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Dal Siegel

DAL SIEGEL

DAVID SIEGEL

September 6, 1972

DAL SIEGEL

Salt Lake City, Utah

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Q: I do not know. I just do not know. My father had a family of about eight sisters and one or two brothers, some of which were half brothers. I think his father was married more than once. These sisters, however, were all full sisters.

Q: Did any of them come out West with him?

Q: I do not know if they came out with him, but they all lived out here at one time or another. In fact, one of his sisters was Ethel Hentschel's grandmother. Did you know that?

Q: Really? I would like to see her. Would you like to see her?

THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. DAL SIEGEL IN SALT LAKE CITY ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1972. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE RALPH DEROSE AND HYNDA RUDD. MRS. CECELIA SIEGEL IS LISTENING TO THE CONVERSATION.

RD: Mr. Siegel, where and when were you born?

DS: I was born here in Salt Lake City in 1909. My birth date is March 19, 1909.

RD: You mentioned your father was an immigrant from Germany?

DS: No. He was an immigrant from Russia. My mother was an immigrant from Germany, and came over at the age of two.

HR: How old was your father when he came here?

DS: I do not know. I think he was a young man, probably in his late teens.

HR: They met here in Salt Lake?

DS: Yes. They met here when my mother was a young lady working for Auerbach's as a sales girl.

RD: Did your father come alone or with his family?

DS: I do not know. I just do not know. My father had a family of about eight sisters and one or two brothers, some of whom were half brothers. I think his father was married more than once. These sisters, however, were all full sisters.

HR: Did any of them come out West with him?

DS: I do not know if they came out with him, but they all lived out here at one time or another. Let's see, one of his sisters was Ethel Henteleff's grandmother. Did you know that?

HR: Really? I found this out. Related to Mrs. Feltcher?

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DS: Mrs. Feltcher's mother.

HR: That is right.

DS: Jenny Poritzky was Mrs. Feltcher's sister, and she lived here for awhile.

HR: When your father came here, did he go to New York? How did he get out to Salt Lake?

DS: I do not know what actually induced him to stay in Salt Lake. He was in the jewelry business. I think he had a little manufacturing jewelry business back East at one time. He had a partner that ran off with everything and left him to pay the debts, which he had to do by becoming a salesman on the road. So he traveled the country. As far as I can remember, the first thing I can recall was that he opened a store in Cripple Creek, Colorado, back in the old gold rush days of that area. Later, somewhere near the turn of the century, he went to Ogden. There is a good chance that he went to Ogden because he had a couple of the sisters living there. Sophie Cohne, who was Ethel's grandmother, lived there. There was also a Wolfe family that lived there, and my brother Max was born in Ogden.

HR: This is Eva's husband?

DS: Yes.

HR: Let's get it straight. What were your aunts in Ogden?

DS: They were my father's sisters.

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HR: Okay. What were their married names?

DS: There was Theresa Wolfe. There was Sophie Cohne living in Salt Lake City. There was Annie Richmond, whose son Isadore lived here all of his life and worked for Tracy-Collins Insurance. He died just a very few years ago.

HR: He never affiliated?

DS: He did not affiliate, but I think--.

HR: This was a cousin of yours?

DS: He was a cousin, a first cousin as a matter of fact. His wife's name was Lillian. I think very likely we would still find Lillian's name in the phone book if we looked. It was kind of a family relationship that drifted apart. The rest of that family moved down to Los Angeles.

HR: Was your father religious by any means?

DS: Yes. He attended services at the Congregation Montefiore and was observant as far as being a practicing Jew on the High Holidays. He was very friendly, I remember, with Rabbi Baskin.

HR: When was he here?

DS: Rabbi Baskin? The Rabbi Baskin that I am referring to is the father of the Rabbi Baskin who is getting to be pretty well known today. There are many people who can continue and tell you where this young Rabbi Baskin is, although I cannot. Rabbi Baskin was here, I can promise

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you, in the year 1918.

HR: Was this before Krikstein?

DS: Oh, yes. This was long before Krikstein. This was also at the time that Simon Bamberger was governor of the State.

HR: Oh, he was the Rabbi at the shule then?

DS: He was the Rabbi at the shule. There were different rabbis in the Temple at that time. Very, very far back there was the Rabbi Freund that was also mentioned. Was Freund as far back as 1903?

RD: Oh, no. I am sorry. No. It was not him.

DS: No. I would say it was--.

RD: Rabbi L. G. Reynolds, 1903.

DS: Oh yes. L. G. Reynolds. But Rabbi Freund would have to be 1910, 1912. There was a Rabbi Rice and a Rabbi Steiner and some of those that came along in those early years that I can recall.

HR: Did you know of Rabbi Rice?

DS: I knew of him, but I did not know him well enough to make any comment about him.

RD: Who was the cantor we were talking about?

DS: My grandfather?

RD: That was your grandfather? That was not here?

