

Harry Colman

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Interviewee: Harry Colman
Interviewed by: Barry Kessler (Jan 2008)
Transcribed by: Donna J. Williams

Qt: “There we go. Harry, I’m so glad you came down today to Shadyside, and I’m just wondering, as you look back on the days when you came here as a young boy, what did it...what kind of a place was Shady Side in those days? What kind of a place was the Fishing Club in those days?”

HC: “It was something that I could look forward to on the weekends, and that was very important to me. And as of this date, I’ve not grown up and to looking forward to something to do on the weekends, and I knew I could be together with my cousins Nancy and Linda Greenbaum, and we’d always have a good time. And that’s what it meant to me. And to see somebody, and her last...her nickname was Cookie, and I have no idea who I’m talking about, but it was Cookie; and I just looked forward to being with people, and people that looked forward to being with me, and I especially remember Nancy and Linda Greenbaum.”

Qt: “What kind of a place was this, though? I mean your friends were here, but what was the nature of the place?”

HC: “A place to get away and relax, and it gave me inner strength to look forward to doing something.”

Qt: “Yeah...”

HC: “... and especially when the Dunns had their carnival, and the fire house had their carnival, and I always looked forward to going back home because we’d stop at Renno’s Store and I’d get a big pretzel rod. There were different things to look forward to, and having dinner and just mainly being with people. I’m a people person.”

Qt: “Can you tell me a little bit about your family...your parents, your sister? What kind of a family did you come from?”

HC: “My father was one of the founders of ‘Shady Side...the Fisherman’s Club for Jewish people, and we... you know, grew as a family, you know, it was a time where I could bond with people, our relatives, and that’s what I remember most...is the bonding that took place, and that’s what I remember most.”

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Qt: “How did the bonding take place? What was it that helped your family to bond here?”

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HC: “Just the atmosphere and being away from home, and basically, that was it...you know, just a change of environment. You know, Fridays was a real special day for me. It was you know, I knew that I had something to look forward to.”

Qt: “Well, walk me through a typical Friday during the summer, just even before you start coming down. Start me at your home and tell me each thing that happened during the course of that day up until you went to sleep.”

HC: “OK. On Fridays, my mother would make home-made fried chicken. I don’t know if it was oven baked, but it was real, real good with gravy and mashed potatoes...it was very typical. And she’d buy an extra package of backs for me and my father, because the restaurants do not serve backs, and it was one part of the back that my father and I always enjoyed, so she’d get an extra package of backs. She made good chicken with gravy and mashed potatoes, and we’d hop in the car and come down here. And any time we’d pass Cookie’s school I’d get real excited: ‘Oh, that’s Cookie’s school!’ And I don’t even know who I’m talking about now, but I think it was King/Keene ? Elementary School at the time and, hopefully, you can remember her real name.”

Qt: “Was it, by any chance, was she the granddaughter of Dan Dannheiser?”

HC: “I remember Dan Dannheiser’s name.”

Qt: “Was she Cookie Schenker?”

HC: “I remember Mr. Dannheiser’s name, but that’s the only thing I remember...and her nickname. She’d always go by Cookie.”

Qt: “Yeah.”

HC: “And I wish I could remember her real name.”

Qt: “Well, there is a Carol Schenker who was the daughter of Florence Dannheiser Schenker who was here; and I can look her up for you.”

HC: “OK. And then we’d come down here, and the first thing we would do in this Great Room that we’re in now is watch TV. It was always in that corner [pointing to his right] by the steps, and I got so bored because I was not a baseball fan then. And we watched the baseball game on, probably, a black and white TV. And I said, ‘How many minutes before this is over?’ And it was the seventh inning, and my mother and father would say, ‘Seven more minutes’, and, I don’t know why, but I just ... baseball did not do a thing for me then especially on a black and white TV. And then I would go up to the men’s

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dormitory and off to sleep I went, and I would look forward to being with people on a Saturday; and I still am a people person at age 61.”

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Qt: “What did you do on ... while your mother was cooking on Friday during the day at home, and where did your family live. Where were you coming from when you came here?”

HC: “OK. We lived at 5419...this is so many years ago, I can’t believe I still remember it... 5419 Kansas Avenue, NW, Washington, DC; and as it turns out, I married a young lady from Kansas. At least she was young when I married her. [Someone laughs in background.] And it must have been the stars were in alignment or something like that. And I would drool all day at school knowing I was going to get my fried chicken dinner; and I just couldn’t wait to get out of school. And then we’d drive down past Cookie’s school, and we’d get down here and watch baseball at least, or at least they’d try to get me to watch baseball.”

