

Angelo Cohn
Narrator

Rhoda G. Lewin
Interviewer

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Angelo Cohn -**AC**
Rhoda Lewin -**RL**

[Interviewer's Note: Angelo Cohn was a long-time acquaintance, because he had worked with my father on the Minneapolis Star Tribune for many years, and because his children and mine had gone to school together. For these reasons, and because this interview was intended solely for my own research use, I did not record my questions, and I turned off my tape recorder when Angelo and I were talking about topics not connected with my research.]

AC: [We] came to this country, my parents with my two brothers and me, in 1920, October 12, 1920 was the date of record. We had a great deal of family on my mother's side who had come to Minneapolis about from 1900-1905, in that area. This was a large family, many cousins, and besides the direct family there were many friends and sort of second, third-level relatives, cousins of cousins, who came from various cities in Romania and also were living here. Of my father's family, nobody of the direct family came to America, sisters or brothers or uncles or any of that, but there were some second cousins of his who came to this country and all settled or remained in New York. They had been people who came much earlier.

RL: Where did you come from?

AC: My home and birthplace was in Bucharest, which was my father's home. My mother came from Botosani; B-O-T-O-S-A-N-I is the way it's spelled on the Romanian maps. And this was apparently a fairly large Jewish community; it's, I think, north of Bucharest and a little east, near the Black Sea. And that was one large community. There was another small town, much smaller I gather, called Dorohoi which was also in that area and was almost a completely Jewish community from what I've been told.

Both my parents were professionally trained. They had been teachers, but they were limited to teaching in the Jewish schools, although my mother taught French language and other languages, but in the Jewish schools. My father was also trained as a teacher, and he also was a law school graduate from the university but could not practice law because of the Jewish restriction. He did work in a law office with a non-Jewish attorney who was a close friend and remained very friendly even after we came to this country.

There was a great deal of correspondence between them and that continued relationship. But he was limited and I think if anything caused us to come here, it was that restriction more than the fact that my mother's side of the family had come to America many years before and had really quite prospered.

I'll give you some background on the family. These were the Kanters and Silvermans. Mr. Nachman Kanter, was the patriarch, so to speak, of the American branch of the family, and his wife was the oldest sister in my mother's family. There were also two other sisters, Sophie, who was Mrs. Pinck, a sister-in-law of Dave Pinck, the dentist. This was also a fairly large family, the Pincks, who came from that same area, incidentally, but they had come long before. I think Dave is the last one living, maybe one other brother; one just died recently, one who was living in Faribault or Mankato. Then another sister, Mrs. Maurice Abrams, and then there were brothers, Charles Silverman, who was in the wholesale meat business with the Kanters, the next generation of Kanters, and Ben Silverman, who lived in St. Paul, also was in the wholesale meat business here. Now to give you the next generation from the Kanter family, Anna Joseph, Mrs. I.S. Joseph, was a daughter of the old Mrs. Kanter, so she's my first cousin. And, let's see, Maurice Kanter, also is of that generation, who's now the father of Bruce and Herbie Kanter. Bruce is the eye doctor.

Now all these people had come about 1900 and their business had done fairly well. And actually when my parents were married in 1911 or 1912, Mr. Silverman, who was a kind of favorite brother with my mother (they were the two closest in age), and his wife Clara, who was also a kind of a second cousin from the Kanter side of the family, the same side as Anna Joseph, roughly that relationship, Mr. Silverman and his wife and I think the senior Kanters and one daughter, who must have been Anna Joseph, all came to the wedding in Romania. That was quite some expedition.

When we came here in 1920, the others were not only settled, but scattered to some extent. They had actually lived somewhere in that Seven Corners area when they first came but had already moved a little bit. We came we lived in a six-family apartment building, you might call it, on the corner of Fifteenth Avenue and Ninth Street, and this at the time was owned by my uncle Charlie but he no longer lived there. But the Abramses and the Pincks lived two units of in this building. We then came into a third one, and the other three units were occupied by other people, non-Jewish, as I remember. But we lived in this close little area. Mr. Silverman at that time and Morris Kanter, who was his, I suppose, both a cousin and a brother-in-law, were then living on about Elliot Avenue near Franklin. I think they lived in two houses side by side, and the Kanters very soon after that moved further out west, someplace about Franklin and Fremont or someplace, in the general area of Temple Israel, I think.