DS: Yes. It was in Salt Lake in Congregation Montefiore, which is the Conservative congregation.

RD: So your father's father came over?

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DS: My father's, father I never knew. I do not believe he was ever in Salt Lake.

RD: Oh, this is your mother's father you are speaking of.

DS: Yes. My mother's father I am referring to.

HR: Mr. Brodie?

DS: Mr. Brodie.

HR: Okay.

RD: Excuse me for getting--.

HR: You would not happen to know who the rabbi was then, would you?

DS: When?

HR: When your grandfather was the cantor?

DS: I do not think there was one. I really do not believe so. I think back in those days, he handled all the necessary services that had to be performed which did not involve the delivering of a sermon.

RD: Approximately what years was your grandfather the cantor?

DS: For how many years I do not know. Except this, that he could very well have been the cantor even before the opening of the present location on Third East. He was the cantor there when it opened in 1903, and he passed away in 1907. Chances are that he was the cantor during that period and maybe something prior.

HR: We asked Sarah Pomerance about the Friday night services and what they were like. Do you recall? From what I

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gathered, she said they did not go into much then. They did not have too much, so apparently you might be right.

DS: Yes. I think they just prayed. It was just like the seder in an Orthodox home. You did not hear anything. It was all Hebrew. When you got through with the Hebrew, you were through with the service.

HR: It must have been a much smaller building than it is now, from what she said.

DS: It was enlarged. Do you remember the old Congregation Montefiore with the steps in the front and the banisters with the little spikes on them?

HR: No. it has always looked like this to me.

DS: When they enlarged it, they extended the building right out to where the front of the steps were.

HR: Oh.

DS: Not too many years ago when we enlarged it for classrooms, we pushed it out to the rear, so some classrooms would built behind the bimah as well.

HR: Oh, I see.

DS: From the bimah it was quite a little bit different. They have added both a front and a rear to the building.

HR: From what Sarah had said, I think Dupler Hall, which is downstairs, was the original area that they prayed in.

DS: Not in my lifetime.

HR: Well, she was there at the laying of the cornerstone in

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1903.

DS: Maybe then it was, but in my first recollections of the shule I can remember the tall stairway. The stairway led up to the other floor where the sanctuary is now, the floor above Dupler Hall. You went straight in there from the outside, rather than the inside stairway. That is where we held services such as Friday night or Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I was born in 1909. So I can remember from, say, 1915 on. In 1915, I would almost be willing to guarantee that we davened upstairs.

HR: Really?

DS: I also believe that in those early years that Saturday morning services and the minyan could very well have been conducted downstairs in the vestry rooms, as they were known prior to being called Dupler Hall. Because my brother Max was bar mitzvah down in the basement.

HR: He was?

DS: When Rabbi Baskin was officiating.

HR: He was the rabbi then when you were a youth?

DS: Yes.

HR: Okay. Did you have a healthy religious background? I mean, education-wise? Did you feel that you got what you needed, in retrospect?

DS: No. I had very little. I never went to cheder myself. I went to Sunday school one or two or three years, and as

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I recall, it was always the same thing. We started at the beginning of the Bible at Genesis, and by the end of the year, we may have finished Genesis. The next year we started over at the same place. I learned my bar mitzvah just through transliteration. I never studied Hebrew. Some rabbi was kind enough to write it out in English in a transliterated form. I memorized that, and then I gave a little speech. That was about the end of it. I really had very little Jewish education. I think there was more available than I took advantage of, but even the most that was available, you would have had to get from the Peppers and so forth who went to cheder at that time. The Peppers or the Bernsteins.

RD: Would you have grown up at the same time as Mr. Eisen, Ed Eisen?

DS: You know, I do not remember Ed Eisen from those early days. Ed, I guess, is nearly my age.

HR: I think Ed said he was born in 1916.

DS: He is a little younger than I thought he would be. He has been in the city a long time. Was he born here?

HR: Yes.

RD: So I guess he received a pretty extensive Hebrew education. Then it was discontinued.

DS: There was always a cheder. It is just that I never went. My mother never sent me. I used to sell newspapers

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and magazines on the streets. If you went to cheder it was always after school, and that was the time I was trying to make a few dimes.

RD: Was that to help out with the family?

DS: We had very little, yes.

RD: Did your father have a difficult time in his business?

DS: I never remember his having made any fortune. I do not really recall that I ever really had to turn over my earnings, so I will not say that I did it just to keep us going. We did not live very plush.

HR: All right. Was this at the time your father's establishment was where the Walker Bank is today?

DS: No. I never remember the store being in that location. The earliest I can remember my father's store was at 110 South Main which was a location that was later occupied by two other Jewish people. Shirley Rosen had a place up there. Remember Shirley Rosen, who was Ted's sister?

HR: Who is Ted? I do not even know Ted.

DS: You know Milt?

HR: Yes.

DS: Well, I should say Milt Rosen's sister then. Ted is his brother. They had a little location up there at 110, and later on Dave Zinik came to town and opened his jewelry store and sporting goods store at 110.

