

Blanche Halpern Goldberg
Narrator

Rhoda G. Lewin
Interviewer

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Blanche Goldberg **-BG**
Rhoda Lewin **-RL**

BG: Could I give you an introduction first?

RL: Yes.

BG: My mother's family were all in America. My mother, one of eight children, was married and had six children in Europe. And my father was very wealthy. He owned a fish market, grain elevator, what have you.

RL: Where was that?

BG: In Podotork, Romania. Try and spell it!

RL: Was it a big town?

BG: Little town. And in the next couple of years, my brothers would be taken into the service, and then you don't know what happens to them. Half the time they go and they never come back, because it was a seesaw. At times Russia took Bessarabia—this wasn't Bessarabia, but it was a province there was—so sometimes it was governed by Russia and sometimes by Romania. And so they thought they would come to America. They came in 1900 with seven children . . . Bessie, Charlie, Ben, Sam, Anna, Esther, Ruth . . . as my father says, seven kinderlach . . . and a half- brother, Shruel Halpern. My father's mother died when he was very young, and there was a sister and a brother, and then when the father remarried there were two more brothers and a sister, so Shruel was a half brother. His own brother remained in Romania, and so did his sister. They came by steerage like everybody else at that time, and as my father said, with all the money he had, what with transportation for all of them to Minneapolis, he barely had anything left when he got off the train here.

RL: How did they happen to come to Minneapolis?

BG: Because the Riglers were here, my mother's family.

RL: How did the Riglers get here?

BG: I don't know how for sure. My mother's youngest brother, Charlie Rigler, was thirteen years old, and we've often wondered, how could their parents, my grandmother and grandfather, allow a thirteen-year-old to come to America alone in the late 1800s? The oldest brother, they settled in Eureka, South Dakota, and finally ended up in North Dakota, and then they brought my grandmother and my aunt, Annie Rigler, who is Esther Kaitz's mother. My mother was the oldest daughter of the four girls. Some of her brothers were married in Europe, and they would come here first and then they would have the money to send for their wives and children. Dr. Leo Rigler's folks did it that way. And the oldest brother, who lived in South Dakota . . . I don't know if you know Sally Obern, married to an Abramowitz? Well, that was her grand- father. They farmed in the Dakotas, they homesteaded. I don't know if Charlie Rigler homesteaded, but the others did. My mother's sister, Rose Rigler Schwartz, married to O.G. Schwartz, she homesteaded. So did my two other aunts, my Aunt Fannie and my Aunt Annie, and my older sister, Bessie, and Leo Rigler's parents. They homesteaded in the southwestern part of North Dakota. My mother's sister Bessie was going steady with her boyfriend and he was out there homesteading with his brother. His oldest brother married my mother's sister the day I was born, and my mother couldn't even go to her wedding. And I had an uncle here in Minneapolis. I don't know when he come over. His name was Aaron Goldberg . . . my grandmother's brother. He was in the wholesale dry goods business, so he would give his relatives consignments of the merchandise, and when they finished homesteading they were able to own the land, and they decided to stay out there in North Dakota in a little town, and open a store, and they all did very, very well. And that's how many of the Jews ended up. My mother's family, there are a lot of branches to it. Aaron Goldberg married Yetta . . . she was German- Jewish, went to Temple. Morris Goldberg was living here, and he had a daughter, Goldie Dechter, who just died last week. My grandmother's sister Frieda was Ruth Sternberg Litin's grandmother, and another one was Mrs. Kapelowitz, Esther Cooperman's mother. Some were the Firestones, in San Francisco. They spread out far and wide. My parents came here in 1900 and Moishe Yossel Rigler . . . they were living here. He had a son, Dan, and Sam and Sylvia and Rose Rigler, and Ann Kerlan, and Sadie, and they lived in Minneapolis. And the joke was they came to the station to meet my parents, and Rigler didn't know how to express himself, and he mixed up the Yiddish and the English in trying to welcome them to America, and they were almost kept at the border! Their ship did not come through Ellis Island. It came through Quebec, from Amsterdam. And this Shruel Halpern had eye trouble, and for a while there they were quite panicky that he would not be allowed to come in. But somehow they found out the diagnosis was wrong. It was trachoma that kept them out, and he didn't have it, so they did come. My father came here, and his eighth child, my brother Saul, was born six weeks after they arrived. My father did what the rest did. He started peddling, peddling fruit. They lived on Two-and-a-Half Street, down near Washington Avenue. The boys went to Washington School and they all got jobs, hustled papers. My sister Bessie was the oldest. She worked at the Minneapolis Dry Goods store for \$2.50 a week, and then \$6.00 a week. She thought she was doing very well! Then she went out to homestead, and after