RL: That wasn't a Jewish community...

AC: No it wasn't, except for very few families. Now the Josephs, Anna Joseph, Betty's and Burton's and Roger's mother, lived there too, on Emerson, or no, it was Fremont, right on Franklin, in adjoining houses.

Now let's see... In our neighborhood, Ninth Street was really at that time one of the key streets, although it was a dead-end at Sixteenth Avenue, which was one block from our corner there. Fifteenth was a main street because it was a streetcar street; the Bloomington car line came up that street. Ninth Street went east one block to Sixteenth and that was the dead-end. The other way it didn't go right across Fifteenth Avenue; there was a little jog in the street. The jog was about half a block further north on Fifteenth Avenue. The one block beyond that jog, or a block and a half, was the B'nai Abraham Synagogue, and the next block, which was Twelfth Avenue—the blocks are irregular because some were skipped there—was the Adath Jeshurun Synagogue. The Adath moved away fairly soon after that.

Fifteenth Avenue was a key street, and on both sides of it there were a great many Jewish families, and all, interestingly enough, from that same area. There was another synagogue, the Agudas Achim, which was called the Seventeenth Avenue Shul, on Seventeenth about between Nineteenth and Franklin, right in that block. But that was kind of separated from our community because all the streets ended at Sixteenth Avenue and then you had to go way out as far as Franklin Avenue to get around and come back on Seventeenth, unless you came through the alleys or between the houses. But none of the streets, which were Ninth Street, and then the next street south was already Eighteenth Street and the next one was Nineteenth Street, a block away, and then Franklin Avenue was number twenty. So the Seventeenth Avenue Shul was a little separated. And this was a different shul also. The two, B'nai Abraham and the Adath were mostly Romanians. The B'nai Abraham was in fact called "the Rumanische shul." And the other one, Agudas Achim on Seventeenth Avenue, was really people from an area that was sometimes Romania, sometimes Russia, sometimes Hungary. But it was that little corner of land which was constantly changing leadership or ownership. We used to consider them the "Russians" actually, but they called themselves Romanians and some were actually from the same areas.

If you want some names, some of the people, for many years the Blumenfelds, Kid Cann's family, were associated with that synagogue [Agudas Achim]. In fact, in its late years he supported it almost entirely because he hadn't been made very welcome at the other synagogues [laughs]. But there were other people around there who were also members of that shul, and there were a great many who maintained dual memberships in B'nai Abraham and the Adath. Most of my family, all the Kanters, the Josephs, the Silvermans, all maintained two memberships.

RL: Why was that?

AC: I think it was just because of their ties. For instance, when we came here, the Zeesmans, the bakery Zeesmans, who were from the same area as my mother. I think

Mrs. Zeesman came from Botosani if I'm not wrong. But, they did come from the same area. Then Mrs. Segal, Sam Segal's mother, you know Sam and Bernice Fischbein's mother, came and they knew each other from Romania. Just to give you an idea of how close this relationship was, when our daughter, our oldest, was just a baby, we were at a party at the Samweiners next door. And they were very close friends with the Segals - this was a Hanukkah party - and Mrs. Segal was there. We were talking about things, and this was the first time she had seen the baby. She asked what her name was and I said "Anna Rebekah" and she said, "Oh, she was named for her great-grandmother, wasn't she?" This was an Anna who was my mother's mother. As it happened, that was not our thinking. It was Miriam's mother who was also Anna. But this is how close a relationship that Mrs. Segal knew this. And as it happened the Segals were not particularly close friends of ours because they lived a few blocks away, and while I knew Bernice at school, they also were among those who moved from the neighborhood fairly early. So they were gone.