Qt: “Now let’s come down to Saturday morning. You’ve been...tell me where you’re waking up and what are you going to do when you first wake up in the morning when you get here.”

HC: “I can’t say what I was first going to do when I wake up, because this is being filmed! [Laughing.] We would just have breakfast. Someone would always cook breakfast. And one other thing I remembered, my mother got our eggs from Mrs. Wilde, and I don’t know why I remembered that name at age 61, but I’m proud to say I’m age 61 now. And we’d get our eggs from Mrs. Wilde.”

Qt: “But where was Mrs. Wilde?”

HC: “I don’t remember. I just remember the name, and she was the egg lady. And we’d get the Saturday night crabs from somebody else.”

Qt: “Do you think that you bought the eggs on the way in to Shady Side or...?”

HC: “Somebody else got the eggs or got them Saturday morning, but it was tradition that we’d see Mrs. Wilde. I never saw her...but it was traditional...eggs from Mrs. Wilde and the Saturday night crabs, which I was never invited to because I wasn’t old enough, and that still hurts me [smiles broadly]. You know, I loved pickin’ crabs like some people picking greens, I like to pick crabs. And my father, on his 90th birthday...he lived to be 92, and we had a crab feast for him. And he picked more crabs than anybody else. I came in second place. And I worked harder than anybody else because my wife, Mary Rose, does not like to pick crabs, so I gave her a lot of the crab meat from my crabs.”

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Qt: “Tell me more about your father, though. What kind of a person would you say he was?”

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HC: “A workaholic...in one word, a workaholic. He provided very well for us financially. And sometimes we’d go to a baseball game, and sometimes, personally, my father and I would go bowling or to a football game. And I remember that football game in particular because we sat in the end zone, and it was against the Pittsburgh Steelers, and he said, ‘Oh my goodness, you can really hear the helmets hitting each other.’ And on the way home, on the radio the announcer said...the post-game announcer said it was a very physical game, just like what my father said. And I think what I remember best or most about my father is I would always...if we didn’t come down to Shady Side, we would go to a movie together and then get buttered popcorn. And the best buttered popcorn was at the Sheraton on Georgia Avenue. And sometimes...a lot of times after the movie we’d go and get chocolate-chip ice cream and when we’d get home with my mother, we’d all share that ice cream. So that’s the type of person my father was.”

Qt: “He sounds very generous and very warm.”

HC: “Oh yes. And you know he had to share his time with...between me and my sister, which he did very well. And...but the movies was the best part because we got to bond then.”

Qt: “Yeah. So, we were talking about your day at Shady Side.”

HC: “Yes.”

Qt: “And you told me that you woke up and you had breakfast, and then what?”

HC: “Then I would play with Nancy and Linda most of the day. Nancy and Linda Greenbaum. I don’t remember if David ever came here or not, but I remember spending quality time with Nancy and Linda. We would make up games and really bond and that’s mostly what I remember.”

Qt: “Can you remember any of the games that you played or where you particularly liked to play?”

HC: “Not really. It’s just whatever we could make up, and we’d do a lot of running around, probably on that back lot, all over the place. And that’s the days before they had the swimming pool.”

Qt: “Yeah.”

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HC: “And I don’t remember anything particular, but it was just a fun time with Nancy and Linda.”

Qt: “If there wasn’t a swimming pool, did you go swimming at all?”

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HC: “Down by the pier. I remember I saw a picture of my father holding me out of the water down by the pier. I didn’t see that picture today, but I remember that. And sometimes...I remember this one occasion, Evelyn and Bette Claire took me out on a row boat, I forget how far out we went, and they convinced me there was a monster over the hill, and I couldn’t get back here fast enough. And I probably ran straight to my mother. And I remember some days, if I got too much sun and I wasn’t feeling well, I would go right to my mother and father’s room and lay down for a while before dinner. And my father would make me his version of buttermilk. It was whole milk, all butter and pure cane sugar. And, oh, that made me feel better.”

Qt: “Now how did he prepare that buttermilk, do you think?”

HC: “In a saucepan, and he’d heat it up on the stove. And, you know, he would powder me down, and, you know, make sure I got rid of my sunburn or too much sun. And that was his version of buttermilk. And then one day I was over a friend of mine’s house, with his mother and father; and they asked if I would like buttermilk. And I said, ‘Oh, yes!’, not knowing what it was, and I was out for a rude awakening; and there was nothing I could do but swallow it, because I was in mixed, you know, good company.

