

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

We are Maxine Switow and Anita Weber, conducting an interview with: Carol Behr
for the JFCS archives on December 23, 2011.

1. Tell me how and why your family originally came to this country and when? How did they travel?

My paternal grandparents were from Vienna, Austria, from a much assimilated family. My paternal grandmother came to New York with her father who wanted to take her away from an unsuitable suitor. In the early 1920s she met a man. They worked in a restaurant after they married. He died very early. She later moved to Louisville with my mother and father. My maternal grandparents came from St. Petersburg where my grandmother's father was an overseer for a large estate. They left St. Petersburg before the Revolution where they barely escaped the Cossacks. My maternal grandmother became a well-known dress designer ("Madame Reed") in New York City. She and my grandfather lived at 59th and Madison for many years. Both of my parents, Shirley (Sophie Resnikoff) and Julien Greenfield, were born in New York City. My father's mother, Rosalie Greenfield, lived with my parents, my sister and me from 1937 until her death in 1955.

2. Tell me about your parents - their names and where were they born? Have there been other family names used in the past? Where, when, and why was it changed?

My dad, Julian Greenfield, came to Louisville for a job in women's wear. He opened the Joy Shop. They didn't know a soul. My mom, Sophie, changed her name to Shirley and her Russian maiden name was Resnikoff which she didn't change. Both parents were born in New York City.

3. What is your birth date? What language(s) were spoken in your home?

I was born 2/12/1933. English was spoken at home, never Yiddish. I was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. My family moved to Louisville by train and car when I was two. My paternal grandmother lived with us.

4. Where did you live as a child? Who lived in the same house with you – Grandparents? Uncles/Aunts? Brothers? Sisters?

My parents lived in a rented house when they first came to Louisville, where soon after all their belongings were gone due to a fire. My sister was five years older. We moved to the Highlands on Spring Drive, Woodbourne and Lauderdale. We lived in the first "all-electric" house in the Highlands on Lauderdale. There were many other Jews who lived on Lauderdale. I walked to Highland Jr. High, took a bus to Atherton. My grandmother lived with us. Both my parents worked downtown on 4th Street. My family and I attended Adath Israel (3rd Street Temple). There were a few stores at Douglass—Heitzman's Bakery and a produce store, an A&P, some drug stores—near my home.

5. What brought you or your family to Louisville, Kentucky and when did you come? How did they travel? Did they share any unusual experiences with you?

A job was the reason for the move. We came by car and train. As soon as we came, there was a major flood and our belongings were lost in a fire.

6. What was your neighborhood like? Were there other Jews living in the neighborhood? Did you walk to school? Sunday school? Synagogue/Temple? What kind of shops were in your neighborhood?

See Question 4.

7. If you or your family lived in Louisville at the time - how did the 1937 flood affect you and your loved ones?

Since we lived in the Highlands, we did not have to move out during the flood. In fact, other people moved into the garage of the Spring Drive Apts. where we lived during the flood.

8. If you wished to travel within the city limits what kind of transportation did you use? Did you travel out of town when you were young? What kind of transportation did you use when you traveled out of town? And if so, where did you go? What special memories do you have of those trips?

We always had a car, but we often used a bus for transportation in Louisville. My dad took me out of town to Lake Wawasee in the car, because I had hay fever and I was uncomfortable, and it was very hot in Louisville!

9. Was your family involved in a synagogue/temple? Were your parents or other family members religious?

I was involved with the Temple, and Dr. Rauch was the Rabbi. We were not very observant and did not keep Kosher.

10. What holidays and rituals were observed in your family? Do you have any significant memories surrounding Jewish celebrations and what was special about those occasions?

My family observed Passover and Chanukah.

11. Did you attend Sunday School or other religious schools? Were you confirmed? Did you have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? What are your memories from that time? Are you still in touch with some of the people that attended Sunday school with you?

I was confirmed, and attended Sunday school. I enjoyed Sunday school, and am still in touch with friends from Adath Israel. Rabbi Rauch was my earliest rabbi; later Rabbi Herbert Waller was rabbi. I did not have a Bat mitzvah; it was not done at Adath Israel.

12. What is your educational background? What was your occupation? Who or what influenced you to choose your career? What kind of preparation or training was required for your career?

I attended Indiana University for two years. Twenty years later I went to University of Louisville to get a business degree, but never graduated. I did a great deal of volunteer work in many organizations which influenced my life and enabled me in my future job opportunities. I ran a mini warehouse; worked for Jefferson County-City of Louisville for 20 years; did event planning and directed departments for the city and county.

13. How did you meet your mate? At what point did you realize that this was the one you wanted to marry? Where and when were you married? Do you have children? Grandchildren?

I met my ex-husband, Max Behr, at the YMHA. We came from diverse backgrounds; I was Reform and Max was Orthodox. We married in 1952 and have two children, a daughter, Rhonda, and a son, Mark, and five grandchildren. We divorced in 1988.

14. Discuss your involvement in the Jewish Community outside of your temple or synagogue when you were growing up.

Later, I was VERY involved in the Jewish community, Young Judea, YMHA, girls' clubs, Hen Hussies, and Sigma Theta Pi.

15. What was your involvement in the non- Jewish community? Did you witness any anti-Semitism living in Louisville? If so, how was this incident handled?

I worked for Mayor Harvey Sloane and the City of Louisville and Jefferson County for 20 years, ran a mini warehouse, sold diamond dental bits, worked for a microfilm company, etc. There was a great

deal of anti-Semitism, but I ignored it. I would hear the worst remarks about Jews. Many times I would try to educate those people. Mostly, I ignored it.

16. How was your family affected by the World Wars? Wars in Israel? Pearl Harbor? What are your earliest recollections when thinking about major events in history?

My brother-in-law served in the Navy. My earliest recollections regarding the war were sitting by the radio and listening to the news with my family, and later about the Israeli wars.

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

Everything in life affects you spiritually, and that religion affects everyday life if you love your religion. I am very proud to be Jewish, and my life reflects that feeling.

18. What interests or hobbies did you have when you were young and what are they now? What schools did you attend and are there any memories that stand out from that time in your life?

My favorite hobby was dancing. I belonged to a dance group, and we were “therapists” for each other. It was a modern dance group developed at the YMHA and the Jewish Community Center. Also, when Max and I lived in Germany while he was in the service, I taught dancing in Germany. I felt that I was “my mother’s daughter.” She was also a “doer” and a productive person who owned a store at 4th and Market. I was very involved in Hadassah, as was my mother.

19. What are your favorite family memories – whether it was with your family of origin, or your extended family and friends?

My favorite spiritual memories are the births of my children and grandchildren, their mitzvahs, and watching and engaging in their lives.

20. What is your legacy? How would you like to be remembered? What message do you want to leave for your children and future generations?

My legacy? Being home and having family dinners, being a great mom and grandmother with my family and grandchildren; hoping I contributed something in my lifetime through examples of community service and family devotion.