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HR: What is there today?

DS: I think probably a parking lot, just south of the bank.
That First National Bank.

HR: Oh, yes. In between the bank and Meredith Leather.

DS: That is right.

HR: My word.

DS: That is it. There used to be a drug store next door, ZCMI
Drug.

HR: When did your father move to the bank area?

DS: Move to the bank? Shall I assume that it was someplace in
the vicinity of 1906 or 1907, something like that.

HR: When did he come here?

DS: That is just the reason I am assuming that. That is about
the time he came here. That could very well have been his
first location in Salt Lake, and then he moved up to
110. He moved from 110 to our present location, 76 East
Second South, in 1915. We have had that location on
Second South from 1915 to date, so you figure that is
fifty-seven years, I think. Is it not?

HR: About that.

DS: Right. As of now, we have been in that location.

HR: All right. Do you remember? In talking to Ben Arnovitz,
they had a liquor store or something very close to that
vicinity?

DS: A retail liquor store?

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RD: Both.

DS: I only remember Ben Arnovitz's wholesale business, the Utah Beverage on West Temple. Of course, that is where the parking lot for the Salt Palace is now.

HR: I think he and his brother Joe--.

DS: Had a liquor store?

HR: Had a liquor store. Then after Prohibition, I think Mike went in there, and it became some sort of a clothing store. Then he moved over to where Sam Sapitsky is, National Jewelry. Then it was a haberdashery for awhile.

DS: Yes. Mike had that for a number of years until he was burned out there. He never went back into business after his fire.

HR: When was this?

DS: I can't give you years on this.

HR: Myself, I am surprised at some of these things, because I do not remember.

DS: You do not remember Mike's fire?

HR: No.

DS: Yes. Mike had a fire. You see, these things were not so terribly many years ago. Mike was working in his own business until this fire. Then he was out for a little while. Ever since, he has been having this job with Wolfe's, rather than go back into business for himself. George Camorel took over the business and tried to

make two stores out of one. I can't remember what was in there to begin with. It did not do any good. Then finally Sam Sapitsky and Mel Mednick were forced to move because they were tearing down the Wilson Hotel on that property where the old Capital Loan office was. Incidentally we that owned for a little while, having bought it from Louis and Gersh and Grosseman.

HR: Oh, really?

DS: Yes. Then we moved out of that area, and they moved in. Then they expanded and they took this whole big area that Mike previously had. It is the National Loan office now.

RD: Getting back to your father's early days in his business; did he have capital to start, or was he helped by friends or relatives?

DS: I know of no one who helped him, but I could not promise that he was not helped somehow.

RD: Because many of the other Russian Jews had to start out as peddlers and junk men.

DS: Yes. The earliest beginnings I know of him in his business life were that he probably always had a little capital, because he had this little business manufacturing jewelry in the East. If he was ever down low, it was at the time that this partner ran out on him. He was left with nothing except debts. He had to work himself back up from nothing at that point.

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HR: When did your father pass away?

DS: May 5, 1922.

HR: Oh, this is before the Depression then.

DS: Oh, yes. He died fifty years ago this year.

HR: My word. He died young.

DS: He died at the age of fifty-seven. At the time of his birthday this year the thought crossed my mind that had he still been living, he would have been 107 years old.

HR: Well, your mother must have been much younger than he.

DS: Ten years younger. My mother died this year, January 18, 1972, at the age of ninety-six-and-a-half. Their birthdays are actually just three days apart, so he was three days less than ten years older than she.

HR: Isn't that something? I hate to go over something again, but I am not sure. Did they meet here?

DS: Yes. They met here.

HR: They met here. They were married here in the shule?

DS: I do not know where they were married. You know, as a fact--I will not say as a fact. As I think I remember it, seeing their marriage license, this Rabbi Reynolds's signature was on their marriage certificate.

HR: That is a strange name for a Jewish rabbi.

DS: I think Rabbi L. G. Reynolds.

HR: It just does not sound Jewish.

DS: Does not sound Jewish, huh?

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RD: Do you recall anything about how your mother and her family came to this country?

DS: I know that they came to this country and lived in Montreal, Canada, for awhile. She used to tell many stories of skating and sledding on the frozen-over St. Lawrence River. I think she moved to Buffalo, and they just gradually worked themselves out West. I can't remember her telling me any stories of just why they came West or why they chose Salt Lake. As we have been talking, I could well assume that maybe my father went to Ogden because there were these two sisters that were living there.

HR: It is just hypothetical, but do you think your grandfather came out here because of maybe a chance to do his profession in some way?

DS: Your guess is as good as mine.

HR: When was Kaplan here? Many years later?

DS: Well, Kaplan was not even too many years ago. Do you mean the kosher butcher?

HR: Yes.

DS: Why don't you ask some of those that bought kosher meat? They would know more about Kaplan. I just knew he was there. We never went down to patronize his butcher store.