And I remember something unusual about my friend. In high school, we played murder ball with a dodge ball, and the Shirts vs Skins, and then people would throw a dodge ball as hard as they could and as close as where the two of us are sitting. And finally, this one guy from Germany came into the school one Friday, and the gym teacher knew I hated murder ball, so he had me walk the track with Wolfgang. And we were just, you know, walking the track, and I knew he was German. And we finally talked about religion and he found out that I was Jewish, and he literally stopped dead in his tracks. He couldn’t believe that a Jewish person would talk to a German person. And to me...I’d like to say I’m very open-minded. Everybody’s an individual person, and I didn’t even think about that, you know, because he didn’t do anything to me or my family so...and I really enjoyed, you know, meeting his parents...if it wasn’t for the buttermilk. [Chuckles.] And I really enjoyed it and had a good rapport with him until he went back to Germany.”

Qt: “Well you brought up the question of ‘Jewish’ and you mentioned that many of the people here at the Fishing Club were Jewish...”

HC: “Yes.”

Qt: “And I’m just curious if you could tell me more about that. Why were so many Jewish people involved in this club?”

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HC: “Well, because at one time we were unwelcome, as I understand it, from...this is not the original location, and we were down about four or five miles. I forget the name of the town even; and as I understand it, they were not welcome at the country club or where ever they first settled. And that’s why they moved down here. And I remember the

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house being green, and it was just something to look forward to. It was strictly for Jewish people, as I understand it. I wasn’t even born then, so it’s just word of mouth.”

Qt: “Yeah, but what during the time when you were coming down? Did your family face any kind of anti-Jewish prejudice anywhere that you were aware of in Washington?”

HC: “Not that I was aware of. No. Everybody accepted everybody for what they were.”

Qt: “Even in the surroundings of Shady Side?”

HC: “Correct. And that matter of fact...and this is not about Shady Side, I’m Jewish, obviously. My wife of 30 years is Catholic, and we met at a young adult club sponsored by the Presbyterian Church and I am the only Jewish vice-president that the Baptist Bowling League ever had. [Chuckles] And we had a Catholic-Jewish wedding, and to see how different people can get along was really beautiful. And I’d love to see a tape of that, but, you know, I had to be the person in the highlight, so I didn’t get to see it ... a tape of that, I’m proud to say that I look for the best in all people, no matter what race, color or creed. I’m very proud to say that.”

Qt: “How do you think you came to be that way?”

HC: “Just my natural...I’m a people person, and the more friends I make, the more I can learn.”

Qt: “I just wondered...”

HC: “Mary Rose and I had an unwritten pre-nuptial agreement we, for medical reasons, did not have any children. Both of us have medical reasons. And the unwritten pre-nuptial agreement that if we did have any children or if we adopted any children, it was OK to go to Catholic mass and it was OK to go to the Jewish Sabbath services, but it was not OK to go to a Jewish school or a Catholic school. And I am a better person for having been associated with all types of races, religions and creeds.

And I remember this one person in particular, Bill Yerbe, who was a minister. And I was going to hotel-motel training school, and that was a long year. That’s when I started to put on the weight, because I’d get a bite to eat after work or after school, or before school and then after school. Bill Yerbe, who took the bus in three nights a week, from Baltimore, Maryland, and I would go out for a beer or two or three, I couldn’t wait to...in good-natured fun, to tease him about being African-American or Black; and he would get

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right back at me about being Jewish, and we had a wonderful rapport. And it finally came to the end of the year and I said, 'I'm sure glad this is over with', because it was a strain going to school and then going to school again at night school and he said he's sad this year's over with. And I said: 'Bill, have you been hittin' the beer too much?' And he said 'No, because...', and this is a two-part answer...I don't know how old I was, but

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it doesn't matter. He said this is the first time in a long time that he had been able to develop a meaningful relationship with a Caucasian. And I'll carry that to my grave. And then I asked him the following question: 'What did you say?' I asked him 'what is a Caucasian?' I knew I was white, but I didn't know I was a Caucasian! He got the biggest laugh out of that, you know. I never did keep in touch with him. It was a tremendous rapport we had."

Qt: "Yeah, a beautiful friendship."

HC: "Oh, yes."

Qt: "I'm just curious, do you think that this is something that maybe you got, in some way, from your father or your mother? Did they experience their relationships in a similar kind of way?"