that she came back and she and Max Schwartz were married in 1908. She celebrated her golden anniversary, as did my parents, and she passed away at the age of 85. It will be five years this summer. My brother Charlie married a first cousin, Leo Rigler's sister, and he was traveling for my great-uncle Aaron Goldberg. My father felt he was making both ends meet, but he was working awfully hard—he was in his fifties when they came here—and he felt if the others are doing something worthwhile out in North Dakota, he'll try it too. So in 1910 he went out there with my brother Ben, the next one in line, and through some consignment goods from Uncle Aaron they opened up a store in Hebron, North Dakota, a town of 500. A year or two later Ben decided to get married and my father opened up a store for him on a branch line thirty miles north of Hebron. Ben married Betty Dechter. My brother Sam remained in Minneapolis, at South High. The others didn't have the chance to finish high school and some of them didn't have the chance to finish eighth grade, but Sam was a debater and a very fine student and went on to Law School at the University of North Dakota, because at that time our residence was in North Dakota, and North Dakota had so few at the University, they didn't even charge for tuition! That makes a difference, when you're struggling and trying to feed all those mouths. Eventually he graduated and opened up an office in the same town, Hebron, North Dakota. He married Etta Blank, related to all that Cooperman mishpocheh up north—Dr. Cooperman, Harold Cooperman, Eddie, Ben. My sister Anna worked in the store, my sister Esther worked in the store. Then Anna married Charlie Rosen from Bismarck, North Dakota, who had a great big clothing store. His brother was Dr. Sam Rosen. Everybody knew him. He practiced, I think, on Franklin Avenue. He also had a brother Morris Rosen, a dentist. My sister Esther got married to Bill Rosenzweig. My sister Ruth graduated high school there with my brother Saul. Saul graduated ahead of time -- he was two years younger -- so they had one graduation. That was the first graduation the town ever had, in 1916. We went back to a reunion when the town was 75 years old, in 1960! We were the only Jewish family in this town, and they threw out the red carpet! When we first moved there, though, they didn't know what to make of Jewish people. They'd never heard of them. They wouldn't have anything to do with us; they were anti-Semitic. Six churches in a town of 500! My father trained my brother Morris, who is the last boy, the fifth son, for his Bar Mitzvah, and when a Rabbi came through—they brought him out to Bismarck for a wedding—he was Bar Mitzvahed with this Rabbi. It was planned for. But when any Jewish baby boy was born, my father and mother knew the Hyman family . . . Rabbi Hyman—they called him "Hyman Schochet"—lived on Eleventh Avenue South . . . and my father would contact him to come out and circumcise the baby, and if they couldn't do it exactly on the eighth day, so it was done a month or so later. He'd try to get a couple for him so it was worth this Rabbi's while to come out. So when he did come out to do that, he would kill chickens and kill geese and everything for my mother, and they smoked it, to have kosher meat. We imported kosher meat from Minneapolis, but when it came out by train—our store was across the street from the station—the station master would say, "Jake, your package came." And he'd say, "Look, Pete, dump it! It smells way over here already." No refrigeration! How my mother managed to feed all those kids, with very little meat, I still don't know. My oldest sister and my dad helped the son-in-law open up a store in Bellevue, North Dakota. My mother's sister had a store in Dickinson, and my father helped my brother Charlie open up

a store in New England and Ben in Golden Valley. So there was a settlement of my aunts and uncles. My mother's two sisters lived in Dickinson and they had a store, Schwartz and Singer. Come the High Holidays, we all went to Dickinson by train. We locked the store. My father had a watchman there, no one should break in. The gentile people couldn't understand it. We were not allowed to go with any gentile boys. It was quite disappointing when you're growing up and everybody is talking about a party, but they were church parties, and naturally we wouldn't have anything to do with them. A school program, yes. A school party, yes, when it was in the school. But out of school, uh-uh, we never could date anybody. And we didn't. Those were the days when children listened to the parents. It wasn't easy. When you are growing up you want fun, and you just can't go. But the families got together. My father opened up a store, fifteen miles from us in the town of GlenEllen, and he put in his brother Schrul Halpern and his brother Joe. They were married to two sisters. You may have heard of Sammy Halpern, who just passed away a year ago, who used to work for Jay Phillips? That was one of the sons. And Sally Halpern.

RL: These were your cousins?

BG: These were cousins, yeah. Sally married Sid Karon from Duluth. Florence married Dr. Abe Katz, and lives in Rice Lake. These were some children; they all went to college eventually. But we would always try to get together. Then when everybody started buying a Model T Ford, we started driving to one another.

RL: When was that?

BG: I imagine it must have been about 1915. But before, my mother used to prepare all the food for the holidays, and we'd take the train to Dickinson. They would rent a hall, and we would have the service for Rosh Hashanah. We would stay in the hotel. Once we even rented a furnished house which was vacant, and we had the food there. And we'd all eat together . . . our own food . . . not breakfast, but the main meal, the kosher meal. Then my father suggested they build a synagogue, and they built one out there.

RL: In Dickinson?

BG: In Dickinson. And then all the Jews from the surrounding towns used to come. Mrs. Maurice Ruder—there was a Ruder family—I saw her at the Hadassah meeting the other day.

RL: Molly Ruder?