RD: Do you recall anything about your grandfather's shop?

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DS: As I say, I only knew that it was there. It was located, on Third South close to Second East. Maybe very close to where Lou Dornbush's is now is the approximate location where I think it was. I do not remember ever seeing it. In fact, I am sure it was out of existence before I ever got to the earliest stages of memory.

HR: Was your grandmother alive?

DS: Grandmother died at a very young age. She predeceased him. I am sure that she did not even live to be fifty. She probably died at the age of about forty-eight. All the Leos and Leahs in the family are named after her.

HR: Oh, really? How lovely.

RD: What did he do after the butcher shop failed?

DS: I do not know that it did fail.

HR: He probably died. He died in 1907.

DS: He died in 1907 as far as I know. He was the chazan. I know that he was the chazan and the butcher at the same time.

HR: And the mohel?

DS: The mohel and the shoichet. [laughter] I do not use the word "teacher," because I do not know that he was a teacher. I believe that he might not have been.

HR: That is very interesting. Does the name Brodie--. I do not know why, and I have heard it many times associated with Jewish people. It just does not sound Jewish to me.

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DS: Any more than Siegel.

HR: Siegel sounds Jewish; Brodie sounds Irish.

DS: Well, as I understand it, back in the old country the name had more of a French sound, Brow-day. You know it became Bro-dee when they came over to this country. My father always said that our name was something in German. In Russian was always pronounced Say-gall. A good many of the Siegels are spelled S-E-G-A-L, which would almost seem like Say-gall.

HR: Yes.

DS: Maybe the artist Mark Chagall might have had the same kind of a derivative for his name.

HR: That is true.

DS: Over in this country that is the way it turned out, so they became Brodies.

HR: You know, I see--.

DS: The McGillises became McGillison.

HR: You said that you did not have much of a Jewish education, and yet I see in you a tremendously interested Jew. And an educated one too, as far as I am concerned. What possessed you? What happened in your life to make you feel this way? To get involved instead of to turn your back and, say, just work and be involved in business; because you have been dedicated to this community as long as I remember, Dal.

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DS: Well, you said the words. I have been "dedicated to the community." It has not been a particular dedication to the religious houses, even though I held office in Congregation Montefiore for a few years as treasurer; not the president. I had no religious responsibilities. I did feel that I was a part of the community, and an old part of the community, and that I owed something to the community to keep community life going. I was just very interested in seeing to it that things like the Community Center flourished, or the B'nai B'rith Lodge flourished. I did what I could to help the drives. The United Jewish Appeal and the Welfare Fund drives. Of course, I did take the presidency, at one time, of the United Jewish Council, but it was this sort of thing that I was most interested in, not necessarily the religious aspects. I put forth quite a little bit of effort in these lines.

RD: What is the purpose and the activities of the B'nai B'rith Lodge?

DS: The B'nai B'rith, of course, is an international organization that really embraces almost every problem and function that interests Jewish life, at least from the secular sense. They are best-known for their work in anti-defamation. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, of course, fights for human rights. They are strongly committed to a youth program, as is evidenced by

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the AZA and the BBG and, formerly, the Young Adults, which no longer exists. They are strongly committed to aid to Israel. They have an international council that tries to develop some sort of rapport between the thinking in this country and the thinking in other countries. You know, you can still be Jews, but if you have different nationality backgrounds you have different feelings about matters relating to politics and humanity. The B'nai B'rith was originally organized, of course, to try to make a cohesive group of the Jewish immigrants that were here.

It needed some sort of help to become established in the new land. One of the early things was to help widows and orphans and people like you are talking about who needed some kind of start in business when they were immigrants. Today, B'nai B'rith involves quite a broad spectrum of Jewish life. It is very definitely a community rather than a religious organization.

RD: I understand now that the B'nai B'rith is not as active now as it has been in the past. Is that true?

DS: Are you speaking from a local or a national sampling?

RD: Local.

DS: Locally, we have had some organizational difficulties, and it is not really as active as it has been, or as it should be. Whether or not this is a little pause in our

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activities or if this is the beginning of the end locally, I do not really know. There has been a very definite lack of demonstration on the part of younger people to take over leadership. That is not only in B'nai B'rith, you know. That is pretty much up and down the line. When we were younger, the younger people seemed to be interested in doing it. As we got older, fewer and fewer of the younger ones came in. Some of them did, of course; Hynda is an example. She took an interest in things when she was younger. She is certainly a younger generation than mine.

As times and activities have progressed organizations that meet regularly have lost their appeal. Whether you want to blame it on television or the modern way of life, whatever it is. You and I and other people just do not want to go to meetings any more. Consequently, this was sort of a meeting-type of organization. All the organizations that have meetings have been suffering in this same way. People do not even like to go to Friday night services, which is another form of a meeting.

HR: Well, I would like to really sit down and talk to you about this sometime. I have some very definite ideas on it, and I am sure you have too.