HC: "If any it would be my mother. And I remember one day, we took a tour boat out of Annapolis or Baltimore, and she just made friends right away. And she was more outgoing. My father was a workaholic, and he had his own group of friends. She would make friends with whomever she could. So I took after my mother, I would say."

Qt: "Well, let's think about your mother, coming back to Shady Side, what would she be doing while you were playing with your friends? What would she do all day?"

HC: "I would imagine I don't know about all day, but I imagine she would be playing cards, especially Canasta. She was an avid card player...and preparing dinner, and you know, just sticking around with the girls and watching the soap operas, if there were any on the weekend. I don't think they had DVDs or anything [someone chuckles in background]. So she would watch her soap operas or just, you know, sit by the water side but, you know, before the pier steps and sit and just relaxed."

Qt: "Did she do any needlework or handcrafts of any kind?"

HC: "I don't know if she did any down here, but, yes, she did. And the one that I'll always cherish was a small frame but the meaning still holds out true. I don't know, needlepoint or crochet. It's all the same to me. I say 'So What!', you know? And she wrote out 'Shalom', and that's a very typical Jewish phrase, and it has so many meanings. And I have a Mary Rose and I have a lot of peace signs at home. And I have a peace necklace that I brought down with me, and that's one that I will always cherish, that 'Shalom', that phrase will always be with me. I just love it, and when I send emails to

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my friends, after office hours, of course, sometimes during office hours, I always...instead of 'Love, Harry', I'd put, 'Shalom, Harry'. And that's one I'll always remember. And she always...sometimes she would make a toilet paper holder made out of crochet, or sewing or whatever she did...it was something I have no patience for. I

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was not a sit-at-home person; I had to be on the go, and I'm still the type of person that has to be on the go on weekends."

Qt: "Some of the people who were young kids here at Shady Side told me about explorations where they wandered far from the house and this particular property and got into adventure. I just wonder if there's anything that sticks out in your mind?"

HC: "No. Did they mention my name?" [Laughs]

Qt: "No. But you did mention the carnivals, and I wanted to come back to that. Could you describe one of the carnivals...?"

HC: "Yes."

Qt: "...that you went to?"

HC: "When the people...when the firehouse had an annual carnival, right across from Renno's Supermarket, and I'd always look forward to that. And I'd always go on the whip. And then the Dunns, right next door, they had one ride, and it was just for the local people. Every year they would go around in a circle, and every year that was...excuse the play on words...when the Dunns had their carnival, that was a Dunn Deal; and I'd always look forward to, you know, going around in circles."

Qt: "Besides the ride, what would the carnival consist of?"

HC: "Well, the one at the volunteer fire house, you'd have games of chance. They probably had a Ferris wheel, that you could not pay me enough money to go on, especially the one that stopped at the top. I don't mind going on a small Ferris wheel now but not the type they have at the Navy Pier in Chicago; and sometimes I can adjust to heights, but..."

Qt: "Were there special foods at the carnival or other activities?"

HC: "It's been so long ago that I don't remember. I'm 61 now."

Qt: "Yeah. Do you remember who you went to the carnival with from here?"

HC: "My Mom and Dad. If I can jump back to another subject."

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Qt: “Please.”

HC: “A lot of times my mother and I would watch TV at home, especially on a Saturday night, and my father would come up after he did his homework, and he would bring a party platter for all three of us with, you know, sandwiches cut in triangles with pickles, 9.

olives and potato chips. He’d always enjoy surprising us like that. And I was hoping he would do that more often, but...I had an appetite. I was not lacking for hunger.

[Laughing in background.]...especially when it was Friday nights and we had the fried chicken, but I forgot to mention that about my father. And I think Evelyn was at home then, too, but I don’t remember.

We moved to...when I was about ten years old, we moved to another neighborhood where I could get a better education and I went to...it was Ben W. Murch School, and I went to school with...there was one person that you might remember: President Johnson, Lyndon Johnson? I was in the same room with Lucy Johnson. And I was in the same room with the founder of the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus, Kenny Feld; and you could just tell by the way he carried himself that he was going to make something out of himself. He just had a very professional attitude, even before sixth grade. So, excuse me for name dropping...”

Qt: “That’s all right.”

HC: “Lucy and Kenny I remember very much.”

Qt: “Well, coming back to Shady Side again, can you remember any of the women that your mother was friendly with or the fellows that your Dad was especially friendly with down here?”