BG: Molly. It was her brother who was married to a relation of the Freidman's. And Rosie Rosenthal, she is related to my machatenista, Bea Gross. They lived there. And I remember Koss . . . Ueland . . . They were older than I. They were married when I was a little kid. They came from towns, the branch line, from here, from there, and everywhere surrounding. And then they'd have a Yom Kippur dance. Everybody looked forward to

that. On Christmas when the store would have to be closed, my brothers and sisters who had stores in the surrounding towns, with their kids, used to come to our house and we'd have a whole weekend of festivities, because that was the time everybody could close their store and get together. I think that had something to do with the closeness of families, that the family remained so close. My father was not that young at any time, but he learned the English language very fast. He not only did well with the store, he dealt in cattle, he bought land. For a while there, he even owned the brickyard in Hebron. He even had a coal mine! He was very shrewd and a very smart businessman. I don't think any family had the longevity and the real vitality of the Rigler family. But there comes a time when you're beginning to feel your aches and pains. And besides, when World War I came and then the Armistice, I remember that terrible flu epidemic when my mother used to go from one to another treating them with the flu. They didn't have a train up on Golden Valley Road where my brother Ben lived, but the postman, he'd go up there with all the newspapers, and the letters, so my mother rode up there with him to take care of my brother and sister-in-law and her two brothers, the Dechter boys. They had a temperature of 103 and 104. My older sister, in Belleville, 60 miles away, was expecting her fifth child, and her doctor said to her, "They're dying like flies. I don't want to take care of you. Go to somebody else." So Bessie comes to Hebron to deliver her fifth child in my mother's house. That was 1918.

RL: But you all survived the flu?

BG: Yah. I remember when Gerald was born, because Frank was about 13 months old, and he cried for his mommy, and I was feeding him Profitos all night and rocking him on the rocking chair, in that big house my father built there, with everybody under one roof. With so many people, it's surprising, how my mother could have managed it, but of course everybody helped. The children helped. It isn't like today.

RL: If you have to peel potatoes for dinner for fourteen people, somebody's got to help!

BG: Yes. My father had the store, and he'd come at 11:30 for lunch, and the others would come. They'd try and get some Jewish boys who wanted and needed work out to North Dakota, and they wouldn't stay with us, but at times they ate their meals with us.

RL: How did they get them? How did they contact them?

BG: My father, or one of my sisters or my brothers, would come down for a buying trip, for merchandise.

RL: To Minneapolis?

BG: Yes. At different times, there were Jewish people came out and worked for my Dad. There was one man who came out with his wife. She is still living, and whenever I see her, Mrs. Kushner, she remembers the days when her husband used to work for my Dad. Another one was Sam Zuckman. I think he passed away this past year. His brother had

Haskell Liquor Store. But anyway, it was time to quit, so my father sold out. Ruth and Saul were down here at college, and Frances came down. They were staying out at the University.

RL: In rooming houses?

BG: At that time at the University they had a lot of rooming houses, where you sometimes got your board, too. At that time, there were no sororities, no fraternities. In 1916 there was a fraternity, Psi Psi Theta (?). Leo Rigler and a lot of the Jewish boys belonged to it and they wanted my brother Saul to join. My brother Saul was my most favorite brother. I hope you don't mind the tears, because I was very close to him, and to my sister Frances. For Saul, everything was for justice. He would fight for a principle, if it was to the last penny. He didn't care what it did to him; if it was for principle, that's what he would fight for. My brother Sam became an attorney. He was practicing in North Dakota. And my mother said to Saul, as the usual Jewish mother said, "Why everybody attorney? Why don't you be a doctor?"

So he comes down and he takes some of these pre-med courses. We didn't even have chemistry. We had physics in North Dakota, but not chemistry. Well, it makes a difference from a red schoolhouse to the University of Minnesota, and he didn't exactly care for it. He wasn't scientifically inclined. Then he switched over for law, and after he finished law school he went out and practiced in Glen Ullin, North Dakota. Both of my brothers were county attorneys and my brother Saul was always interested in politics, and was a judge out there. He loved politics, and my father did too. And I just live for all this; I should have done more with my life than I have. Ever since I was a child, I was always interested in government, and I remember coming to school when I was in fifth grade . . . I must tell this! There was no newspaper in town, and our newspaper would come the day after the election, from Mandan and Bismarck by train. We came to school that morning and the teacher said, "Well, who is our new president? Charles Hughes!" I was so upset that Woodrow Wilson lost, and they were all excited. Well, the next day, it was a different story. I went around as though it was my prize . . . the Democrat!

RL: They never practiced in Minneapolis, did they?

BG: My brother Sam did, but Saul didn't. He went out and practiced in Glen Ullin with my cousin, Sam Rigler, and he liked the small town. I don't think he exactly cared to go back to a small town, but certain sentimental reasons sent him away from Minneapolis. I'm not going into that. But my brother Morris, my younger brother, an attorney, practices here. When Saul was here in school, he didn't care for a fraternity. He thought that is snobbery, that you pick only certain ones. So he never joined a fraternity. I think I am very much like him. I'm not bragging about myself, but it's my makeup. I'll fight for the forgotten man, I'll fight for the child who sits in the corner. And when I was teaching here in the high schools, and the principals always said, "Why are you always in such demand?" Everyone said, "You are one of the best teachers." My husband didn't want me to be a regular teacher, so I was on call, usually on the long call, as a substitute. I was

always trying to see if I could help the child that didn't raise his hand. And my brother was very much like that too. He was always looking out for the downcast one.