DS: Oh, yes.

HR: Do you really feel--? I do not have the answers, but at

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least I have some thoughts on it.

DS: Thoughts are what begin to develop answers in a sense. In answer to his question, whether or not it is less active now than before, I would have to say yes. There are less activities going on and it is simply a question of leadership. If there was ten fellows in this town right now that were vitally interested in seeing to it that the B'nai B'rith Lodge was an active, vibrant, and vital entity, it would become one.

RD: It is not a decrease in the interest in Judaism, because the recent merger or consolidation shows that the community is more interested in becoming solidified.

HR: I think the priority, if you do not mind me saying so, is B'nai B'rith today does not meet the needs of the people. You can take or leave this, but this is what I feel. Things have to be changed in order to meet the needs right now. B'nai B'rith and the shule, were all means of social interaction at one time. People do not need this any more. In fact, at times they are so inundated with social action, that is why they do not want to go to a meeting.

DS: They withdraw from it.

HR: That is right. I really feel that the whole format, has to be completely changed.

DS: This is probably true. That does not mean, necessarily,

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that the basic ideas that are behind the organization still exist. The problems are still there. They still have to be solved, and some group has to solve them. We just can't blot out a certain area of our lives that certainly these organizations are taking care of. It did not seem nearly so important to Dr. Zucker as the work of the National Council of Jewish Women, for example, which you read about. [laughter] That also erased one area of our Jewish life. As I say, it could be made very vital and very important if there were sufficient people who were interested in performing the leadership functions. A lot of what Hynda says is true. We do not have that social interaction in the organizations that we used to have. They do not seem to need it. They do not even seem to want it. We are living in a different life today, and I can't help but feel that a great deal of the attitude of young people has been shaped by the Vietnam War and all of the fringe things that happened in this country because of it.

HR: Yet, you take my two children. Last night they had elections. My daughter, and I am not bragging. I am just saying that she made Vice President.

DS: At BBG?

HR: AT BBG. Jeff could have been president again, but he did not. He took something else. Their life is devoted to it,

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totally devoted. When you see--. Friday night they had an Institute up at Brighton. You have never seen anything so exciting, never. I was there. I was so involved with them. The interaction was just out of this world. I hate to see this apathy that happens to these people after they get out of college. Something occurs.

DS: We become blasé as we get older.

RD: We get a lot more so. Of course, you take up with other things. I wanted to ask you about your younger days. Was your Jewishness--? Let me rephrase the question. Did you experience any problems in being accepted by the community because you were a Jew?

DS: No. I personally have always felt that I had no problems because I was a Jew. I have felt like many others that have lived here all their lives, that it is rather pleasant being a Jew in a Mormon community, because they have been friendly in their attitude toward Jews. I could not say that I even knew the meaning of anti-Semitism until possibly when I went to college and realized that there were groups formed that excluded Jews.

RD: Was that here in Utah?

DS: At the University of Utah. Even though others may have had some unpleasant experiences, I think that mine were minimal. It is not that no one came up to me at some time and said, "Jew"! That is okay, I might have said,

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"Greek"! back to him. You know, it is the same thing. So I feel that our community has been notably free of anti-Semitism. That is the way I have felt all my life.

RD: I was not aware that there were some groups, say on campus, that would have excluded Jews.

DS: Fraternities and sororities and the like, back in the time that I went, very definitely excluded Jews. I belonged to a Jewish fraternity that excluded Gentiles.

HR: The SAMies?

DS: The SAMies, yes.

HR: When was this? When were you on campus?

DS: From 1925 to 1929.

RD: Dr. Zucker came in--.

HR: He came in 1928.

DS: He came about the time I was graduating.

HR: How large was the campus then?

DS: I believe there were about three thousand students on campus.

HR: It was not just the circle at that time, was it?

DS: Yes. The circle and a little beyond to the gym and the stables. That is about all.

HR: Where were the stables?

DS: Well, do you know where the ROTC buildings are? Do you know where the old gym is? Maybe you have got a cafeteria there. The old gym, and right in back of it were the ROTC

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buildings, and the stables were beyond that.

HR: Did they have horses there?

DS: Sure.

HR: Was that part of the curriculum, that you could ride horses?

DS: Absolutely. I was in ROTC. It was horse-drawn. I learned how to ride horses up there. I even rode in a horse show once for the university.

HR: Really?

DS: I am lucky I did not get killed.

HR: Well, you have got quite a service background. You were in the Second World War?

DS: Yes.

HR: To what degree did you get to?

DS: I advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

HR: Lieutenant Colonel. Are you still affiliated in any way with the service?

DS: I am a Lieutenant Colonel, retired. As retired, that does not mean that you are not affiliated, you know. It is not likely there would ever be any recall. But way back in the small print, I would be subject to recall, and I hear from them. I am on the retired rolls, and I even receive retirement pay.

HR: Where were you in the service? Overseas?

DS: When I went overseas, I went to the Philippine Islands.