HC: “Well, my mother was friendly with all her relatives, and that meant a lot to her. And that would help pass the time away when my father went fishing. And my father was especially friendly with his fellow fishermen. And one of the original...I don’t know if he was an original member but excuse me for name dropping again, but Sam Gompers. He was a member of the Club when my father was a member. And he one of the founders of the A.F.of L., C.I.O., if I remember correctly.”

Qt: “Tell me about your father’s interest in fishing.”

HC: “It was a relief from his work week. As I said, he was a workaholic till the day he passed away he was a workaholic, and that was a stress relief for him, and to socialize with his fellow fishermen, and that’s the best I can remember him.”

Qt: “When did he go out fishing?”

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HC: “Early in the mornings on Saturdays, sometimes probably before the sun rose, and he’d go out fishing. I didn’t even know it when I woke up. He would always catch a lot of fish and it was a way of life for him on the weekends.”

Qt: “Any idea how it was that he came about, how it was that he got interested in fishing?”

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HC: “Probably somebody talked him in to it, you know, ‘cause it was a whole group of fishermen, and, at that time, I don’t know if he was very sociable or not, but he may have forced himself to go out. You know, when he found out it was a guy’s day out, that really was a big turn on for him. And I brought a lot of people down to Shady Side since, and, you know, it brings back so many memories. I remember the swing slide; I don’t even know if it’s still there or not. I wasn’t here when the swimming pool was here, but I saw now it’s covered up. And I think looking through that book you showed me my father played volleyball, and it was a necessary break for him, for my father.”

Qt: “Did you do any of the sports activities that were here?”

HC: “Not that I remember.”

Qt: “Horseshoes?”

HC: “Probably horseshoes, yes. And I don’t remember that much about it, but I was not a professional horseshoe player. I was not good enough to enter the Olympics in horseshoes, but at least I had fun trying. And that’s about all I remember. Well I don’t remember what age I was when I came down here but, you know, that goes back a long time.”

Qt: “Yeah.”

HC: “I’m sure I played horseshoes with my father. That was a lot of bonding, another bonding between me and my father; and sometimes my sister would join us in, you know, different games and everything, so it was a bonding factor that I enjoyed.”

Qt: “Did you ever go out on the water in any kind of boat yourself?”

HC: “Just by myself?”

Qt: “Or with other family members?”

HC: “Just with Evelyn, my sister Evelyn, and my cousin, Bette- Claire. And again they scared the heck out of me (and again, excuse my language), convincing me there was a monster looking over the island [Laughing in background] or something like that. I didn’t get out on the water too much that I remember.”

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Qt: “With your father, for example, or going fishing...”

HC: “Not that I remember.”

Qt: “Did you ever fish with him?”

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HC: “No, but as long as we spent the weekend together, that was the main thing.”

Qt: “Tell me about Wilbur and Wilbur.”

HC: “One day, Mary Rose and I brought my father down here. His name is Wilbur Colman, obviously. And we were just looking around, and he hadn’t been down here in twenty, thirty years, maybe forty years. And all of a sudden, Wilbur Dunn shows up. And it was like a family reunion, and Wilbur is not your more common name, like John, or Robert or David, so it was an especially nice time they shared together, and occasionally I got to speak. But the two of them reminisced about the good old days, and that really made me feel good about me that if it wasn’t for me, my father would not have had a fantastic day. And they talked about the good old days and Wilbur Dunn would bring his golf cart...when he was alive, he lived in Florida for half a year and came up here for half a year; and he brought his cart over to our property, and they just sat there for hours on end, just relaxing and looking at the water. And it was just a fantastic day. It was nice for me and Mary Rose to see Wilbur Dunn, but just knowing that my father really had some fantastic memories, that really made the day for me and Mary Rose.”

Qt: “Yeah. Can you remember any of the things they talked about? I wish we could’ve taped that conversation but we didn’t. Can you remember anything, any specific things they remembered when they were talking?”

HC: “I tried to leave them alone so as not to play interference and just let the two of them reminisce but that still was a very memorable for all of us. I felt lucky, you know, ‘cause at that time my father was a senior citizen so he couldn’t drive. He had an amazing sense of direction, even though he could not see as well, he could tell where we were, and he could tell me to take a left turn here, what road we were on, what intersection we were on. So that’s another thing I’ll remember about my father. And he couldn’t see that well or hear that well. That’s why I’m wearing hearing aids. He gave me such an ear full sometimes when I was bad that I lost my hearing. [Chuckles.] And so it might have been inherited. So I just let the two of them reminisce by themselves.”

