difference of opinion, between the Keil family and the Topkis family. The Keil family wanted it to be located at the Young Men's Christian Association on Delaware Avenue. And Louis Topkis insisted he wanted the Community Center to build right next door (to Adas Kodesch at Sixth and French St.). He succeeded, and that was where it was built. When the Depression came along, it was so bad here that we couldn't afford to keep it (YMHA) open. For two years it was closed. When the Jewish Community took it over they renamed it the

YMHA (this was the building next to Adas Kodesch).

What newspapers did you read then?

The papers I read then and now are the *Morning News* and *New York Times*. I read those as long as I remember. There used to be two newspapers in Wilmington, Morning News and Evening Journal (the Morning News is no longer available).

How about Sunday papers?

There was the Sunday Star. It had a Jewish section. All the news was recorded on Sunday in the Jewish section until the rabbi from the Beth Shalom complained. He thought it was not right that they should have a special section, and it was abolished. Al Polotsky used to work for the Sunday Star, and he used to have a column for the Jewish news in the Sunday Star.

Did you encounter any anti-semitism at that time?

The only anti-semitism I encountered was in my business. I was doing business with people and encountered it.

What recreation, such as movie theaters, was available?

At that time we had no television. Everybody would go to the movies. The Grand used to be ten cents. I'd go there and watch cowboy pictures. My aunt used to give me ten cents. With this I'd buy an ice cream for five cents, and with the rest I went to the movies. Saturday morning we could go for five cents.

What family values, as you recall, have been lost or gained since the 1930s or 1940's?

I don't know if we've gained anything. I think we've lost more than we gained. I think the people were so poor, and I think the people were a little bit more compassionate then. It seems when you have everything you are not as compassionate. I think these immigrants that came over from Europe, they suffered so much, and they would help their fellow Jews. That's the way I feel. I might not be correct.

Tell me a little bit about Scout Troop 28.

You tell me when to stop. When I took over Troop 28 I was 18 years old, and I wasn't eligible to be a scoutmaster. I visited the troop by sheer accident. I went down there; my store was two blocks away (Fourth & Walnut). Before I went home, most of the time I would stop over there (YMHA) and just wander in. The troop was going fairly well under Martin Horowitz, but he was going to the University of Delaware and said he had to give it up. So I came around and hung around there to see it (Troop 28), and I happened to like what I saw.

What year are we talking about?

It was the 1930s. I came around there and sort of stuck it out. Then they decided instead of looking for a scoutmaster they'd put me in there, and they called me an acting scoutmaster.

I couldn't be scoutmaster because I wasn't of age yet. I ran the troop for 18 years. From my group of boys, I think there were between 600-700 Jewish boys, there was a solid Jewish group during those 18 years.

When was your last year there?

It was sometime around 1945-46.

Tell me about some of your memories of life during World War II. You know, we had a lot of boys in the Service.

They had laws to control food prices. You know that in a free economy anything that is scarce, the price goes up. When it is plentiful, it goes down. So, they had price control. They put a price on every item, and most of the items were scarce, so that created a "black market" (prices and sales outside of price control). I was working with the Office of Price Administration as a volunteer. Every Saturday we'd get together and make up prices for the city. As a matter of fact, I had six Service deferments; they were going to take me in the Army. The only reason they kept me out of the Army is that they considered my business very essential to the government. They eventually gave me an indefinite deferment. You can imagine, we had 11 million men and women in the Service and that made it scarce to feed the people around you.

What would you want the Jewish community of the future, let's say 50 years from now, to remember about life during the 1930s and 1940s? What's missing today that might have existed then?

Well, what I think is missing today ... People are looking for the good things in life. People do not want to live like we lived before, and I can't blame them for that. So it creates (with both parents working) a bad situation at home. The kids are left on their own. You go back 60 or 70 years ago, we didn't hear so much about divorce cases. Today, since the children are left on their own and it is difficult to take care of them, you get a lot more problems. Those days (years ago) we had more closeness with the families. If the Hebrew school needed money, we didn't worry; I'd go out and see four or five gentlemen, I'd get five or six thousand dollars in one day. Everybody felt for the other person, and I don't get that feeling today.