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We got there just about a year before the war was over, and we fought in a couple of campaigns in the Philippine Islands.

HR: Is there anyone else in the Jewish community that was in the service?

DS: Quite a number.

HR: Really?

DS: Yes. There is a plaque, an honor roll someplace of everybody who was in the service at the time. Haven't you ever seen that?

HR: That is right. My uncle was on there.

DS: Sure. Herm Bernstein was even on the Island of Leyte at the same time that I was. I looked him up. I had a better chance because I was an officer and got hold of a Jeep. I knew that he was there and his division was there, so I went over and found him. His division, when it left the Philippine Islands, went up to Okinawa and had quite a fight. Ours went from Leyte down to the southernmost island of the Philippines, Mindanao, and had a cleaning up operation across the island of Mindanao.

HR: All right, let me ask you one other thing. In the service, as a Jew, did you find any problems?

DS: No. I did not have any problems. I was an officer.

HR: Yes. okay. I guess that would make a difference.

DS: Really, I have not experienced too many problems in my

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life simply because I was a Jew. I was elected to office in high school. I was even class president of my class at the university for five years. Not while I was on campus, but I was an alumni president. So I have been accepted.

HR: Were there many Jewish people up there when you went? Many of your friends?

DS: We must have had a tremendously active fraternity. As I recall, there must have been four of us who composed the local chapter.

HR: Who were the other three?

DS: That is hard to remember, you know. Over the years, of course, there were many more than three. The one year there were four who would have been there?

HR: Were you the originator of the SAMies?

DS: Oh, no! The SAMies were instituted in Salt Lake City in 1919; a different group altogether. I think fellows like Wes Samuels and Herb Rosenberg were in this group. Joe Rosenblatt and Sy Frank were already members when I joined. So was Milton Pepper. My contemporaries were fellows like Harold Aaron, Francis Bloomberg, Sam Bernstein, and Frank Garelick. Harry Smith came in my later days in the fraternity as did Barney Rosenbloom.

RD: What does SAMie mean?

DS: Well, SAMie is just three letters, S-A-M, and that refers to three Greek letters; Sigma Alpha Mu.

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RD: Oh, I see. Does it signify anything?

DS: It does signify something. There is supposed to be some secret motto that the words stand for, but I am not supposed to divulge it. I you give me ten bucks!
[laughter]

HR: Wow, it really must be something.

DS: I suppose all the names of all the fraternities actually mean something. They stand for something.

RD: Was it a social fraternity?

DS: It was a social fraternity.

RD: Did it have a sister fraternity?

DS: Well, fraternities do not necessarily have sister fraternities. I mean, there are fraternities and there are sororities. They do not have any connection. Certainly no political connection, because the sororities that were national had their national offices. Phi Sigma Sigma was here for awhile.

HR: Was this Jewish?

DS: That was Jewish. Cecelia belonged to that. After their local sorority went national, then it was just natural that you would want to go out on dates. Then the fellows in the fraternity took out the girls in the sorority, or any other girls they could find. There were enough of either one to go around.

HR: What did you major in?

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DS: The School of Business.

HR: School of Business, I see. Four years?

DS: Four years.

HR: Fine, okay. I would like to go back to something you said before we started, about how your folks helped people here in town, like the Rosenblatts. Your parents were established here?

DS: I was talking about my grandparents.

HR: Your grandparents, okay. Was this in reference to Joe Rosenblatt's father?

DS: Yes.

HR: He was a peddler, right?

DS: I think when he first got started doing something for himself that he was a peddler, as I recall the story.

HR: What occurred? Did these people come like to the synagogue and your grandfather might meet them this way?

[END OF SIDE A OF TAPE]

DS: I can remember stories my mother told about my grandfather bringing people home for dinner on a Friday night that way. I do not recall that being the story to take somebody into their home and keep them for several months. I do not really know how long Nathan Rosenblatt stayed with them, but I get the impression that it was several months. I doubt if the time expanded into years.

HR: Let's see, this would be prior to your grandfather's

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death. So this would be about the turn of the century then. Let's see, when did Maurice Warshaw come?

DS: I think Maurice Warshaw dates just a little bit later than that, because my mother recalls when he was a peddler selling vegetables from house to house. I would think that would have been probably between 1915 and 1920. I can remember Maurice's little shack on Ninth South and Main when he had a little fruit stand there. Asha Moscovitz worked for him before he went into his first supermarket across the street. He was on the west side of the street. I think the first supermarket opened up on the east side.

HR: Yes. That is what Norman Nathan was saying. They had a store across the street kitty-corner from there, and then there was the Salt Palace.