But again these were people, the Zeesmans, the Davises, who had one of the butcher shops in that area, were from the same area. And, oh, any number of others I can't name. Then when you went up Ninth Street, in the jogged part of the street, which was across from the two synagogues, among the families living there were the Gottliebs (Harold Gottlieb was in the insurance business) and that was a large family. The Spiegels, Lamar and Maurice Spiegel's family lived right across from the B'nai Abraham, and again they were a large family. We tended to be closer with these kinds of people because they were both large families and there would be people at school the ages of my brother and me, and my younger brother, so that you always had these close family contacts. And they had all come from much the same area. The Schwartzes live there, Russell Schwartz's family were on Ninth Street, and at the corner there on Fifteenth Avenue, across the street from our house, was a large, two-story flat building. It must have had six or eight or ten units in it, which I knew only as the Schanfield Flats, because Joe Schanfield owned that. He also had lived in the area some time before, but no longer at the time we were there. Then Dave Silverman's family lived a block down; in fact, for some years I think Dave lived in a duplex house at about the corner of Nineteenth or Eighteenth and Fifteenth Avenue, which had been moved to that location from another place, and Josiah Brill's father occupied the other part of the building. Then on our block, between our house and that one where Dave Silverman lived for a short time, on our side of the street there was a family named Kaufman, who are still in the community. They were in the fruit business. And one of the Kaufmans, just about a year, two years ago, married Eddie Schwartz's sister. These were second marriages for both of them, I understand. And then there was a Glick family, again a large family, and there were two sisters there, one of whom was a teacher at Adams School, Elsie Glick. And I think they're related to you, aren't they Rhoda? [Laughs] The Glicks...

[Interviewer's note: The other sister was my mother, Florence Glick, who later married Louis Greene. Elsie never married, and later worked for many years in the Book Department at Powers Department Store.]

There were others . . . there were two Wexler families who were cousins, one of them, now, Mark Wexler, who's in the printing business, is from that area. And I think on his mother's side of the family were people named Sadoff, who had a little store on Nineteenth Street. Then when you go over on Nineteenth, on the block facing Adams School was a whole string of houses, all Jewish families, the Glickmans, Joe Glickman, Mildred, all that family lived there. And next to them was a Silverman family. I don't know if any of the Silvermans are still here. Then around on Ninth Street, next door, around the corner from the Spiegels, was a family named Smilow. And the daughter in that family, Tessie Smilow, was a very close friend of my cousin Bess Abrams. They were very close friends and schoolmates. And she married Lou Cohen from Modern Medicine. So, that will give you a fix.

On Eighth Street the families I knew were the Gimpels, who had a little shoe store down in Seven Corners, and a Mrs. Ruder, Sophie Ruder, who had a little grocery store. She was a widow and was living behind the store with her several sons and a daughter, Molly Ruder, who you probably know. I think you can track those families down if you're curious. I can give you a lot of names.

My father worked at various things, and then for a while he was in the business with my uncle Charlie Silverman, the meat business. That later was divided; the Kanters went into their own business. This was separated and there was some acrimony in the family about this breakup of the business. There was a lot of court activity and trials, and interestingly enough, when the trial came up, the attorney for the Silverman side, which was my uncle and my father's side of the family, was George Leonard. The attorneys on the other side, the Kanters, the chief attorney was Sam Maslon and Amos Deinard. You can see how close the community was! [Laughs] These were the attorneys on the two sides.

We all went to Adams School, which was at Nineteenth Street, between Nineteenth and Franklin facing Sixteenth Avenue. The back of the school, the school ground, was back toward Fifteenth Avenue but was not a complete block; there were some houses also on the block with the school. There was playground at Adams, and it was always very active in the summertime. Let me think . . . The Glickmans were always big ball players because they lived right across the street. Harry Blumenthal, who was in the scrap business, was around there quite a bit. Some other Segals, not Bernice's family, but cousins.

The other very important resource there was the South Side Neighborhood House, which was on Seventeenth Avenue. Or Sixteenth . . . no, Seventeenth Avenue. I can track that down. But I think it was . . . it might have been facing Sixteenth. I'll have to check that. Because we always went in from the back door, so to speak, which was on our side. This had been established by the Council of Jewish Women in that neighborhood. It was a large old house. At the time we first came there, Jack Mirviss was the head worker, and Lee Sharp was his kind of assistant. This was Dave Sharp's sister, the doctor. Later Mirviss was the director there [Adath Jeshurun] long enough to be in charge of the move when Adath Jeshurun went to their present building. The South Side Neighborhood