Anything else you want to add?

Well, I've been active in the Adas Kodesch synagogue for 68 years that's personal if you want to put it in. I love working with people, older people, children. My wife (Sylvia) and I were both orphans and we understood, and I have a lot of letters that we wrote to each other. In every letter that my wife wrote to me she would say we'd get married, we'd set an example for others. And I think my wife did. (So did Mr. Silverman.) I learned a lot of things from her.

This concludes the interview.



Philip Simon

Philip Simon, Born 1898

Died August 23, 1997 (Age 99)

Long-time City Resident

With Aside Comments From Frances Blatman Bellak

Marvin Balick: Today is November 19, 1996. Tell me your name, your age, and when you were born.

Philip Simon: Philip Simon. My age is 98. I was born July 19, 1898.

How long have you been living in Wilmington?

Since 1914 (82 years).

Do you remember where you lived when you moved here?

I came from the Other Side. I landed in Philadelphia off of the boat, and then my uncle brought me down here. And that's why I am here yet.

Do you remember where you stayed?

827 Shipley Street. My aunt lived there, and my uncle was a Workmen's Circle member. He was a Blatman.

He was a Blatman, so you and Mutzie (Blatman) are related.

Her father and my uncle were brothers.

I didn't know that.

Well you learned something.

(LAUGHTER) Okay. Tell me about what you remember about Wilmington in the 1930s, 1940s. What was life like in the 1930s, 1940s? What did you do for a living? What was happening on Second Street?

What was happening? What do you want to know about it? I'll tell you. As far as Judaism, we had four butchers. We had Dave Cohen, Abraham Sklut, Lundy and Willie Bank. Then later on the Workmen's Circle opened another butcher store, it used to be called Cooperative Butcher Store, on the corner of Second and Tatnall where there was a long row of stores. They opened because the Workmen's Circle offered a (kosher) butcher store for the members. And then we had three bakeries; we had Gluck, Blatman, and Percy Cohen on King Street. At that time it used to be Naef the Baker. Percy Cohen came from Philadelphia

and bought that from Naef the Baker, between Front and Second on King.

Any delicatessen that you remember?

Oh sure, what do you mean? Rips was one; Teitelbaum was the oldest one, Max Teitelbaum on the 100 block across from the fire engine house, he used to have his delicatessen. Then Rips opened up, and then Rips sold to Shapiro. There was one row of stores.

Do you remember Market Street below Fourth in Wilmington? Were there businesses in that area?

Oh yes, businesses were on Market Street all the way down to Front.

Which ones do you remember?

Leibowitz, Goldenberg, and Danforth at Second and Market.

Frances "Mutzie" Blatman Bellak: How about your brother-in-law, Jimmy, did he have a store there?

My brother-in-law, Jimmy Goldstein, had a store, a men's clothing store, between Second and Third on Market.

So there was a lot of business on Second Street and nearby?

Every store was taken. Made a living too. We didn't need a lot then, but we made a living.

Tell me about the religious activities at Chesed Shel Emeth.

I lived next door to it. My address was 227, and the Chesed Shel Emeth was 229, and then the schvitz. I used to go to the Chesed Shel Emeth and then go to the schvitz.

Who was the rabbi there?

We didn't have a rabbi then. There was a cantor, but I don't remember the rabbi. The cantor was there for my day.

How about Rabbi First, do you remember him?

Oh, yes. What do you mean?

Tell me what you remember about him.

He was a good man, he knew enough. He knew more than the whole world knows, I'll tell you that. He could read the Torah without looking at it. Good man. But he was on his way out when he came here, and then he had a stroke. When he left Connecticut he was not in good health. And many times I took him to shul. I used to leave my store and go take him to shul.

You mentioned the schvitz.