DS: Yes. The Salt Palace was on Ninth South and State in the area where later was the old Bonneville baseball park. Something that interested me in religion was really at the time I was overseas. There was little to do to just get away from the ordinary duties of the day, except when Sabbath would roll around, and we would sit down and have a service. Quite frequently, one of the chaplains in the area would come around, and he would conduct services for us. One of these chaplains was a Rabbi Harry Jolt. I got kind of interested in the services. Maybe you get a

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little bit more religion anyway when you are in the field with the army than you get when you are home. I think also that a little feeling of religion comes to you too, when you get older and raise a family. So these things were sort of a combination of things that got me more interested in religion after I got back from the service than I was before I went over.

RD: What was your age at the time?

DS: When I was in the service?

RD: Yes.

DS: I was in my early thirties. Incidentally, another one of the chaplains was Rabbi Maurice Adler, the man that got shot on his pulpit many years ago. Do you remember that incident where a young kid, the idiot was out of his mind? He dealt with some sort of complaint at the rabbi's center. The kid shot him, and he died as a result of that wound.

HR: No. My word.

RD: You went into the service and you graduated from where?

DS: The University of Utah.

RD: Then went to work?

DS: When I graduated from the University of Utah I also was "minoring," you might say, in ROTC. I got a commission through the ROTC, and I held that commission. When the war broke out, I was just naturally inducted into the

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service as an officer. Then I went to work, and we had our own business. My brother, who was a little older than I, was running the business prior to the time that I got out of school. At that time I just went right in with him.

RD: This is the jewelry?

DS: That is the pawn shop on Second South and State.

HR: Did Leo ever go in with you?

DS: In the pawn shop?

HR: Yes.

DS: Oh, yes. Leo was with us for quite a number of years.

HR: Is he still in?

DS: No. Leo is not in now. He was bought out. He came in upon his graduation from the university. It was a store that Adolf White operated called Uncle Sam's Loan Office. Adolf and a couple of his sisters built this building we are sitting in now.

HR: How were they related to James L. White?

DS: Adolf was James' older brother. We bought that business out. I guess we must have bought it from Leo Grossman. I think that is when we bought it from Leo. My brother Leo, when he was later running that business, it also was eventually torn down when Walgreen's Drug was built on that corner prior to Penney's being there. We were forced out of that location. Then when the Grossmans wanted to

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move to California, they sold their business to us. The Capital Loan Office. For a short period of time we had all three. That did not last long because when the Uncle Sam's Loan Office closed down, then Leo moved over to the Capital Loan Office, which is the one we got from the Grossmans. We operated that for awhile, and then we gave that up.

CS: Hi.

DS: [to wife] Are you leaving?

CS: Yes.

HR: Cele, this is Ralph DeRose; Cele Siegel.

CS: I am very glad to know you.

RD: Did you experience any attempts at proselytizing on the part of the Mormon community?

DS: Oh, during the time that I lived in the community I guess missionaries have called on me two or three times. We have pleasant visits. When I tell them that we are Jews and have no intention of changing religions, they generally just keep it all on a social basis.

RD: Do they ever bring up the fact that there exists a Jewish brotherhood in the Mormon church? You know, Jews that have converted to Mormonism?

DS: I will bet you I have not talked to missionaries in ten or twelve years. I do not recall any such thing. The thing that is strongest in my mind is that usually when

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they leave, they ask if we can't pray together. We stop them from praying together because I do not like the way their prayers end. So we do not permit them to pray in the house. It has always been a social call. I would say that when missionaries call on you, they are attempting to convert you, so that is the answer. Two or three times is all that I have had them call.

HR: Something that I just thought about. There are two things. I will ask you this one first. When did we sell the Covenant House. How many years was there as an interim period between the Covenant House and our Center?

DS: We could actually look it up and be accurate. We opened up the Covenant House in 1925 in September, and I think we sold it in June of 1948. So there was about a ten-year period between the sale of the Covenant House and the opening of the James L. White Jewish Community Center. During that interim, most of the time our activities were held in hotels, in the Temple House, and other places around.

HR: Tell that to Eva, because she did not think it was that many years. I thought it was.

DS: Oh, definitely.

HR: It was all a part of my youth, my growing up.

DS: For nearly twenty-five years that we were in the Covenant House at 411 East South Temple.

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HR: How did you feel the social life was before you got married and maybe after you got married? Did you find a strong social life amongst the Jewish community?

DS: Well, I had enough to suit me.

HR: I mean, were we gregarious?

DS: Remember, one thing that we have not mentioned was that before the days of the B'nai B'rith youth organizations, we formed a youth group called the Maimonides Club. It should come up in your history, because I think that it was important, at least to quite a segment of the people of my generation.

HR: Which I was just going to ask you about.

DS: It was coeducational. It lasted six or seven years. During the course of events, which incidentally, was about the time of the Depression. This must have had something to do with it because at that time nobody was going away to college. They all stayed home. Most of the fellows in the Maimonides Club married all the girls in the Maimonides Club. That is right. As I recall, the very first marriage was Abe and Ann Greenband. They both belonged. Then there was Dr. Milton Pepper and Sonya. I can't remember if Sonya belonged. She lived up in Ogden.

HR: Did she?

DS: Yes. That was an early marriage.