House moved into the Adath building, which... There might have been a little interim period there, because there was a Talmud Torah branch which was on Thirteenth Avenue between Ninth Street and Eighteenth Street—this was a little one-story square building. And that was abandoned and Talmud Torah classes moved into the Adath building, which was larger. But that didn't last too long, as I remember, and then the Southside Neighborhood House . . . Or maybe the Talmud Torah was in the Adath building first, and then in their own little building. I think that's more correct. And then the South Side Neighborhood House moved into the Adath building, which was remodeled extensively so the main sanctuary became the gym—the other building had no gym—and I remember playing there. We were at the South Side Neighborhood House very often because the parents all went there for Americanization meetings and other community meetings. It was really quite a center.

And we started in the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts there, and I remember, my first experience there that I have a really specific recollection on was in the Cub Scout group which was just being organized, and they had a Boy Scout troop, but I just started with the younger Cub program and I remember being out in the back yard there, with a little bonfire in the sand box, cooking wieners over a stick. Our leader then was Herschel Kaufman, who was about two years older, and he was one of the Boy Scout leaders. Herschel and his cousins, the Seltzes, lived up about Chicago or Elliot Avenue, near Franklin.

That was one thing. And I think besides those things, the two synagogues were really the principal centers. People went to one or the other. I think the holidays, because the two synagogues were near each other, were kind of a big activity time for the youngsters. You went to shul, but you didn't stay inside very much. You ran back and forth from one to the other, and everybody was sure that they were in the better one. There was rivalry. But there was a lot of interaction, especially among the young people, because they were just a block apart.

RL: Did you have activities at the synagogues?

AC: Relatively little, mostly the Bar Mitzvah preparation, which was very simple and cursory.

Now the Talmud Torah branch was...active. We went there every day after school, practically, four days a week and on into the evening. Classes ran even for the very young boys until seven o'clock or seven thirty. Those were the main activities. When the South Side Neighborhood House finally moved up into the Adath building it had a gym, then a lot more happened there. Just about that time, I think, Jack Murviss was the head worker for a short time after they had moved and then he went to the Emanuel Cohen on the North Side. And then Sam Finkelstein sort of became the head worker. When I first knew Sam he was going to school at the University and he was the basketball coach.

The other things, I suppose, that were important were the commercial areas. There were two butcher shops, one on Franklin and Sixteenth, which was Davises', and one on Seventh Street and Sixteenth Avenue, right at the railroad tracks practically, which was the Kellermans'. Both kosher shops, and working on the community. The People's Bakery, Mr. Zeesman's, was on Franklin Avenue. He had a small bakery. And then there was another bakery, Berman, which was on Fifteenth Avenue at Fifth Street on what would be the southeast corner. Kitty-corner, the northwest corner, was Z. Cohen's wholesale candy and tobacco business, which later moved downtown. Mr. Cohen was a quite substantial citizen. Because I think he was a director of one of the Northwestern Bank neighborhood branches even at that time, so he must have had a pretty solid business.

For other people who lived down there, Ernie Fliegel lived right on Sixteenth Avenue at the dead end of Ninth Street, facing Ninth Street. The Ostrows, Julius Ostrow, they lived across the street from us on Ninth Street. Ida Ostrow was married to Joe Kaplan of Kaplan Brothers store.

RL: Was Kaplan Brothers there then?

AC: They started about that time. There was another store, Marcus's, on Franklin Avenue, which was a little clothing/variety store, a Jewish store, but the others were not particularly Jewish stores. The Segal family, Harry Segal, who was a tailor, the father of Martin and Eddie Segal, lived in that neighborhood. They too were Romanian, from my mother's part of the country. They had the tailor shop on Bloomington Avenue at about Twenty-Fifth Street, and they lived there, but they'd also gone to Adams School and South High and so on.

For other activities, I think the South Side Neighborhood house was very busy. Most of the people went there. And there were PTAs at Adams School that brought people out. There were interesting things. The Brins, Howard Brinn's parents, [Fanny and Arthur] were from that part of Romania also. I don't know what the connection was, that my folks knew them. But in later years my mother used to write letters to their family back in Romania for Mrs. Brin; this went on for a great many years, that they wrote letters. Then I remember when Leah Zeesman, after she was married and went to live in Texas, Mrs. Zeesman came to my mother and asked her to teach her how to write so she could correspond.