Qt: “Did they go down to the water and out on the pier at that point?”

HC: “I think that at that point the pier was damaged by one of the hurricanes, but there was still some pier left. But they just stood up by the pier before the steps and chatted for at least an hour. It really brought back some good memories. And that makes me happy that I was able to do that for my father.”

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Qt: “Were they able to come inside this house?”

HC: “Oh, yes. The house was always open and, you know, that even brought back more memories.”

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Qt: “Yeah. Do you think at that point the house was a museum, or was it still a club of some kind?”

HC: “It probably was a museum at that point ‘cause I’ve been coming down here once a year, once every year and a half, and, you know, bringing different people down here and it’s still my place, you know. The name of it is ‘Our Place’ but it’s still my place where I spent many a childhood weekend. And one weekend...one Saturday, we brought this couple down, Sam and Hannah Kolodny, and I didn’t...we had dropped out at that time...my whole family had dropped out. So somebody had seen a strange face...well, to me, they were a strange face. And people came and I said ‘well, I’m so and so.’ It was either Mel or Art, and, you know, ‘is there any way I can help you?’ And I explained that I used to come down here many a summer weekend when I was a lot younger, and at that time my hair was thick and I was thin. Now it’s reversed itself. My hair is thin and I’m thick [Laughing in background.] And we introduced ourselves, and he introduced himself as either Mel or Art Sheinbaum. As it turns out, Sam and Hannah Kolodny’s son worked for ‘Mel Art Jewelers’. So they were able to meet their son’s boss on that particular day, just by circumstance. We just happened to be at the right time at the right place; and of all people to come out to inspect us, you know, to go through the security check-point, that was the day. It could’ve been anybody to come out to make sure that we were Kosher.”

Qt: “Right...a fun coincidence.”

HC: “Yes.”

Qt: “So did you actually come into the house on that day and participate, you know, with the Club? How long did you stay?”

HC: “Well we were on our own to tour the house; and we had all the freedom that we wanted. We walked to the back where the swimming pool was. Again I don’t remember if it was open or closed, but I just wished I’d had that swimming pool when I came down here. I just love showing people where that swing was and, you know, where that TV was over where Mary Rose is sitting, and showing them our dormitory and different bedrooms. It just brings back a lot of memories, even though I was young when I came here, and it still brings back a lot of memories. And that was a lot of fun seeing Sam and Hannah Kolodny meet their son’s boss. I mean that was pure luck. And at that time, I don’t know which year, but it was probably a new group of owners. Here, when I first came, it was family owned, and then people started dropping out. And now it was a new

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group of owners. I wish I knew more of the history how it took over from one generation to the other.”

Qt: “What about just within your family. Do you have any sense of why they dropped out of the Club?”

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HC: “I would imagine that people started passing on, and there wasn’t enough interest. You know, when you lose a dear family member, it’s kind of like a haunting ground for people to come back where they have so many memories. And that’s the way I am sometimes. You know, if I lose a friend, I try to stay away from that place, you know, until my mindset can get used to it. It was...that would be my reasoning. Some people just lost interest and had other...pursued other interests on the weekends.”

Qt: “But in the case of your family, you were still...when...do you remember one summer being able to come and then another summer not being able to come?”

HC: “No, but because I probably started at Camp Ramblewood the next summer, in Darlington, Maryland, near the Conowingo Bay (River) and Dam. That’s not a cussword, that’s just where the water works and we would...some people called it, you know, ‘professional babysitting’ ‘cause it was for two months. And the one thing I remember most...there were a lot of things about Camp Ramblewood, but my cousin Melvin Klein - we were talking about the Kleins earlier – definitely one of the cousins was Melvin Klein, and we were about the same age. And the biggest thrill for me was when we played softball. He was on the opposing team, and I struck out my cousin. I got the biggest thrill out of striking out my cousin. That was a...and I was an all-star pitcher two years in a row. I was starting pitcher one year, and I would throw the ball so soft, people tried to swing and clobber it and strike out. I had a better strike-out record than Babe Ruth probably. [Laughing in background.]

Qt: “Good for you. Bringing up your cousins. I’m just wondering if you could tell me, obviously, it was lovely that you were able to bond with them here at Shady Side; but what kinds of activities might you do during the rest of the year, the other three seasons of the year with the whole group of cousins?”