Then, when I came to Wilmington, Mr. Neisenbaum owned the schvitz. After that it was Katz. He rebuilt it and he owned it. Katz's father (you remember Louis Katz) bought it. They remodeled it, rebuilt it, and opened the schvitz. I used to go there.

What do you remember about activities at the YMHA, the Jewish Community Center?

When I came here the YMHA was over top of Ben Mudrick's store, Third and King. That's where the YMHA was in those days. That was 1914, don't forget.

Tell me about the Workmen's Circle. Were you active in that organization?

No, I wasn't, but I always joined them. They were between Second and Third on Shipley.

Do you remember any public schools that your children attended?

Nate started across from my store, 30th and Madison, No. 2 School, I think it used to be. Well, my Ben (killed in action during WWII) started there. My second boy started at Mary C. I., but we moved over on this side of town so he went to 30th and Madison School, where the playground is now.

Mutzie: You used to work on Second Street with my father (Mr. Blatman), what year was that?

That was in the 1930s. I worked for so many people. I worked the first time when I came here during the Depression. It was very tough. I got a job peddling with a friend of mine who lived in the same house as me. We used to go to Rockland and peddle some clothing for kids. We used to walk from Second and Shipley and buy the stuff at Delaware Novelty House on Market Street. It was owned by Nate Topkis. We used to carry the pack on the shoulder and go to Rockland because it was a nickel carfare. We used to walk. If we made enough, 50 cents during the day, we'd spend the nickel for carfare, otherwise we'd walk back home too.

You had a long walk.

Wasn't too bad in those days, I've walked longer than that. Then that was no good, so I gave it up. And then this fellow that I walked with took me down to the Topkis factory. They used to be on Second and Adams before they came to Third and French. They used to make underwear. I got a job there; two dollars and a half a week, five and a half days, ten hours a day.

You worked hard.

Yes, I did work hard.

Mutzie: And then what did you do?

Then I had so many jobs, Marvin, Carter doesn't have that many liver pills, as many jobs as I've had. I've had so many jobs. And I worked for my uncle, roofing.

Did you encounter any anti-semitism while you were working, any problems?

Not then. I didn't have a problem then. I didn't come across it. I didn't pay any attention to it, to tell you the truth.

Seems to me that you were working too hard.

I was busy trying to work, that's all, to get paid. I worked in the Pullman (train car) shops. I worked there during the War as a roofer and a tinsman. I worked a little bit of roofing, and they got a little idea that I wanted to work for Pullman's. I worked fixing the roofs on the car.

Can you recall any of the Jewish community leaders at the time?

The biggest leader in the community was Louis Topkis. Louis Topkis was the leader of the Adas Kodesch, he was the leader of the city, and he was the leader of everything else.

Tell me about changes in Jewish life that you have noticed, let's say from when you were young until now, that are good or not so good.

They were good, those days.

Why?

We stayed together, we were close together. You understand, they were good, those days. There is no comparison to the days of today. They are my days, not yours, but my own ideas. No comparison. Good Jewish life, good Yiddisha living, you understand? And Second Street was the only street where the Jewish people gathered. From Second and Shipley, Shapiro had a grocery store on the corner, David the butcher was across the street on Shipley Street, Harry Cohen's father (You remember Harry Cohen?) was a butcher here in Wilmington.

So a lot of the Jewish life centered around Second Street?

Yes, and many others lived within the ten block distance. That's close you know. Max Keil lived at Sixth and Washington those days.

So most of the Jews in the city lived in that area.

Lived within a distance of the bridge at 14th and Washington. That's where most of the people lived then. When you lived on Eighth Street, Ninth Street, you lived in a fancy neighborhood then. You were among the "400." You understand?

Suppose you're going to talk to people 50 years from now, what are you going to tell them, what do you want them to know about Jewish life today? What advice, what suggestions do you have for the Jewish community, the young people growing up? What do you want them to know about your times?

Nothing much, only that the Jewish people were closer together than they are now. You understand, it's not here.