RL: Did your mother ever formally teach?

AC: No. She did a little French teaching here, and both my parents went to the University for evening classes and part-time things. They never had any degrees or anything.

As far as activities, I think the family social activities more than... There were some people who you seldom saw except at a wedding, for instance, would bring hundreds of them out.

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AC: [The Shapiros had a club at] about Thirteenth Avenue and Franklin before they opened their downtown nightclub, Curly's. But both Nate and his brother Curly were active there. And then, let's see, the school, and the Franklin Library was a gathering place because there were meetings and there classes at the library also, mostly English classes and things of that sort.

RL: Did they have a section of Yiddish books, and any things....

AC: I don't remember...

RL: Because the Sumner branch did.

AC: They may have had, but I'm not particularly aware of it. I think there was a Jewish librarian at one time.

I think the remarkable thing was how these families moved when the Adath moved. A great many families, for instance, Bernice Fischbein's family and their cousins, and several others moved right around the Adath. This was already kind of a change in lifestyles, too, because they then lived in apartments instead of in the various houses that they had. I think when they went out to St. Louis Park a lot of them tended to go in groups.

But that generation already, I think there was some mixing with the Northsiders. Rhoda, we had, I can tell you, no contact with the North Side youngsters until we were well into high school. The earliest contact was that our basketball team would go up to play at the Emanuel Cohen Center, or they would come down to play on the South Side. But there was no real social contact. It was kind of an expedition to go to the North Side! Our shopping was down there, and the synagogues.

Now, my folks attended the B'nai Abraham and the Adath at various times the first couple of years. In 1923 they first went to Temple Israel, which was then on Tenth Street downtown. They went there out of curiosity at one time, because Rabbi Minda was then new at the Temple, and they were interested in some things they'd read about him. And interestingly enough, what impressed them most was that on Yom Kippur eve, at the Kol Nidre, he made his money appeal for Japanese earthquake relief (that was the year of the big Tokyo earthquake) and they were so impressed that a rabbi would do this, and so they stayed with Temple Israel. I think the temple did not attract so many of those families. Now the Josephs went - I.S. Joseph, Anna Joseph, her part of the family - but the Kanters, the Silvermans, the rest of the family all stayed with Adath as long as it was down there

on Ninth Street. And then when it moved, they were... In fact, Maurice Kanter may have been president of Adath at the time when it moved into the present building. I'm not sure, but I know he was a president of the congregation, it may have been just about that time. Some of the more liberal people—my uncle Charles, for instance—was also a member of the Unitarians, and Sam Salkin was a Unitarian as well as an Adath member [laughs].

RL: How did the depression seem to affect you?

AC: Well, I think the Depression years there were not so much a community event. A lot of the people had little businesses and kind of supported one another, and actually by the time of the depths of the Depression that neighborhood had begun to break up a little bit and a lot of people had gone. We moved from that flat on Fifteenth Avenue in about 1927, we moved to a duplex on Eleventh Avenue. And our neighbors were the Shinks. The Shink boys now have had the drug store on Minnetonka Boulevard, by the St. Louis Park Theater. Their father was a fruit peddler, and there were others like them. And the boys, where the families were fruit peddlers, the boys worked during the summer with their parents. During the winters they never worked anyhow, Depression or no Depression. Winter was a lay-off. Mr. Shink used to go out, as I remember, and work for the city shoveling snow. But he had a limited season. One of our neighbors, Mr. Silver, on Fifteenth Avenue, sold cream and cottage cheese and eggs and so on. Potatoes and fresh things. But again, his business too was only a summer or half-of-the-year business. The rest of the time they somehow just survived. And yet with all of that, even to the Depression, a huge number of these people went through school, and through the University. A higher proportion, I suppose, of professionals out of those families as any other part of the city at the time. Trained and professional and businesspeople and so on.

I think during those Depression years, actually, there was a lot of community activity. The South Side Neighborhood House was still very busy. And the city parks, the skating rinks were always well-filled, and any of the activities, the summer programs at the schools were heavily attended. But this was early; you're talking about 1928-29 and so on. In the depths of the Depression a lot of these families had already moved away and were in other places, and they still had their little businesses.