RL: What did the Menorah Society do, do you know?

BG: The Menorah Society was what Hillel is today. Hillel is an outgrowth of Menorah Society. But they couldn't do much, they didn't have a building, they had nothing. They'd have meetings once a month. My sister Ruth was rooming with a Jewish girl from northern Minnesota and at that time they started a Jewish society called the Scroll and Key, so she joined the Scroll and Key because all the girls did. It was a treat to be together with Jewish girls; otherwise she'd be by herself. And she enjoyed it, but after a couple of years of college she didn't, and she quit. My brother Saul was very active in the Menorah Society and in the North Dakota Society at the University. Yes, they had a North Dakota club. And I remember when I became a freshman. We moved down here in 1921. My father looked around to buy a house, and he asked different old friends, and they said the Adath Jeshurun—he was always a member, years before, when it was the Romanische Shul, although my grandparents, the Rigers, were active with the Seventeenth Avenue Shul—they said, “We're moving out to the west side of Minneapolis because we need a new Shul.” So that's the reason, when we moved down here we bought a house on Fremont Avenue South, not far from Hennepin and Lake. I went to West High School. I was a junior, and the transition was very difficult for me. We were the only Jewish family. I got along very well with the gentile friends, and it was very difficult for me to even feel at home with Jewish people my own age. I don't remember how I met this first Jewish girl in Minneapolis, and through her—the girls were giving afternoon parties—one after another invited me and I met quite a group of Jewish girls, most of them from North Minneapolis. There were only three Jewish students in my class at West High, but they belonged to Temple Israel and they had very little to do with the rest of us. When I look at my Hesperian, I can see some of them . . . Harriet Levinson . . . Miriam Deinard, Dr. Deinard's daughter . . .

RL: Where did your family live? Where did you buy a house?

BG: On Fremont South, a few blocks from West High. I'd walk home from school, and I'd go to the Walker branch library and study there 'cause my mother's house was always open house. My folks, they were wining everybody and dining everybody, and anybody who didn't have a place to sleep slept at our house, even if there were a hundred people! That was the kind of house we had all my life. There's a warmth that way, and every one of us in our family are that way, my house especially, 'cause my husband is a type like me. They called it the Goldberg Hotel! He'd come in and say, “There's no place for me to sleep, I think I'll go down to the Gateway.” [Laughter] But nevertheless, we enjoyed it.

I graduated in 1922 with Viola Hymes and Zetta Goldberg, who married Bill Berman, Dr. Reuben Berman's brother. I met Bill on the campus, and I met Maishe Berman and Rae Berman. I met them at different parties, through Jewish girls. It's funny . . . afterwards we became cousins, and I met them on campus. My brother was very active with Menorah,

and when I entered in the winter quarter, they had a dance in honor of the new students. Everybody came unescorted, and the new students of course had to have a ticket on their dress; it was a "tap" dance, and somebody tapped me and said, "I'm the president of Menorah. I know you're Saul's sister. Can I bet he'll be the next president of Menorah?" He tells this to me! That was Rabbi Dave Goldstein. And then he says to me, "Do you see that couple over there? That fellow is the one and only that we can rave about here at Minnesota. He's on the Minnesota football team! That big fellow is Louie Gross. And you see the girl that he is dancing with? Her name is Beatrice Rosenthal [now my machatonim]. He never takes girls out, but he's dancing a straight program with her, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if something is going to come of it."

And I told this to Dave Goldstein when he was here recently, because Dave married Reuben Berman's sister, a cousin of my husband's. And he looked at me and he said, "You remember after all these years?" I said, "Yes." He says, "You know, Blanche, I knew when your sister Ruth and Saul and Frances were down here and had an apartment together, before your folks moved down. I used to be up in that apartment very often." He went to the University of Minnesota first, before the seminary; so did Max Shapiro. (That's the other Max Shapiro, married to Sadie Berman.) He says, "I became quite attached to your brother Saul, and to think that you were related . . ." That's why he always had a soft spot for me, as I had for him.