HC: “Not much in the way with the cousins...I had my own circle of friends. We would go bowling, to the movies. We used to live near the Kennedy Theatre. And every Saturday, we would go to a...they tried to have a...it’s now a temple and it was within walking distance, and we lived at 5419 Kansas Avenue, and we’d go to the movies. And on Saturday nights, me and my friend, Archie, would go bowling. And we joined a bowling league, and just whatever we could do. And then I became a member of what was the Young Adult Club, the 18 – 30 club at the National Presbyterian Church. And we’d do our own thing on the weekends. And whenever I had to stay home, I had to help my folks do spring house cleaning. It’s best you stay away from me. I was not a very happy camper.” [Laughing in background.]

[Type text]

Qt: “What about on Holidays? Did you see your cousins for special holiday meals?”

HC: “Only on Passover. And sometimes on Sukkos...excuse me if I don't remember the name...the holiday of fruit.”

14.

Qt: “Right.”

HC: “Sometimes I would see them at the Temple...the Washington Hebrew Congregation. And talking about that, it started out, if I'm not mistaken, on 8th and H Street, NW, Washington. And then we way outgrew ourselves. Now it's a Christian church, but it still has the Star of David on the top. And on the other hand, I went to New York City one time, and it started out as a Jewish temple at one time and now it's a Catholic church if I remember correctly.”

Qt: “Well, coming back to Passover, I wonder if you could remember just describe what Passover would be like with all of your family members around?”

HC: “It was always...one of my...Carol Davis, was Aunt Lil's daughter, and Mary Conn...and I'd always call her by her first and last name, I still don't know why. And Mary Conn's father, I don't remember his first name, would always be the leader. And he'd go around reading, taking turns reading and doing the overly fast songs. And my parents and I, at one point, did celebrate Channukah, but I was scared to light the match, so somebody had to do that for me. I got nervous doing that.

And at Passover, it was a special occasion because we'd all gather around the table...maybe 15 of us. And then that was really nice except I would always get scared when it was my turn. I was hoping I could read the Dayenu's because it was short, choppy sentences, [Laughing.] and that's where I'd shine; but when it came to reading long passages, I just was intimidated. And I did not have any training in Toastmasters, which I could've desperately used. Somehow I managed to work my way through it.”

Qt: “It sounds as though this might've been your mother's side of the family, though, rather than Uncle Lou and Aunt Eva and the Powdermakers. Is this correct?”

HC: “Yes, that's correct.”

Qt: “?? there

HC: “Plus my sister and my brother-in-law...she was married at the time. Yes, she was married at the time, and their three children. And their three children... their first initials were...Lisa, and Sharon and Debbie...and that was 'LSD' in that order. [Someone is knocking in the background.] And then my brother-in-law, Lennie Rawicz, he took over the leadership. And now we have Passover at my one niece's house, Lisa, and she took over the leadership. And I'm not sure how old Lisa is but she's a Sunday school teacher,

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and she does the Passover services with a lot of meaning and background. And I'm sure she's an excellent Sunday school teacher."

Qt: "I'm just wondering about Sylvan and Cora Powdermaker and their children and grandchildren...whether you saw them in a social way outside of Shady Side?"

15.

HC: "Very seldom, although Aunt Cora was insistent that Mary Rose and I come over. That we had to spread our wealth around, even though we are in credit card debt, we spread our wealth around to people, and one time we did come over to Aunt Cora's, when she lived on Quebec Street in NW, Washington. And she pretended like she was going to faint. 'Oh, my goodness! You really did come over for a visit.' And I probably spent more time with my mother's side...her two sisters, Aunt Miriam and Aunt Lil. And Mary Rose and I went over...the day we got engaged...when we got home from being engaged. And Mary Rose and I went over to Uncle Lou and Aunt Eva's, Rockville, Maryland. And I'm giving this a little publicity...free publicity...which is right across the street from the Silver Diner restaurant. And I would appreciate your showing that to them and so I could get a little moolah. And they were the first, of course, my mother and father were the first to know we got engaged, and then we told Aunt Eva and Uncle Lou. And that was over 30 years ago because we've been married 30 years. And then Aunt Lil calls us and tells us my grandmother passed on the day we'd announced our engagement, and that was a bittersweet day...one offset the other."

Qt: "Sure. Well, speaking of the Powdermaker family, did you see them here at the Fishing Club?"

HC: "I don't remember seeing them at all at the Fishing Club."

Qt: "OK."