It's missing.

That's right. But those days we were close together. Of course, we had to go down Second Street to get close together because everybody had a little business, a little store. When we got together we were on Second Street, we were in shul, we were in the Workmen's Circle, we worked together. That's all.

You want the people in the future to know that during your time there was a closer relationship.

Oh my, yes.

You miss it?

Yes, indeed.

Mutzie: How many businesses did you have?

Well, the first store I had was at 12th and French. Then I got married, and I bought a store at 12th and West. Then I went out of business on 12th and West, and I went into the garage business and lost every dime I had during the Depression. Do you know why? They changed the law so that cars could park on the street. In one month I lost 17 customers because they let them park on the street. So I went broke, and I went to work. I bought an open Ford truck, and I went down the country to pick up chickens and eggs and stuff. It was no damn good, I couldn't make a living off of it. But anyhow, later on all the jobs were gone. I bought a little store, 32nd and Monroe, and I got a job with Mr. Blatman. I got a job driving a truck serving bread, and my wife used to stay in the store. I had three children then, too. My wife stayed in the store daytime, and I used to stay in the evenings until ten o'clock and get up two o'clock in the morning and go to work. I used to come home and have lunch and a nap, and I'd get up at six o'clock. My wife would go in the house, and my mother lived with me too. We only had two bedrooms, and I had three kids. I used to get up in the afternoon and take over the store. Before I came home I used to go and buy the stuff. I'd stop at the cigar store, I'd stop at the meat store, whatever I needed to buy, and I'd bring it in my truck, the bakery truck. Because at the bakery I'd work at four o'clock; at three-thirty I'd be there to load up. I used to stay until ten o'clock at night and then I'd go to bed, to wake up and go to work on a bread truck.

So, you worked very hard.

Well, this I'll let you say. I don't say. I'm here, anyhow, Marvin. I had a tough life, I did. Tougher than some of them did.

Do you have grandchildren?

Do I? I've got ten.

What advice do you want to give? You want to tell them anything?

They don't want to listen to me, anyhow, if I tell them.

Why not?

Well, my mind and their mind is not the same. We don't click, that's all. They live a different life. I told them that I want them to live the life that I was raised on, and they laughed at me when they were kids.

What advice do you want to give to children?

The advice that I want to give all the kids, all the Yiddisha (Jewish) kids, is that they are born Jewish, they should stay Jewish, and die Jewish. That's all. And obey the Jewish religion. That's what God intended for them, and for me, and for everybody else. Floating around, they wind up behind the eight ball anyhow, nine out of ten, behind the eight ball.

Mutzie: I'm trying to think of something else I want to ask you.

Well, you think. I'll tell you if I know.

Mutzie: Did you always belong to the Chesed Shel Emeth until they merged with Adas Kodesch?
Always, and worked for it all my life, since I was married.

Mutzie: Were you ever the president of the Chesed Shel Emeth?

Yes, one year, the year World War II started. I resigned when they took men in the Army. I gave up, I was 40 or 41. I was president of Chesed Shel Emeth.

You were also an officer at Adas Kodesch.

Yes. There's a chart (certificate of appreciation on the wall) you can read right up there. I was president here, also.

Mutzie: And then when the two synagogues merged, what did you do?

I merged with them, and I've been on the Board all my life in either one of the shuls. I was on the Board at Chesed Shel Emeth ever since I got married, and I was on the Board over here (at Adas Kodesch).

Mutzie: Tell him about the Hevra Kadisha ("Holy" Burial Society).

It was during World War I when we had that sickness. It was the flu, influenza, cholera (cholera or general sickness, usually terminal). It killed people, that's all. They'd walk on Second Street and they'd drop dead, and there was nobody to pick them up. I was working for Pusey and Jones then in the shipyard. I used to work most of the time on weekends. Why? Because it was double pay. I used to take off two or three days during the week, wouldn't come in to work. It worked pretty good for me. I lived at Second and Orange with my brother, right there on the corner where his candy store was. So, this influenza, this cholera, came and the people were dying, and there was nobody to take care of them. There was an undertaker, Mr. Spire, I don't know if you remember him or not. He was a registered undertaker; he had a license.