Well, I graduated high school in 1922 and I wanted to go into nursing, and my father said, "You're not gonna go. I'm not gonna pay tuition, you should empty bed pans. Go to school for something worth-while." My sister Frances was taking education. I didn't take it because she was, but I was trying to feel my way through, and I ended up by taking education, too. I liked history, and I took an awful lot of history. She graduated in 1924 and she was already going with Dr. Max Goldberg for a couple of years, but she taught in a small town in Minnesota. And I must give you this example about my sister. The University maintains they get you a job to teach when you get through. But every time she was interviewed by a principal they said, "And what is your religion?" The minute she said "Jewish"—the name Halpern doesn't sound Jewish—that was that. Around the same time, in 1924, I get a note in my post office box from the head of the history department. They want to see me immediately. It was the assistant dean, and he said, "Miss Halpern, I'm gonna have a little talk with you first, then I'm gonna tell you why I asked you to come here. What religion are you?" I forgot his name. I said, "Professor, what do you think I am?" He says, "Well, I can't figure you out. The name Halpern sounds very German to me, but with your blue eyes and your dark hair, I think you're either Scotch or a combination of Scotch and French." I says, "Well, you want to know what I am, I am Jewish." He said, "You're kidding me. I don't believe you." I said, "Well, that's the truth." He said, "Really? On both sides? Father and mother, way back?" I said, "Yes, way, way, way back." He said, "I've often wondered who you were, so I clarified that first. Now, I have a couple of students here who want to be tutored in history and we charge a dollar an hour and be sure you get a dollar an hour if you're gonna take it. And here are the names of three girls, and they want it very badly because midquarters are coming very shortly, and then finals." They happened to be three girls that I knew socially, Jewish girls. Of the

three, one of them paid me. The others still owe me! So my sister became desperate, and she finally wrote a letter to Sim Heller, who's president of the Adath. He took education and he graduated a year before she did. He was teaching in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and she wrote him a letter and she said, "How did you get your job? It seems the fact is that I can't get a job because I'm Jewish." And certainly he looked Jewish too. He answered, "You'll get a job. Just don't answer that question. Put anything down but 'Jewish'." And sure enough, as soon as she got that letter, they called her, there was another possibility. She put down "Unitarian." What else could she do? And she got the job! It was in Onamia, on Mille Lacs Lake, not far from Grand Rapids. Shortly after that, while he was teaching there, the Depression came, and then Sim quit teaching and went into the theater business, and he made a lot of money. Anyway, she got her job in Onamia, Minnesota, and she taught there for a couple of years and then was married. My brother Saul graduated Law the same year Frances graduated Education in 1924. On the campus I was very friendly with all my gentile friends, because I was used to it, but it bothered me, why can't I be friendly with the Jewish people, they're my own. I wasn't happy about it, but it certainly changed in a hurry once I was active in Menorah. Then I was very happy on the campus. All these girls that I knew—and we were very chummy with one another—started joining sororities. No Jews wanted, of course. Not that you would want to join a gentile sorority, but the minute they joined a sorority, they were through with you. And I was "rushed" to Scroll and Key, but to me, it was a handful of the many Jewish kids who were on campus at that time. So Menorah was the only contact that the Jewish students had, to get together and to meet one another. And that's when I got to meet a lot of Jewish girls. I had a lot of Jewish friends from the Range, a lot from St. Paul, from Minneapolis, and gradually I felt more at home with the Jewish people that way.

RL: So then you graduated?

BG: In 1926. I was supposed to graduate in December 1926, and with honor points, I was hoping to graduate in June. But five months before, in February, I was running from the College of Education to Folwell Hall. The classes in the College of Education ended at 9:25, but classes at Folwell ended at 9:20, and I didn't want to be late, so I was running across that square, and running across the street into Folwell, a car comes and knocks me down. And the next I saw, I was in the Health Service. Two Jewish fellows that I knew saw it and took me to the Health Service. I didn't know that until later. And then they told me I should go home. Well, you know, some doctors are alarmists . . . a brain concussion, and this and that . . . and I was out of school for ten days, so I had to drop two three-hour courses, so I couldn't make it in June. But I thought, I'm not gonna worry, I'll go back in summer school and maybe I'll get a job by September. The ruling in the state of Minnesota at that time was one had to teach two years in a small town before you even could apply to be a teacher in Minneapolis. Second of all, you could not teach at all in Minneapolis if you were married. Well, this is February. In April my husband-to-be became very serious. We became engaged and we were married in June. So he said, why go back for summer school now? You're not going to be teaching. Why don't you go in the fall quarter? Which I did, so I graduated in December. So we were married in 1926. I don't think the University tried too hard to get a Jewish girl a job at that time. I could tell,

from my "practice teacher" when I was doing my history practice teaching at University High. Her name was Mary Gold. We had to have our pictures taken, not only for the annual, but these pictures would be kept there so in case any superintendent came looking for a teacher, they would see a picture of the girl, and she said to me, "I don't like your pictures because you look awfully Jewish there." If she knew I was Jewish or not, I don't know, but she said, "You ought to take them over again so you don't look Jewish. Your hair is too curly." My sister Frances' hair was very kinky, but mine was just a loose wave, though it was deeper than it is now. And just by that alone— isn't it funny, we all have that sixth sense—I had a feeling that I'd be the last one she'd okay for a job, from her repeating this over and over again to me. Well, even if I didn't get married, you couldn't get a job. We were almost 500 graduating that year, so there were an excess of teachers. Half of my friends who took education were working in Dayton's basement! So my husband kidded me, "You did the best thing, got somebody to support you." I was set and determined that whatever course I take, I want to make use of it. I called it at that time, and I still call it today, and I lecture on it to my children, to my nieces, to my great-nieces, in Education, you get a general education but you come out with a vocation. Naturally in a four-year course it isn't a full education, but you want to come out with some form of vocation and you want to support yourself. At that time particularly, most of the girls I knew, even Jewish girls, were working their way through school. And to this day, I'm always saying, "Look what happened to me in the end. After World War II I was called down to the Board of Education, will I come and teach, they need teachers so bad!"