One of the things that I do remember from the Depression time was the failure of the Liberty State Bank, which was on Franklin Avenue at Fourteenth, roughly across from the library and that later became a post office and then I think it became one of the Indian centers a few years ago and the post office moved to another building. But there was a small state bank there, and this was closed up at some time. There was a little scandal about it at the time, because there were accusations that Mr. Zeesman had withdrawn the bakery funds—I think he may have been a director of the bank or knew about it—and that some of the other businessmen who were involved had taken their money out at the last minute before the bank closed.

You asked before about some of the contacts and the togetherness. Among our early friends here were the Abramowitzes; they no longer lived in that part of town, but they

had come from Romania, from the very same area, and my folks were quite good friends. These were the parents of Elizabeth Neiman, Leonard Neiman's grandparents, who were quite a bit older than my folks, too, but somehow there was a contact there. And I understand that the Abramowitz home was one of those where many of the newcomers frequently made their first contacts. The Abramowitzes must have been here very much earlier. And then our home became kind of a center at the time of World War II, where a great many people came to our house, mostly because my parents were multilingual, and they were handy with not only Romanian but with German and French. And any number of families made their contacts at our house. But this was a later wave and another generation.

Then I think the one other thing that might be of some interest is that of those earlier people that I mentioned, those relatives, who had all come about 1900 and some of them had been born in this country already, most of them I think were in military service in World War I. Now they might not all have gone overseas, but the Pincks were in service. Charlie Silverman was in uniform. But a great many of these people, as I understand it, were in military service. I remember the Justers talking about this. Billy Juster's father... Now the Justers who had the wholesale clothing business and that, they were from that part of Romania and were intermarried and related to the Davises, the butcher shop family, and they were all very close friends, too. But I remember Mr. Juster recalling one time some letters that he had received from his brother Adolf, who was in the transfer, moving business, a trucker. Adolf was Ruby Juster's dad, I think. Remember Ruby, who was a journalism person, went to New York [unclear]. Anyhow, Mr. Juster recalled getting letters from Adolf who was in service and he had actually gone overseas in Europe, and mentioned specifically getting one letter where he said, "Everything is just fine here. We live like you can't imagine," and he made a little picture in the bottom of a letter of a pig wallowing in mud. Now, the Justers did not live in that area anymore at the time we were there, but I think they were also, again, very much a part of the community.

I think the few who stayed longer were the older families. Mrs. Ruder, I think, lived almost to her very last days, she kept a store for a long time, then after it was sold she still lived not too far from there on Elliot Avenue. Mr. Gimpel, who had the shoe store for a while in the Seven Corners area, continued to live on Eighth Street until his death. His sons, one of them is on the West Coast and one is here in the city, I think he's a dentist.

RL: Yes, Aaron.

AC: Aaron is a dentist here, that's right, he was in my brother's class. And Sam, older brother, also a dentist, is on the West Coast.

[Break in interview]

AC: [Regarding anti-Semitism] Let it go; it wasn't a very sensitive thing. There used to be talk about the Ku Klux Klan and there was occasional fighting in the school, which I

think broke up where the Jewish kids were one gang and the others were the other gang. But in my time, at least, there wasn't any longer that big a Jewish population in Adams school, to where it was a problem. I understand in North High, for instance, there used to be pitched battles as to who owned which side of North Commons Park. There wasn't too much of that. And I think because the community had already begun to spread out a little. There were incidents, I remember a very nasty anti-Semitic remark by a school teacher at Adams School who made some remark [about] one of the students. That was the kind of thing that students wouldn't stand for now. And we had our scuttlebutt; you knew these teachers liked the Jews and these didn't, and so on. I remember one time when I had to... this was quite a bit later, I was practically a senior at South High. I had to make up some time, actually it was probably for having been away at a Jewish holiday, and the gym teacher - I owed him some time for gym class, I had skipped, either for a Jewish holiday or for another activity - and he volunteered...he came to me and said we might settle this for a bottle of that nice Jewish wine, which we did, frankly! [Laughs] And that kind of thing.

