

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

I am Jerry Fleischer, I am conducting an interview with: Simon Wolf for the
JFCS archives on July 22, 2012

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

My family came here to escape persecution and because they were very poor. They came by boat in 1930.

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 name: Helen Wolf; my father's name: Louis Wolf.

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

I was born on November 22, 1930. English, Yiddish and Hungarian were spoken in my home.

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

I lived in Philadelphia with my mother and my sister.

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 because I was drafted and stationed at Knox. We traveled by trolley, auto, and by foot.

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 had a Jewish population. I attended Day Nursery by walking and public transportation; and I attended Hebrew School which was housed in Row House. We had a fruit store and a kosher butcher shop in the neighborhood.

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

I was not living in Louisville at that time.

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 traveled by bus and train from Philadelphia to New York.

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

My grandfather was a member of the orthodox synagogue.

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 observed Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. I remember attending services at the synagogue.

During my teen-age years I went from synagogue to synagogue.

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?

At age 13 I became Bar Mitzvah. I did not keep in touch with my classmates.

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 obtained a B.S. degree in Pharmacy at University of Kentucky. My lifetime occupation was as a pharmacist.

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 partner in Louisville at the J.C.C. picnic. We wrote to each other, and got engaged one year later. Our wedding was at the Kentucky Hotel on December 27, 1953 by Rabbi Gittelman.

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

Belonged to and attended the Jewish Community Center (Y.M.H.A.)

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 was on the board of Acorn (Senior Citizens in Louisville.) There was plenty of anti-Semitism experienced.

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?

Everyone was affected. I remember 1944.

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

I enjoyed all family events. My mother moved from New York to Louisville in 2001. I identified with my religion, Judaism.

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?

When I was young I collected stamps and played all sports (elementary, high school and college.) At the present time I attend the theatre (movies), social functions at J.C.C., senior citizen's events, and I dine out with friends.

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

With my grandparents and parents, life with Carol and the children. I remember my week-long visit to Israel with Carol and my mom.

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?

I always did the best that I could; and I tried to be the best I could be; and I hope my children will always try to do their best.

Interviewee: Sy Wolf Date: July 22, 2012 Age 81

My family came to America by boat in 1930 to escape persecution and poor living conditions. My mother, Helen Wolf, and father, Louis Wolf, spoke English, Yiddish and Hungarian with us in the home.

I was born November 22, 1930 and speak English, Yiddish and Hungarian. I grew up in Philadelphia with my mother and sister and was drafted and stationed at Fort Knox.

The family traveled by trolley, automobile and on foot. Our neighborhood was predominantly Jewish. I attended day nursery on foot and using public transportation. I attended Hebrew school in a row house. The shops around us were a fruit store, Kosher butcher shop. The family and I traveled by bus and train while living in Philadelphia and New York.

My grandfather was a member of an orthodox synagogue. Our family observed Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and attended synagogue. During my teenage years I went from synagogue to synagogue.

At age 13 I became a Bar Mitzvah but did not keep in touch with my classmates.

I obtained my Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy at University of Kentucky. My lifetime occupation was Pharmacist. My wife and I met at the JCC Picnic after which we wrote to each other and got engaged a year later. We were wed at the Kentucky Hotel on December 27, 1953 by Rabbi Gittelman. My wife and I have two children, (a boy and a girl), three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Belonged to and attended the Jewish Community Center when it was called the YMHA. I was on the Board of Acorn-Senior Citizens of Louisville group. Unfortunately, I have experienced "plenty" of Anti-Semitism. Everyone I knew was affected by the wars. I especially recall 1944.

I identified with Judaism all my life. When I was young I collected baseball cards, stamps and played all sports in elementary school, high school and college. Now I attend the theater, movies, social functions at the JCC, senior citizens events and dinners out with friends.

My favorite family memories are my grandparents, parents and life with my wife Carol and the children. I remember my week-long visit to Israel with my wife Carol and my mom.

My legacy is that I did the best that I could and was the best I could be. I would tell people to always try to do your best.

Respectfully submitted by interviewer Jerry Fleischer on August 10, 2012.