RL: How did they find you?

BG: Through Sophie Haveson. I am deferring from my story, but I'll tell you how they found me. Well, I got married, and Arthur was born two years later, and then Stanley, and six years after we were married, my sister Ruth became desperately ill. I was with her at the hospital most of the time. Who ever heard of colitis at that time? It was all brand new, and I think that's the reason my son Stanley went into Proctology. They said they couldn't do anything more for her here, between the doctors in Minneapolis and St. Paul, so she was referred to Dr. Barron, and they referred her to someone in Rochester. So she was down there. They insisted on a colostomy, and then they closed it up, and they said it's gonna work, and she collapsed three days later and died before we got there. We got the call, and it's on Valentine's Day. My brother -in-law was going to take the bus back that noon to be with her for their anniversary two days later—he fixed his appointments that way. And now my husband, my brother-in-law and myself, our car breaks down, so he hailed a car and got there just as she was closing her eyes, and we got there twenty minutes later—on a beer truck!

RL: Now this was the Depression already?

BG: 1934. Arthur was born in 1929. Stanley was born in 1932. When my sister passed away, my mother wanted my brother-in-law to move in with them. Marvin was just seven, and Mimi was three. My mother-in-law begged them. And we told them our house was open. I have to divert a bit, because my husband and his brother Max were 18 months

apart. They worked their way through school, and when they worked as paper boys and all the way up in the Tribune, they had one bank account that they shared. One didn't question the other if you withdrew so much money; that's how much faith they had in one another. So you can see how close they felt to one another. And then by the work of fate, they were married into the same family. So it was like a logical thing that he said to us, "I would rather come to your house with the children. I feel for the children's sake they should be with children." We were very happy about it, although as I look back, it hurts me to think that he hasn't had much of a life. He never remarried. They were with us for ten years—seven years old, five years old, three years old, and Stanley was a year-and-a-half—and it wasn't an easy matter for me. We had his maid and my maid, but it was quite an adjustment. I was just married eight years. I was in my twenties at that time.

RL: Where were you living then?

BG: We had rented a house at 1512 Russell North, and they had moved south in a house not far from me. He didn't want the change to be too abrupt when she passed away, so their maid came, too. I gave them much more attention than I gave my own children. I felt I wasn't fair to my own two and yet my heart went out to them. Well, I felt, I'll do the best I can, and in a couple of years I hope he meets somebody. But he never seemed interested, never at any time, to this day. I keep contact with him too. I got a kick out of my neighbor next door. He's a school teacher, non-Jewish, and he said, "Blanche, you know,"—you must think I'm bragging when I say this—"you had gone to Europe when we moved in, so I've lived here here ten years now." I said, "Bob, it's ten years?" And he said, "I've been noticing you. You are such an outgoing person with the scrubwoman, and with the conductor, and with the wealthy people, and with the poor people. No wonder you've got lots of friends." I said "Stop giving me compliments." But you know, that was my makeup. And that was my brother Saul's makeup. I'm very much like him. I will have more arguments and fights with people, not that I want to fight, over the principle of a little nothing, and that's me, too. But he hit the nail on the head, I guess.

RL: Well, let's see, this was about 1935?

BG: Yes. Max lived with us ten years. They weren't easy. Whooping cough, measles, chicken pox, when one was out of school, the other three had to be out because they were exposed. And they wouldn't get it until the first one was ready to go back to school. Willard School, John Hay, North High. The heartbreak was in 1943. My husband gets a letter from Uncle Sam: "You Are Wanted." And he said, "Well, while I'm in this country, I want you with me and with the boys." And that just struck me as though somebody put a gun to me. (Crying) Well, I went along. I knew I wasn't feeling well. I was down about 35 pounds. I was very thin when my sister died, and I was especially thin at that time. We tried to sell the house. He went in in September, and in November I put it up for sale, but it didn't sell. He called me and he said, "I don't like the way you sound. Go and see your cousin Leo Rigler." Leo says, "I want you to see Abe Baker." Abe Baker says, "You're having a nervous breakdown. Tell me, what's going on with you?" I said, "You know, Abe, you were the best man at my sister Toby's wedding." My sister Toby married George

