

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORAL HISTORIES

1. I am Kimberly Feinberg, I am conducting an interview
with Blema Baer for the JFVS archives
on August 6, 2007.

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

My father came to America first because he had a sister living here. And he sent for my mother and brother and sister, who came over later.

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

My mother, Ida Kasap, was born in Kiev.
My father, Samuel Sandler, was born in Kiev.

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?

July 10, 1914. Mostly English. Mom and pop didn't speak Yiddish very often. 763 S 1st street, I think it's all commercial right now. Brothers, 3, and 4 sisters, mother and father.

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?

Friendly, no Jews lived there. Yes, yes. Yes, there was a grocery right on the corner right where we lived, a Pigly Wiggly, and the drug store was about three blocks from where we lived, Davis's drug store.

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

Quite a bit. My father was in Chicago buying clothes for his store, and one of my brother's was down at the store, and another brother was down at the river putting up sand bags. And my sister and I were washing this beautiful punch bowl and listening to the news and I dropped the punch bowl. Then my sister and I went to the school, which was about ½ a block away. And a boat came over to our house to take us out of there. There were about 500 on the second floor of the school and 500 that lived on the first floor, and we were there for quite a bit.

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

Planes, I've been on two cruises they are great but I like trains or planes. Street car. No.

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

No, just as members.

9. What holidays and rituals were observed?

All of them. We had one shlu kappors, it was when we would put money in the charity boxes and swing chickens. We had Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Passover.

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

Yes, went to Hebrew school for a short time. No, no.

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

His graduate, and took some courses at UofL, observed but didn't register. Started out working at Selman's, then my husband was a football coach, then I had two children, then when ray became ill he had dabbled in insurance so I went into that for climbing apple insurance agency and became a business woman.

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

Born here.

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

First I met him when I was in high school, and he would come by at the end of school and offer me a ride home, but I didn't date him for a long time after that. Then he started calling me for dates and that was it. June 21, 1938 at Anches Sphard synagogue. Two children one son has passed away.

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

Volunteering for everything, united Jewish campaign, bond selling for Israel, 7,000 hrs for Jewish hospital. Ever since I was 7 I was volunteering, I used to write letters to my parent's friends children. Jewish convalescent children, council, and community chest, the arts and crafts gallery, my list can go on and on. My family wasn't really involved, my brothers were away from here, and they traveled a lot. I was really the most active in my family.

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

Just like everyone, devastated, my brother served in the service and got accommodation for his services. My son was over in Vietnam taking pictures, my sister worked at the hospital as a candy (stripper), but everyone safely returned home after the wars. My father, who was a tailor, would fix the soldiers uniforms and clothes, without charge.

Stripper

No.

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

Just the fact that Judaism has taught me about sharing and caring for others, and to try to be an example and role model of being good and considerate and thoughtful of other people. It's taught me charity and its importance.

17. What interests do you have?

Right now, working at the hospital is one of my greatest interests, I love to go antiquing, reading, I used to love to drive, but they've taken my car away from me, so I straighten up my house and do all the little chores, I still volunteer at 93yrs old, I visit the patients, I have a nephew who is a dr. and he calls me to visit his patients.

18. What are your favorite family memories?

My family, my sisters and I were the best of friends, and my brothers were also really close to us. My sisters and I would travel together, one of my sisters and I went to Israel together and my four sisters and I went to Japan together. And we would celebrate all of the holidays together. I just have the fondest memories with family.

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?

I don't know. I would like to be remembered as a very caring person. The golden rule, do unto others as u would like to have done unto u, and I really try to live that, I think prayers are important. When I was really sick I used to watch touched by an angel, and I remember when I had my heart surgery and I was there for 7wks. And it dawned on me that I hadn't said my prayers, and I remembered how important it was to talk to g-d. And once I began to say them again I really started feeling better. It's important to know that there is someone greater than us that's looking down on us and really taking care of us.



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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 and can be accessed by interested people. It will be preserved archivally for future generations.

Belema Baer
Participant

Kimberly Feinberg
Witness

8/6/07
Date Signed



Blema Baer, 99, died Friday, October 4, 2013 at Deer Park Retirement Center in Cincinnati. She was a native of Louisville born July 10, 1914. Blema was retired sales agent for Klein & Appel Insurance Agency (1954-1992). She wore many hats as a volunteer for 54 years at Jewish Hospital but her favorite one was visiting the patients on Friday. She was often called "Mama Baer" and "Girl Friday". She served on Jewish Hospital Guild, member of The Speed Museum, a life member of Hadassah, serving on the board, member of NCJW - Louisville Section, member of Congregation Anshei Sfard and Congregation Anshei Sfard Sisterhood. She was a volunteer for United Jewish Campaign, Bonds for Israel, Arts & Crafts gallery and Jewish Home for Convalescent Children. She received The Julia Victor Volunteer of the Year Award in 1986 and won The Bell Award in 2010.

Blema's special way with people has also been helpful to Jewish Hospital Transplant Program. The hospital's social service staff needed someone to be a committed friend to Kentucky's first heart transplant recipient. Blema was selected because of her supportive and nurturing nature as well as her level-headedness in dealing with complicated and unpredictable situations. She was so effective in her first case that social services requested her assistance with other patients.

Blema enjoyed antique shopping, square dancing, reading, needlepoint and her Canasta games. Her home was always open to family, friends and to Ray's football players, better known as "His" boys.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Raymond Baer; her son Perry Baer; her parents, Samuel and Ida Kapsah Sandler; her sisters, Cecil Speevack, Rebecca Judah, Flora Levine and Marian Stern; her brothers, Jack Sandler, Morris Sandler and Carl Sandler.

She is survived by her devoted son and daughter-in-law, Gordon and Shirley Baer; sister-in-laws, Emma Sandler and Arlette Baer; and many devoted, nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews and friends.

Funeral services will be 2:00 p.m. Sunday, October 6, 2013 at Herman Meyer & Son, 1338 Ellison Avenue with burial to follow in Anshei Sfard Cemetery. Visitation will be after 1:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may go to donor's favorite charity.