

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

I am Jerry Fleischer, I am conducting an interview with: Frances Winchel for the JFCS archives in 2011.

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

My family came by boat to Ellis Island; my mother, Pearl, from Latvia, and my father from Poland. They came for a better life, and family was here.

- 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 mother's family name was Brest. My father was originally Smigelsky which was shortened to Smigel.

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

I was born on 10/18/1933. Both Yiddish and English were spoken in our home.

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

We lived in a small town, Mt. Carmel, PA. It was a town of four square miles and 35 Jewish families.

My aunts and uncles were in surrounding towns and had businesses. They were all united and strong in Yiddishkeit. I lived with my parents and two sisters.

- 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?**

I came to Louisville in 1965. My husband, an anesthesiologist, had an opportunity at Jewish Hospital.

- 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?**

My neighborhood was similar to today (after the flood).

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

N/A

- 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 flew and drove. The memories are all good.

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

Synagogue in Pennsylvania. Yes, kept 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?

We followed all holidays and the extended family joined in. It was joyous to be together with our extended families.

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 went to Sunday school with two other girls of similar age. I did not have a Bas Mitzvah or confirmation. I keep in touch with Sunday school girls.

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 have a B.S. in physical therapy from the University of Pennsylvania. I sold real estate in Louisville (took a course in real estate.)

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?

My younger sisters met a young man at a football game with an aunt and uncle. Went to the Community Center and met my husband's brother. The siblings arranged a date; we were 14 and 17 years old. We married in 1953, when we were 20 and 22 years old. We have four children and 17 grandchildren (2 married grandchildren).

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

Was in BBYO in various communities and was driven by my father to small towns. It was important to meet and mingle with other Jewish kids.

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?

There was very little prejudice (overt). I lived in a small town – 4 square miles with only 3 Jewish families. The main occupation was the coal mines and factories. The people were Irish, Slovaks, etc.

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?

WWII: I corresponded with a child in Europe who was in the war. The name was supplied by some Jewish organization. Communication stopped when he requested a prescription to be filled and by the sheer amount of the request, my parents assumed he was selling on the black market. I remember VJ-day; we left the lake and celebrated in town. My father loved Roosevelt and was very dedicated to Israel.

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

I remember all the Jewish rituals as a child and an adult (with my own family.)

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?

Ice skating, dancing, reading. Now, shul activities, book club knit group, giving back to community. I was a docent (guide) at the Speed Art Museum.

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

All family times are very memorable.

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?

Honesty; integrity; love of family; give back to community and practice Judaism; don't look for the easy way out.



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To Whom It May Concern:

I do hereby give my permission to record my life history through
the Jewish Family & Career Services Oral History Project.

2821 Klempner Way, Louisville, Kentucky 40205.

My completed story will be sent to me and a second
copy will be kept in the JFCS library unless

otherwise stipulated in writing by me.

Frances R. Winkler

Participant

TEROME FLEISCHER

Interviewer

6/30/11

Date

Louis & Lee Roth Family Center • 2821 Klempner Way • Louisville, Kentucky 40205
502-452-6341 • FAX: 502-452-6718 • www.jfcsloouisville.org

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