Doroshov of St. Paul. He's a pediatrician and they live in Los Angeles. George and Abe Baker were like brothers, and at Toby and George's wedding, I was the matron of honor, my little niece Mimi was the flower girl, and she had George's sister for an attendant. And I know Abe Baker's wife helped us get ready for the ceremony. He said, "I've been watching you, Blanche, from the time of George's wedding, what's been going on within you, and what you have been doing." Human nature's very funny. We had a lot of friends, we went out a lot, so I was burning the candle at both ends, trying to maneuver. I'd get up at four, or five, making up to those children that they didn't have a mother, baking extra cake and extra this and that, bringing in the friends and feeding the community, being PTA mother, you know, just everything. He says, "It's your fault that your brother-in-law is living with you that long. If he hadn't lived with you, he would have remarried." But we didn't keep him. In fact, we were hoping he would, for his sake. I'll tell you something; I'm going back a bit. My father was from the old school. At the time my sister Frances passed away, Rabbi Albert Gordon was very new at the Adath Jeshurun. We belonged to Beth El, and Rabbi Aronson knew my sister Frances as well as he knew me. Rabbi Aronson married us, but not my sister -- my mother-in-law and my sister were married by Rabbi Matt, and Rabbi Matt married us too, Matt and Aronson. So Gordon, who was very new, didn't know much about my sister, so they had both Rabbis. Rabbi Aronson came with a temperature of 103 to officiate at her funeral. They were in progress of building the new Adath (on 34th and Dupont) in 1934, and they were standing in the street. It was a cold, miserable day. And that reminds me, I was active in the Council of Jewish Women in a study group, and I wrote a paper for the study group about Herzl at that time, and Rabbi Gordon said, "Blanche, it's so good, can I have it, I'll make a copy and give it back to you." I never got it back and he's gone. But anyway, the people were standing outside, and later—I heard this from Rabbi Aronson's wife, Bertha—Rabbi Gordon said, "Did you know Rabbi Aronson had a temperature of 103 when he came to officiate at your sister's funeral? And everybody begged him not to come? I couldn't say anything, because they'd think I wanted the full honor." Bertha Aronson and I were very friendly when she went to South High, and at the University. She was Bertha Friedman. After the Temple service, there were mobs of people on the street, hundreds . . . but of course, a young person thirty years old . . . And from that day on Rabbi Gordon became very friendly with my father. My father was seventy-five the day she was operated on, and died two days later, and he used to walk in below zero to the Adath Jeshurun, eight blocks and back. He was having trouble with his legs, the circulation. And Rabbi Gordon used to come to the early services and to the late afternoon services, which a lot of them don't do any more today. I didn't know they got to know one another that well, but my father was very liberal minded when it came to religion, as he was with almost everything, and he used to say, "Remember, if you don't go along with your children, you are left behind." It's been in the back of my head. My mother would say, "It's got to be this way because you do that in the Jewish religion," and my father would say to my mother, "Look, you've got to give if you want to keep your children." It wasn't like intermarriage, or anything like that, just crazy things about a certain holiday . . . or I don't know why. Oh, she was so furious because some of my sisters and brothers joined Temple Israel! My father said, "Look, what are you going to do . . . you're going to lose your children . . . they're going to a Jewish synagogue . . . see?" When my father became quite ill in 1936—he had very bad

circulation and was in excruciating pain—Rabbi Albert Gordon used to come very often to visit him. My father was operated on in October. They amputated the leg. He said he would rather die than have an amputation, and I said, "Look, doctors don't do it this way, they try to preserve." But it was off with the leg, and we were there at the University Hospital. "Everything is fine," Leo Rigler said, "Your father came through with flying colors." And I said to my husband, "I must be a pessimist. I don't like it. That sounds too good to me." And thirty-six hours later, one o'clock in the morning, the call comes from the University Hospital, "Dr. Goldberg, your father-in-law's failing, you better call the family to come." He passed away. At my father's funeral at the Adath, people from North Dakota came down for the funeral! When we were living there it was "Huh? Jews? Funny kind of animals . . ." But they were finally realizing, I guess, what Jewish people were.

RL: You mean, these non-Jewish people came to his funeral? And he'd moved away . . .

BG: Moved away in 1922. I'll tell you something better, what happened later. The reason I'm bringing these points in is because there was such an anti-Semitic feeling there, because it was such a pro-German town. In 1918, when World War I was over, on November 11th at eleven o'clock, my sister Bessie, who was expecting her fifth child momentarily, she was fuming, and she calls on the mayor . . . my sister Bessie is very spunky, she is the philosopher of our family . . . and she says, "Everyone is ringing their church bells. Why aren't you ringing your bells?" And he said, "What's there to celebrate? We lost!" You see, it was the German's point of view, and I want to make this point about anti-Semitism. That's why I'm bringing this little thing in. But when my father died, yes, some of them came down to the funeral. I will continue in this vein. Twenty or 30 years later, my brother Saul was practicing law and his first wife, Jeanette Goodman, had passed away. She died of cancer; they had no children. She sang at our wedding, the first big wedding at Beth El on 1400 Penn. About 500 people were invited, between all the relations on my side and all the relations on my husband's side, but the people felt, there's a wedding in a synagogue, it's open to the public, and a lot of them walked in! My folks said they never saw anything like it. We always prepared more than enough, but imagine when all those extras came in! (Laughing) It was endless! Well, anyway, my brother Saul remarried, a widow with three children, and he was a sick man, he had a heart condition. And when we went out to this North Dakota reunion in 1960 and they put out the red carpet for the Halpern family, I said to my sister Ruth, "Ruth, this isn't Hebron when we lived here!" Saul and his wife Red - her name is Orpha, but she doesn't like it -- her family, the Friedmans, came from South Minneapolis. Her mother was a Friedman girl, too, married to a Helfstein, and she's first cousin to Ralph Helfstein, who married Rachel Brin. So they told us that just a few weeks before this reunion, one of the ministers in Hebron, this town of six churches, had a sermon -- I don't know what the name of the sermon was—where he commented about a former resident of Hebron, North Dakota who had a family who had a different religion than everybody there. Well, a lot of them were gone, but whoever was there remembered who it was—and he marveled how my father and my mother brought up twelve children and they went the right path, with discipline . . . they were brought up with respect, they were brought up with courtesy, they were brought up with good manners . . . and this minister went on and on and on. After