But I don't think there was a great problem. There was a little feeling... The South Side Neighborhood House basketball team, for instance, if we played the Pillsbury House—they used to have what they called the All Nations Tournament—the South Side kids, like the Emanuel Cohen kids, were “the Jewish team.” They weren't “South Side Neighborhood House,” or... A few of the Jewish youngsters went to Pillsbury House—some who lived close to Seven Corners, especially if they lived across the tracks. The railroad tracks went roughly parallel to Seventh Street and kind of parallel to Seventeenth Avenue, although it's kind of a diagonal there. And this was kind of a cutoff point, so if we lived on the south or west side of the tracks, we didn't have too much occasion to go across, but some of those who lived close to the tracks would go to Pillsbury House, especially before South Side had a gym. Some of those who were athletically inclined, I'm sure Ernie Fliegel and those fellows, and those who wanted to play ball, where that was important to them, went to Pillsbury House. And there was a little feeling, I understand. And then a few others who lived on the higher number streets further to the east would go to the Citizens Club on Franklin and Minnehaha. This again was a community center, but the Citizens Club had a church-sponsored origin. I don't know what the denomination was, but some church group... Just as the Council of Jewish Women had sponsored South Side Neighborhood House, there was some connection. Pillsbury House may have had some Presbyterian church or Episcopal sponsorship, but it wasn't a particular sectarian place. But the Citizens Club on Franklin, I remember, we always thought of as being a goyische enclave. You didn't have too much to do with them... and yet there were always a few Jewish youngsters, especially the boys who were free, or the girls very seldom, mixed in this. But the boys saw nothing of this; if they got on a team at the other place, it was okay.

RL: And you went to the University, didn't you?

AC: Yes.

RL: Did you study journalism?

AC: Yes.

RL: When did you graduate?

AC: 1936.

RL: Oh, that was a good year to come out of college. What did you do for a job?

AC: Interestingly enough, I got a job... I worked in a political campaign that summer for a couple of months. Actually, I had written a little letter of application to all the political parties—we had three at that time, Farmer-Labor and Democrats were separate and the Republicans—about a publicity job, and I was hired by the Republicans. And I worked for about three months through the campaign. And then I applied for a job at the *Star*. To tell you how good a year that was, when I came to the *Star* and finally was about to be hired—Dave Silverman was interviewing me, and he told me that there was a job for me—then he said, “I kind of have to ask you about salary.” He said, “Would you mind telling me how much you were paid in this political thing?” And I did. I said I was getting \$35 a week, and he was absolutely amazed and almost so many words said that was as much or more than he was getting at the time! Of course this was the *Star* and Cowles had just bought it, and I think they were still operating on the old skinflint budget [laughs]. You know, the money hadn’t really started to come in. But I think if Dave was getting paid more than that it wasn’t much more, because he was very surprised.

RL: What was his job then?

AC: I think he had just been designated managing editor, and Nat Finney and Herb Paul were the two city editors.

The other people in the Depression... I think the businesspeople all stayed in the area. Plenty of businesses failed. There were a lot of little stores on Franklin Avenue that closed up and disappeared. I don’t know how much of the closing up of the butcher shops and the bakery was related to the Depression, and how much to the fact that the neighborhood moved, because these things happened about the same time. The butcher shops may have been victims of the Depression just as much as the other. Other than the bank failure I don’t remember anything that was... There was a lot of talk about that, a lot of resentment about a few businessmen who were accused of having known about it and having drawn their money out before it closed. And then of course there were litigations afterwards.

And the other thing is that the houses were allowed to run down. Nobody did much to maintain their homes. You could see it over the years. It was through the 1930s that the area began to look seedier and seedier. Some of those houses, for instance, your mother’s house [the Glick family] on Fifteenth, where there were three or four red brick houses . . .

If those were someplace, where should I say, Williamstown, Massachusetts or something, they would be kept spic and span. They would be choice vintage houses because of the architecture! They were very solid homes, but they were all allowed to run down and became rooming houses. And at one time, right across the street from the South Side Neighborhood House, when it was in the Adath Jeshurun building, there was a family there that was a house of prostitution! The madam that was running it lived there and she had a couple of daughters who were in clubs at the South Side Neighborhood House, played with the kids. Everybody knew it, there wasn't any secrecy about it, but it was kind of an accepted thing.