HR: Sonya Greenband?

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DS: Sonya Greenband, yes. If I went down the line--.

HR: Abe and Claire Bernstein?

DS: Abe and Claire, Sam and Jackie, Ben and Rose Pepper, Cecelia and myself. I tell you, if I had the roster, I think I could go down the line. I can't remember whether Morris Goldberg and Augusta were members. That whole group, just about, got married off.

RD: Did you feel limited because there was just a small community? You tried to interact with Jews, and there were not too many.

DS: True, but as I said, for all the social life that I thought I wanted or required, I had it within the Jewish community. We had very few non-Jewish friends.

HR: Intermarriage was not considered inter-dating?

DS: No. We did a little inter-dating. I did it myself. I can't recall too many instances of intermarriage. If I could, I suppose I should not name them.

HR: Sure you should; certainly. [Laughter]

DS: Well, there were Harold and Bernice Findling, which was an intermarriage. When Bessie Rose left here, she married a gentile fellow who lived in Salt Lake for a long period of his life, named Francis Gillespie. He was a prominent athlete, although Bessie did not meet Francis until they were in New York.

HR: Who is this Bessie Rose?

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DS: Bessie Rose was the daughter of Ben Rose who, incidentally, worked for my father for a number of years. He worked with us. Bessie was quite prominent in the younger social circles, in the sorority and the university. She was a good little actress, very interested in dramatics. I would say that in her younger days, she was one of the more popular young ladies of the city.

HR: Excuse me, were Rachelle and Myron in this Maimonides Club?

DS: Believe it or not, I think Rachelle was just a whit too young. Maybe Myron was too. We disbanded this before they would have come up into that age bracket, although Rachelle and Myron are old time.

RD: What was the reason for disbanding the club?

DS: Well, we did not perpetuate it with younger members. You see, that is where AZA and BBG has it over on us now. When somebody gets to be a certain age, they bring them in. This particular group got in when they were sixteen to eighteen years old. They grew up until they were about twenty-three.

RD: Oh, I see.

DS: By then, you know, there was no longer any need for a youth club, and it just disbanded. We had one of the very few ceremonies that I remember in this community to disband an organization. You know, you institute groups

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and so forth, but you very seldom bury them. We had a little treasury and we had a meeting in the Community Center. Max Aaron was alive at the time. Have you run into the names of Max Aaron and Harold Aaron? Max Aaron was a very prominent member of B'nai B'rith, a very articulate gentleman. He was Harold Aaron's father. They ran a little clothing store in this same location that you are talking about with Mike Arnovitz and Sam Sapitsky. No. Actually his location was where Aaron Hirsch and Señor Pepe is now. Yes. That is where his location was.

HR: Is it A-A-R-O-N?

DS: Yes. A-A-R-O-N.

HR: Okay.

DS: He was the advisor of this Maimonides Club. At the time that we disbanded, we had this general meeting of the community and relieved everyone of office and took our treasury. At that time, it was a very new and smart thing to do. We bought a big radio and presented it to the Jewish Community Center. The organization went out of business.

HR: That was very nice. Let me ask you something I had just thought of. Dr. Zucker mentioned someone yesterday, and I am wondering if you knew him. I can't remember his initials, but his last name is Friendly. He writes now.

DS: Oscar Friendly?

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HR: Could be.

RD: He is an author.

HR: An author. Writes for the newspaper in New York or Washington. Are you cognizant of this?

DS: If he were a literary character, Dr. Zucker would know him, and I would not.

HR: I do not know whether he was just on a second-hand basis or not.

DS: I was close friends with Wallace Stegner.

HR: who is that?

DS: Oh, you read about Wallace Stegner, who was a quite noted author from this area. He has written many things about the Mormon church and about this area. I am sure that it is been less than a year that they were here. He was the one who delivered--

HR: He is not the one.

DS: --the commencement exercises speech recently at Logan, I think.

HR: Is he the one that was from Stanford in the department?

DS: Oh, I think he went on to--.

HR: He won a prize this year; the Nobel Prize or something.

DS: One of the prizes, the Pulitzer or the Nobel or something.

HR: I know who you mean now.

DS: Wallace Stegner went to school when I did, and we were

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very good friends.

HR: Let me ask you something you might know. Is Sam Weller Jewish.

DS: Sam Weller is not Jewish. He is not even close. He is interested. He is friendly. The poor son-of-a-gun. I feel sorry for him. That fire must have destroyed some of the most valuable manuscripts in this valley when it got to his place.

HR: One more thing. I hope you do not mind. My mind is just going, and I keep thinking of things.

DS: No. I wish you would ask because this sort of thing I can feel is not really getting down to the substance that we probably should have been.

RD: It is pretty hard for most people.

HR: Are we?

RD: When we get the whole thing together, then we will--.

HR: Yes. We are almost to the end. I will try to capsulize it. Do you see a change in the Jewish community over the years?

[END OF RECORDING]