Mutzie: He was located on Second Street.

He lived on Second Street next to Weintraub the fish place. And his place ... He (the

undertaker) used to have a secondhand furniture store. But he was an old man already, and when you saw him light up a cigar you knew he had a dead body. (LAUGHTER) He never lit up a cigar until he'd get a funeral. But he always had that cigar in his mouth. Anyhow, this flu was going on and one morning I was standing on the corner and there came Alec Hershman and Harry Sloan. Harry Sloan, Sam Sloan's father. He was a cripple, a little guy, crippled on one foot. So he came up with Alec Hershman, and he was a Hevra Kadisha (Burial Society) man. Had a store where Charlie Shoemer used to have his store on Tatnall Street, 409 or 407 Tatnall Street. He used to do canvassing; he used to peddle around. Came over and said, "Look, what are you staying and looking, you are a young man." I said, "What do you want?" I was standing on the corner, Second and Orange, my brother had the candy store there. He said, "I want you to help us to bury the bodies, we can't take care of them." He said, "You're young, you're healthy." I said, "Yeah, I'm healthy, but I'm working." He said, "Not when you work, do it when you don't work." Anyhow, they talked me into becoming a Hevra Kadisha man. I was 17 years old. I still am a member.

Where was the cemetery?

Same place but a little smaller, the Lombardy cemetery (on Foulk Road). We bought two plots, you know, it's four times as big now. I buried the people, that's all, and I've been burying people all my life.

I'm about finished. Do you have any advice you want to add for someone 25 years from now?

The one thing I want to tell them is to stick to your religion. And God bless you. And you'll go through it (life). And I did. And millions of people like me did, if you stick to where you belong and don't try and go on the wrong track. And that's all I can tell you. And I believe I've told you enough, Marvin.

Yes, you have told me enough. This concludes the interview. Thank you for helping this community over the years. I hope that young people will follow your advice.



