

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

1. I am Robert Friedman, I am conducting an interview with Marie K. Abrams ✓ for the JFVS archives on October 2, 2001.

2. Can you tell me how and why your family originally came to this country and when?

STROLL
Charles ~~Stall~~ helped my father come from Germany in 1929 when he was 18 years old, because Hitler was coming into power, and he had to leave.
My grandmother came in 1939, because she wouldn't leave my grandfather while he was alive. My mother's grandparents came from Lithuania and were married in 1893 in Louisville, Kentucky, and then went to Mississippi and lived there in a small town until my grandmother came over from Lithuania in 1886. After my mother was born they moved back to Louisville.

3. What were your parents' names and where were they born?

My mother Thelma Evans Kahn 4/22/12-7/10/89 was born in Louisville, Kentucky.
My father Leo Kahn 2/7/11- 4/27/87 was born in Germany.

4. What is your birth date? What language(s) were spoken in your home? Where did you live then? Who lived in the same house with you – Grandparents? Uncles/aunts? Brothers? Sisters?

I was born 10/19/37.
My father decided that English would be the only language spoken in my house. Even when refugees came to our house he would only speak English.
We lived on Auerbacher Court when I was born. When I was 1½ we moved to Murray. We had a one bedroom apartment, in which the maid lived along with the family, so I slept in the back.

5. What was your neighborhood like? Were there other Jews living in the neighborhood? Did you walk to school? Sunday School? Temple? Was there a neighborhood grocery? Drug store?

There were Jews were in my neighborhood, we were the only Jewish family, and people walked places. It was 2-3 blocks to the grocery store, Liberty Bank, and *Cherokee* Dairy, where everyone walked to get ice cream. When I was in 5th and 6th grades I walked to both school and temple.

6. How did the 1937 flood affect you and your family?

This question was not asked

7. If you wished to travel what kind of transportation did you use? Did you travel when you were young? If so, where?

I preferred traveling by bus. From the age of 1 I went to AJ until I was about 3. When I was 8 or 9 I would go to YMHA to dancing school.

Every Saturday I went to Brith Shalom, and then Laura Kahy and I would go to 2nd and Broadway for lunch and a movie. When we took long trips we took the train and when I was a teenager we used a car.

I went to Chattanooga and I stayed one month during the Polis Scare, and for 5 years I went to Biloxi Mississippi for a big family reunion.

8. Was your family involved in a synagogue / temple?

My father was on the board of the temple.

9. What holidays and rituals were observed?

We celebrated Passover dinner at my mother's sister's (Aunt Sophie's) house, Rosh Hashanah at home, and for the Sabbath I went to Brith Shalom every Saturday.

10. Did you attend religious school? Were you confirmed? Bar Mitzvah?

I attended temple and was confirmed with my class until we graduated high school which no other class had done.

11. What is your educational background? What was your career?

I spent 2 years at Vanderbilt and 2 years at the University of Louisville. I received History, Sacred Science, and a Teaching certificate. I then taught at Southern High for 2.5 years, and when I stopped teaching there was a great teacher increase.

12. What brought you to Louisville and when did you come?

I have always lived in Louisville. My family came here when my mother was born.

13. How did you meet your husband/wife? Where and when were you married? Did you have children?

I met Ronnie at Vanderbilt. I was a Frat. Project. I was dating a ZBT
Parents picked me up at end of freshman year. My mother said about Ronnie, "He's cute."

I said “yuck”

When I went sophomore year I had broken up with the ZBT brother. Ronnie decided they were going to rush the Jewish girls. I always had dates with the 2 guys. Ronnie said he was serious so I stopped dating the other guy.

We were married on February 2, 1958 in my parents’ living room. We had a choice of big wedding or small and cash was sparse to us.

I had two children, Elizabeth Sue (Beth) Abrams Mitchell 5/11/62 and Marc Neil Abrams 5/19/64.

14. Tell about your involvement in the Jewish Community? Was your whole family involved?

My mother and father active in the temple, Shriners, and Oldham Church. ^{Club?}
My mother was very active in NCSW but wouldn’t take presidency. When I joined she resigned.
NCSW ?

15. How was your family affected by the World Wars? Wars in Israel?

My father’s father (my grandfather) was killed in WWI in Germany.
WWII my father was of age to be drafted but declared 47-7th and became an air raid warden. I remember the rations and tin cans. My family had no personal involvement in Israeli wars.