HC: "I understand from you that Aunt Cora and Uncle Sylvan had their own property, just down the road apiece. And my sister and I and Bette- Claire would walk down there to see the property, but we never made it then, because I was more interested in the fried chicken that we had at the reunion. That was really special because we re-united with Doris...I don't remember her last name. She's about a 15-minute drive from where Mary Rose and I live in Alexandria."

Qt: "Well, we just have another minute, and I wonder if you could think back to when your family was down here at the Fishing Club, and you had to get ready to return to Washington. And if you can kind of, again, walk me through the steps of everything you would have to do, from the time your parents said, 'we've got to get ready to leave', until you reached your home."

HC: "About the only thing I remember is how sad it was to leave, and I already started looking forward to the next weekend. And we'd stop at the Renno Food store and I'd

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always get a real big pretzel rod. And then again, once we'd pass Cookies's school and 'Oh, that's Cookie's school'. And then we came home, and that was always a big let down to be back home. I mean it was a nice home, beautiful home, but I'd rather be away. You know, that's what I lived for...that is to travel, even to this day, you know. I love to be away from our home, sweet apartment in Alexandria, Virginia. It was a long ride home."

16.

Qt: "Yeah."

HC: "It was even a longer ride down. I always looked forward to getting that pretzel rod... a BIG one! And that would last me almost the whole trip home to Kansas Avenue. I reflected what we did on the weekend, this last weekend on the way home I'm still mad, to this day, that I never got invited to the crab feast on Saturday night. I just wanted to be involved with everybody."

Qt: "Do you think that it was because it went too late or why do you think your parents wouldn't let you be in the crab feast?"

HC: "Well, I'm maybe I was more mature than my cousins or whoever else was down here, but it was quiet time for them, it was, you know, adults only, stay away. But that ...I was a good kid. [laughing] So I liked to mix and mingle [Laughing in background.] with everybody."

Qt: "Where did the crab feast take place that you weren't invited to?"

HC: "In that kitchen behind us...or behind you and in front of me...every Saturday night. They would buy the crabs live and then steam them or whatever they had to do. We had many a crab feast at our place including for the Young Adult Club where I met Mary Rose and I showed...got up in front of every body and showed them how to pick crabs and there was more crab shells off than crab meat...nobody...that was an unusual activity for the Young Adult Club, picking hardshell crabs, and we had them down in our basement. I just wanted to get involved.

And another time my mother and some of her adult friends went to 'Hello Dolly' with Pearl Bailey; and I got mad at my mother that I wasn't invited. And she said, 'Well, you wouldn't feel comfortable with people my age.' And I said, 'I didn't come to be with people your age. I came to see Pearl Bailey with 'Hello Dolly'. [Laughing in background.] I liked to...age does not matter to me, you know, just meet other people, older people, younger people. I'm just a people person.

I'm just like my mother, and this one day I was especially close to my mother. We got on a crowded bus...[Someone says, 'Oh, God' in background and laughs.], and it was an old DC Transit...the owner was Oroy Chalk. And I was closer to my mother than my father. I didn't know how close I could be to my mother because my...don't ask me how this all happened, because I don't know. There were two seats left in the back of the bus, way back in the back My belt buckle got stuck in her belt loop, and we were Siamese

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twins for about a couple minutes, and it was like we were dancing the Lombada or whatever that special dance was [Lots of laughter in background.], and I have a lot more memories of my mother, you know, because we interacted more; but that was about the best memory I have when we got intertwined together. And I was so glad to get a seat...I'm sure people were laughing at us and making fun of us, but it was an interesting trip to downtown Washington."

17.

Qt: "Ok. When you think back, if you were to visualize yourself, here at Shady Side in the days when you were coming here, what's the first place where you see yourself, in and around this place. Where did you most especially remember yourself most being?"

HC: "The first thing that came to mind is when we pulled in the parking lot in the evening. I knew I was in for a fun weekend. And it was just the opposite when we pulled out, you know. I looked out the back window sometimes and waved goodbye to this old house. Just the idea that it was the start of the weekend and seeing those baseball games...how boring."

Qt: "But it was just a special moment when you first arrived?"

HC: "Yes. Yes, very definitely. And I said, maybe this will be the weekend that I'll get to eat crabs. I knew it was going to be off the beaten path for a while, and I really looked forward to that."

Qt: "That's great.. Thank you very much. I think that really wraps up what I wanted to talk to you about, so I do appreciate very much your coming down and I really enjoyed hearing your stories about the Fishing Club Days in Shady Side."

HC: "Well, thank you for having me."

[End of interview]

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