*Grumber's Wholesale
207 West Second
Marion Malofsky and Doris Blatman*



*Lou "Smoke" Steinberg and
Mutzie Blatman*















Chart of Residents & Businesses On West Second Street, Wilmington, Delaware

Street Number	Year - 1933	Year - 1936	Year - 1940	Year - 1944
•Second Street - 6-K-10	Samuel Tannen, Wholesale Confect.			#10 Stewarts Diner
•Shipley Street Corner				
100-101-00	Jacob Sklut, Grocer Delaware Hardware	Same Same	F. J Donahoe, Cigar Manuf.	Abraham Sklut, Meats
102	Abraham Sklut, Grocer	Same	John Alanso	Ceha Talley
104	Vacant	os. Aronoff, Hardware	Same	Vacant
106	Isaac Gellor, Dry Goods	Same	Same	Same
108	Joseph Clossic, Grocer	Same	Mrs. Fannie Clossic, Grocer	Same-
109	Max Teitelbaum, Delicatessen	Vacant	Diamond State Insur. (Rube Kellrick, Rose 1 lurshman)	Same
110	Irving & Isadore Malofsky, Milk	Ivrmg Malofsky	Vacant	Rev. Albert Gray
111	Larry Shulman, Watchmaker	Wilmington jewelry Repair	Nicholas Rudnick & Joe Fisher	Sanitary Meat Mkt., Jos. Fisher
112	Sam Steinberg, Meats	os. Wertheimer	Vacant	Robert Goldhammer, Upholsterer
113	Sam Markowitz, Dry Goods	Sanitary Meat Market	Same-	Mrs. Jennie Bnscoe, Restaurant
114	I. Rappaport & Son, Furniture	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
Orange Street Corner	Benjamin Weintraub, Fish	Same	Same-	Same
200	Mrs. Esther Spire-			
200-1/2		Benjamin Paul, Butter	Wilmington jewelry Repair (Philip Kimmcl, Leo Ferber, Louis Resnick)	Wilmington Jewelry Repair (Leo Ferber, Jos. Capnoli)
201	Max Zclin, Confectioner	Louis Diamond, Confectioner	Larry Katy, Confectioner	Frank Mancan
202	Sam Rips, Delicatessen	Louis Shapiro, Delicatessen	Same	Same
203	Benjamin Fineman, Grocer	Same	Vacant	Agnes Redding
204	Abraham Bloom, Grocer	Barnett Krasnick, Stationery	Abraham Bloom, Newspapers	Same & Jacobs Fuel Co.
205	Isaacs & Hank, Meats	Same-	Same & (.has. Coverdale	Same-
206-14	Miller Bros. Warehouse, Furniture	Same	Same-	Same & Pfaff, Shaffer, Caruso, fampolsky
207	Sam Saler, Jacob Knger, Butter	Abraham Bloom	Vacant	Abraham Gruber, Butter & Kggs
209	Aldridgc J lackley	Same-	Poultry Slaughter House	Same plus Mrs. Carmella Dutton
211	Mrs. I lattie B. Stromwasser	Mrs. 1 1. B. Stromwasser, Grocer	Mrs. Mollic Malofsky, Grocer & Ivrm Malofsky	Same
213	Sanitary Bakery (Blatrmn)	Same	Same & Mrs. I .ona Blatman	Same
215	Bennett Krasnick, Confectioner	Vacant	Larry Spires & Dons Rothstcm&David Gluck	Louis Swart/, Carol Milien, Smith, Wallace
216	Jos. Amato, Restaurant	Vacant	John Anchor & Kingdom Gospel Mission	
217	David Gluck, Baker	Same	Gluck's Bakery (David G.)	Gluck's Bakery (David G.)
218	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
219	Mrs. Mary Brown	Mrs. Mary Brown, 2 nd Hand Furniture	Mary Brown & Francis Spirer	
220	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	
221	Morris J undy, Meats	Same	Lundy's Meat Mkt., Mrs. Jennie Lundy	Store Vacant-Mrs. Jennie Lundy
Smith's Court				
222	Vacant		Vacant	Wm. Bowen
223	FredK. Russ			
224	Jos. M. Foracre, Grinder	Vacant	Wilmington Saw Shop	Same-
225	Wm. Krieger, Meats	Berl Cohen, Meats	Cohen Meat Mkt.	Same
226	Vacant		Pentecostal Church	
227	Vacant		I l&L Delicatessen	Same
228	Mrs. Annie Saylor, Confect.		Mrs. Anna Saylor, Cigars	L larry Stellenberg, Confectioner
229	Vacant		Jos. Morns	Jos. Morns
Tatnall Street Corner				
305-07	Jos. Sklut	Jos. Sklut, Furniture	Jos. & Ben Sklut	Ben Sklut

* Information was obtained from official Wilmington city directories of the years included on this chart.

Glossary of Yiddish Terms

Adas Kodesch - Congregation of Holiness

Arbeiter Ring - Workmen's Circle

Bar Mitzvah - Son of Commandments

"Bintel Brief - Bundle of Letters

Bubbe - Grandmother

Chalera - Cholera or General Sickness, usually terminal

Chesed Shel Emeth - Mercy of Truth

"Forvitz" - Jewish Daily Forward

Hevra Kadisha - "Holy" Burial Society

Machzikey Hadas - Fortifiers of the Faith

Maftir - Eighth Portion of Sabbath Torah Reading

Minyon - Religious Quorum (needed for a congregational service)

Schvitz - Russian Steam Bath

Shabbos -Sabbath (Friday night to Saturday night)

Shochet - Ritual Slaughterer of Cattle and Fowl

Shtetel - Small Jewish village in Eastern Europe

Shul (shool) - Synagogue

"Toog" - The Day, Tageblatt Daily News

Yontif - Holy Day

Zadie - Grandfather