16. What are your favorite spiritual memories? How did religion affect your life?

I always was devout to Judaism because of the concept of giving and responsibility to uphold justice to make the world a better place.
As a teenager I was attentive to services. I didn’t think of spirituality. I lived through Judaism “It’s what you do” if you are a Jew.
I was always drawn to livelihood passages, “Do Justice-love mercy. I walk humbly with thou G-d.”
There is not a day in my life that I’m not affected by choices. I can make (Jewish) it’s me!

17. What interests do you have?

My interests include family, community service, friends, and reading.

18. What are your favorite family memories?

They all deal with humor and storytelling. My father was a practical joker and my children still tell Thelma and Ted jokes or stories.

19. What is your legacy? How would you like to be remembered? What values would you like to pass on to those you leave behind?

My legacy is my children. Remembered for their humor and humanity.

I want to be remembered for the small things that have affected others.
Little victories are the values that everyone should take with them.

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Resume

MARIE K. ABRAMS
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Louisville, KY 40241
502-426-4220

CURRENT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Board of Trustees, University of Louisville
Board, Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
Board, Southern Regional Council
Board, Center for Women and Families
United Jewish Communities (UJC), Trustee and Pillar member of HSSP (Human Services and Social Policy)
UJC, HSSP Chair of National Agencies Committee

PAST COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

National Vice Chair, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC)
Co-Chair Equal Opportunity and Social Justice Task Force, NJCRAC
Race and Public Policy Ad Hoc Committee, JCPA
Chair, Social Security Task Force, Council of Jewish Federation's Washington Action Office
Chairperson, Kentucky Commission on Women
President, National Council of Jewish Women (N.C.J.W.), Louisville Section
Member, National Board, N.C.J.W. and Vice Chair of National Affairs Committee
President, Kentucky Youth Advocates
Leadership Kentucky Class, 1986
Board, Louisville Jewish Community Federation
Chair, Women's Division, Louisville United Jewish Campaign
Chair, Community Relations Council, Jewish Community Federation
Advisory Council, Jefferson County Office for Women
Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Task Force
Louisville Public Education Committee (group of 12 people appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to involve the business community in the direction and quality of education in our community)
Chairman, Israel Advisory Committee of the Louisville Community Relations Council (CRC)
Governor's Task Force on Juvenile Delinquency; Chair, Subcommittee on Status Offenders
Board, Jewish Hospital
Chair, Task Force on Educational Funding, Jefferson County Public Schools
Chair, Community-wide pro- and anti-busing dialogue group appointed by mayor and county judge to reduce tension
Chair, Title XX Coalition
White House Conference on Domestic and Economic Affairs
Board member, Louisville and Jefferson County Youth Commission

Board member, Jewish Social Service Agency
Board member, Family and Children's Agency
Board member, Jewish Community Center
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1988
Chair, Harvey Sloane Inauguration, 1982

EMPLOYMENT

Legislative Aide to Kentucky Senate Majority Office, 1982-Present, (full-time during sessions, part-time in interim)
Associate, Schimpeler Corradino & Associates, 1984-1989, an engineering and urban design firm (coordinated projects, managed public involvement activities and served as intergovernmental liaison)
Legislative Aide to Chairman Senate Appropriations and Revenue Committee, 1980
Administrative Assistant to Governor of Kentucky during 1972 and 1974 General Assemblies
Public School Teacher

AWARDS

Hannah G. Solomon Award, National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section
Lewis Cole Young Leadership Award, Jewish Community Federation
Wilson Wyatt, Sr. Award, Leadership Kentucky
National Conference Brotherhood Award
Ottenheimer Award

EDUCATION

Vanderbilt University, 1955-1957
B.A., University of Louisville, 1959 - Social Science Major

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Rabbi Gaylia R. Rooks
Rabbi Robert Slosberg
Rabbi Bradley C. Teckuel

Association of Jewish
Family & Children's
Agencies

International Association of
Jewish Vocational Services

Accredited by
Council of Accreditation of Services
for Families and Children, Inc.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I do hereby give my permission to record my life history through the Jewish Family and Vocational Service, 3587 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville, Kentucky 40205. My story will be kept in the JFVS library unless I choose to keep it myself.

Marie K. Abrams

Participant

Robert Friedman

Witness

10/2/01

Date Signed

JFVS/aj 5/14/01
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