There were a few black families in the area, but relatively few considering that... They tended to cluster around the railroad tracks at Seven Corners, because most of them probably worked for the railroad in the menial jobs. But relatively few, considering the nature of the neighborhood. At Adams School just a handful, really, in our class. I think there was more feeling against them than against the Jewish kids in school. There were not really not many of them. There was some intermingling, when there'd be a wedding, or something, one of those families happened to have a black neighbor, they would be...usually attend the wedding. It was a little mixture.

There was some bootlegging by the families, which I think was a "Depression Industry" for a great many of them. I remember, in fact, when a Mr. Juster, who was either a brother or cousin of P.B. Juster, of the store, was a shammes at the B'nai Abraham. He was arrested for bootlegging one time, and this was a great tragedy in the neighborhood. I'm sure all the leading attorneys went to plead the case, saying that nothing would be served in the way of justice to throw this man in the workhouse for ninety days, or whatever [laughs]. And yet, afterwards, I remember Mr. Juster confessing, in fact it happened in our house – he was visiting there or something - that in all his life he'd never had a time when he could really have a little rest and quiet and peace. He said he never knew anything like it, when you got up at a certain time, and didn't have to worry about anything, so it wasn't all bad! But there was a little bootlegging. There was a large liquor raid one time on Franklin Avenue and Sixteenth in the building where the Davis butcher shop was on the ground floor, but the Davises didn't live there and they were not... There were actually non-Jewish tenants who ran a still on the third floor of this building, or... It was a large walk-up brick building. I remember when the place was raided the whole neighborhood turned out, the word got around and we all came running there. The firemen were helping the police. They were dropping barrels of half-cooked mash down from the third floor—they would drop them in a sling and smash them right there on the sidewalk—and I remember some of the kids being sent out by their parents with little pails and jars to sweep up some of this mash before it ran down the gutters!

RL: Yeah, 1936, what candidate did you work for?

AC: I was one of the bright young men who put Mr. Landon across! [Laughs]

RL: Wow. That was the summer of the great heat wave. And that was the Teamsters strike...

AC: The Teamsters strike. They had one strike headquarters on Chicago Avenue, where the Sister Kenny operation first started. It was an old garage building, and it had been Boutell's truck garage. That was one of the headquarters during the strike. There were others; I guess there was one in the Yellow Cab garage downtown and probably some on the North Side or Northeast too. But there was one there on Chicago Avenue which was... in the first big strike was quite an active place, and there would be fundraisers there almost every night. They would get entertainers from the nightclubs and had mostly union volunteers from the musicians union and actors and so on who would come there and play or dance or sing or just be around, and people would come from the neighborhood and bring groceries. There were a lot of appeal just to bring food.

And that's about it. I...

[Break in interview]

AC: The bootlegging was down on Seventeenth Avenue more... Course, I suppose they were the people who were hit more by the Depression, too. I think in the 20s there, Rhoda, they were people lived in work. Right up to '29-'30 these people all worked and the young people all had jobs in town.

[Break in interview]

AC: Which was a good size food store, grocery store. And the boys all...Chick and the brothers, Johnny, they all worked at that store. I don't know how many others... Were all in various businesses.

[Break in interview]

AC: For instance, just anybody. Now Joe Glickman, Chick, was a classmate of mine. His older sister, Mildred Goodman, was a classmate of my older brother. And Leah Zeeman was a classmate of mine. Any of these houses where we were, if you were there on a Friday night, it was special. I don't care...maybe the people couldn't even read, or could barely make out anything whether in Hebrew or Yiddish or anything else—they still spoke a lot of Yiddish—but you came Friday night, and you knew this was special. There was a different kind of a dinner, and the silver was polished, and there was a kind of a special air about it, and the same on the holidays. They were important, and I think if people felt they'd lost something, it was sentimental about that kind of thing, rather than any actual material comfort or success. My uncle Charlie came here, like so many others, with a note to a Rabbi, you know, and that was it. A lot of them had come here, and you know, actually, some of our family who were sort of second cousins or more removed even from our family, and were also cousins of the Justers, were among that group which was sent out to Beulah, North Dakota. This was a large group...

[End of interview]

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