

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

1. I am Robert Friedman, I am conducting an interview with Ronald 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?

My mother and her father came to the United States when she was six months old. She was born in Minsk, Russia or on the ship. She never knew her birthday date, just the year of 1901. My dad was born in the United States in New York in 1849. His father, from Lithuania came over in the 1880's.

1849?
1880's

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

My mother, Dorothy Peterman Abromovitz Giller, was born April 5, 1901 and died February 5, 1987. My father, Benjamin Abromovitz, was born February 5, 1894 and died May 18, 1967. My name was always Abrams.

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 June 22, 1936. The languages spoken in my home were English and some Yiddish. My grandfather lived with us until I was 5 at which point he died. We lived in the same apartment until my mother died. My sister also lived there. She was 13 when I was born, so she was only home for summers.

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?

We lived in the upper west side of Manhattan, at 85th and West End Avenue. There were primarily Jewish families. I never thought about being Jewish. I did not know in grade school or high school if my friends were Jewish or not. I went to high school in the Bronx. I went to Bronx High School of Science, a college prep high school. I walked to grade school and junior high. I took the subway to high school. There were several grocery stores and drug stores. We lived a block away from Broadway and I would go to Riverside Park.

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

Not asked on this interview.

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

I went camp every summer in Connecticut and up state New York for two months. There was one time I went to California by train with my family. We also went to Long Island to visit family. We went by car, and never flew.

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

No, but we were involved in Hebrew Kindergarten and Infants Home. My father founded it.

9. What holidays and rituals were observed?

We did not observe holidays and rituals.

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

I attended Sunday school for 3 years. I was Bar Mitzvahed but never learned Hebrew. We were never members of a congregation and I had no formal education. My first Seder was in school at Vanderbilt University.

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

I received a BA in business from Vanderbilt University. I then went to Coopers and Lybrand as an accountant. I then spent 41 years at Yeager, Ford, and Warren. I am now retired, but I'm still involved with assisting start up companies. (Please see attached sheet.)

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

Marie, because we were dating, and my business, brought me to Louisville. I was going to school at Vanderbilt University and came for a holiday weekend. While I was here in Louisville, I talked to a CPA who said to graduate and get a CPA degree.

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

I met Marie at Vanderbilt. She was a Frat. Project. She was dating a ZBT. When I went sophomore year she had broken up with the ZBT brother. I decided they were going to rush the Jewish girls. She always had dates with the 2 guys. I said I was serious so she stopped dating the other guy.

We were married on February 2, 1958 in her 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 Oldhum Church. ^{Club?}

My mother was very active in NCSW but wouldn't take presidency. When I joined she resigned.

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

My brother-in-law was in the navy during WWII. My family was not affected by the wars in Israel.

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

I have no real spiritual memories in the religious sense. Family has made the difference. The march on Washington-Soviet Jewry. I believe in what we do here. Marie taught me how to be Jewish.

17. What interests do you have?

The community, golf, and travel are my interests. Another interest of mine is to help young people start their business, not in a tax related way, but to help them raise money.

18. What are your favorite family memories?

Trips before 1976. The 200th anniversary in 1975. The Seder where we took from two books (we would have other people over and Marie planned the service).

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 community and general involvement. Our children are heavily involved in the community, which is a lovely change for us. Beth is involved in NCSW. I tried to do a good job in the community.

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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.

Donald W. Auman

Participant

Robert Slosberg

Witness

10-2-01

Date Signed

JFVS/aj 5/14/01
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BIOGRAPHY

RONALD W. ABRAMS

EDUCATION

1950 - 1953	Bronx High School of Science
1953 - 1957	B.A., Vanderbilt University
1957 - 1958	University of Louisville

EMPLOYMENT

1957 - Present	Coopers & Lybrand, Louisville, Kentucky (or its predecessor)
1971 - Present	Partner
1977 - 1990	Partner in Charge of Taxes
1990 - 1994	Executive Tax Partner
1994 - 1997	Tax Market Leader
1998- 1999	Viperlink, International, CFO, Director
2001-	Teledvance,LLC-Director
2001-	Monty's Plant Food-Director

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Adath Israel B'rith Sholom (B'rith Sholom)

1967 - 1969	Treasurer
1969 - 1971	Secretary
1971 - 1973	Second Vice President
1973 - 1975	First Vice President
1975 - 1977	President
1977-Present	Board Member

Jewish Community Federation

1974 - Present	Board Member
1973 - Present	Campaign - UJC
1977 - 1980	Chairman Community Relations Council
1982	Chairman Group & Social Services Subcommittee, Planning & Budgeting Committee
1982 - Present	Endowment Fund
1983 - 1986	Treasurer
1986 - 1988	Vice President
1986	Co-Chairman of United Jewish Campaign
1988 - 1991	President
1991 - Present	Executive Committee

1997 - Present

Chair, Foundation

Metro United Way

1987 Portfolio Chairman
1991 Leadership Circle Chairman
1991 - 1995 Nominating Committee
1994 Endowment Committee
1994 Allen Society - Volunteer of the Year
1995 - Present Resource Development Cabinet
1997 - Present Board of Directors

Louisville Chamber of Commerce Activities

Economic Development Steering Committee -
Targeted Marketing Subcommittee Chairman
Occupational Tax Task Force
Entrepreneurial Conference
Chairman, Tax Legislative Policy Subcommittee
Government Affairs Committee

OTHER

1971 - 1974 Community Action Committee, Louisville and Jefferson County
1973 Council on Religion and Race Board
1973 Bureau of Jewish Education Board
1968 B'nai Brith - Treasurer
1969 - 1971 Actors Theatre Board Member
1971 - 1973 Standard Country Club Board Member - Treasurer
1974 Young Leadership Award, Jewish Community Federation
National Conference of Christians & Jews:
1974 - 1982 Board Member
1978 - 1979 Co-Chairman
1973 - 1975 Member, Legislation Advisory Committee -
Kentucky Society of CPA's
1969 - 1971 Chairman, Federal Taxation Committee -
Kentucky Society of CPA's
1974 Treasurer, Vote Yes for Transit Committee
1976 - 1978 Governor's Economic Development Committee,
Task Force on Finance
1976 - 1978 Board Member, Midwest Council, Union of
American Hebrew Congregations
1981 - 1982 Leadership Louisville, Louisville Chamber of Commerce

National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council /

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

1982 - 1986 Church State Commission
1982 - Present Equal Opportunity and Social Justice Task Force
1995 Chair, Budget and Finance Committee
1996 - Present 2000 Treasurer
2000 - Present 2000 Executive Director

1979 - 1983	Urban League - Board Member
1984 - 1990	Jewish Hospital Board
1990 - Present	Jewish Hospital Healthcare Systems Board
1990 - 1997	Fifteen Telecommunications (Public TV station):
1987 - 1993	Chairman and Board Member, Finance Committee
1994 - 1996	Chairman, Team One subsidiary board
1989 - Present	Regional Cancer Center Corporation Board Member
1991 - 1993	Midwest United Jewish Appeal Major Gifts Committee
1992	Person of the Year - B'nai Brith
1994 - 1996	Council on Peacemaking - Board Member

Council of Jewish Federations - (National) *(United Jewish Com)*

1991 - 1993	Board Member
1993 - 1996	Vice Chairman, Community Budgeting Council
1997	National Funding Council, Executive Committee
1995 - 1997	Strategic Planning Steering Committee
1995 - Present <i>1997</i>	Task Force on Soviet Jewry Advocacy
<i>1998 - Present</i>	<i>Board Member</i>