all these years! And I'm thinking, as I am talking, that the same brother whose attorney had heard about Hebron, because he practiced twelve miles away, when he was in grade school in Hebron and he was in the seventh grade, one of the boys at recess time called him "sheeny" and then they got into a fist fight and the principal came down to see what was going on. And this principal . . . that's why we all have such a soft spot for him . . . he didn't suspend the boy, because the boy didn't know what "sheeny" meant, he didn't know what a Jew was. And the principal sat and talked to him, and he must have scolded him and had him forfeit something for what he did and what he said, because after a couple of sessions, when he was through with this Laird Theerin, that boy was my brother Saul's best friend! So you can see how they called you "sheeny" and "Kike" . . . they didn't know what it meant, but they knew it wasn't a good name for a Jew. And they didn't know what a Jew was like, or supposed to be, so they took for granted a Jew was a kike and this and that. We tended to our own business and lived our own way, but Pastor Robinson got them all straightened out. We always felt so close to him and he felt very close to our family, because he was one for whom justice comes first. And I think that's what influenced my brother Saul. He always fought for the underdog, always fought for justice, and I'm the same way.

RL: He was a county attorney?

BG: He was a county attorney and a judge out in North Dakota. He was a very active Democrat and he was head of the committee of the state of North Dakota when John F. Kennedy came out there. And there's a picture of my brother and J.F. Kennedy together.

RL: Did the Depression really have an effect on your life?

BG: Oh, it was terrific. First of all, it was at that time, in 1936, when my father was so ill. He owned land out there in North Dakota. Not only did they have a drought, but they had a "grass-hopper deal," that you had to take the last bit of cash to try and buy seed for the farmer or for his renter. People were leaving the state; there wasn't any money. We had it here in Minneapolis, but it was much, much worse in North Dakota. That was the summer my father was dying, and my uncle Shruel, my uncle Joe, my brother Saul would take the car and they would drive during the night, because that was the summer—1936—when it hit 105, 110 temperatures. They would drive during the night, away from the heat, to come down to see him. They couldn't afford train fare, and you all had to pitch in for the gasoline. Even in the stores. You have a store in a small town, you can't turn away a person from buying a loaf of bread, so you gave it to him, but you never collected. It was very bad in the state of North Dakota, and it was bad here. It was the time my sister was dying, and all the expense of her illness took everything my brother-in-law had, and an awful lot of what my father had. She was deathly sick for two years, having nurses around the clock. The Depression hurt plenty, and whatever farms he had, whatever investments he had, it was rough. Even in my life, my husband's a practicing physician, but a lot of times he could barely scrape together the cash to pay his rent. He would go and make a call, he would feel so sorry for the patient, he would take a dollar bill or two and give it to the person, instead of being paid for the call. My husband is very

much like my brother Saul. He felt sorry for the poor person. When people would come into his office, "What do you charge for an 'OB', Doctor Goldberg?" he had no set fee; for the poor one it was very little, or even nothing. And that's why I resent that the situation is entirely different today. I shouldn't talk about this, because I have a son who is a doctor, but then, everything was on the books, but you never collected. But as Stanley tells us today, kiddingly, when I said, or my husband said to him, "Do you have anybody on the books, as far as owing you?" he says, "Mother, this is different today. A lot of your patients, if they're not on Medicare, they've got their private health insurance, so you get some kind of payment, not like when Dad practiced and never got a cent." He could tell you of the hundreds of kids that are walking around Minneapolis that never got paid for, that he delivered, and afterwards the parents made the money, but never thought of paying Dr. Goldberg. And my husband's one of these, "Good God, why should I bother them?" Oh, yes, it hit plenty, right here. And at that time it was very funny, it wasn't only my husband, but the Jewish doctors at that time resented the fact that a lot of the Jewish people were not using Jewish doctors. There were very few Jewish doctors. Dr. George Gordon, you've heard that name, he delivered me. He'd delivered my brother Morris, and we'd moved to North Dakota, but my mother came down here. My sister Toby was a "change of life" baby . . . mother didn't even know she was pregnant! He came to deliver her just in time, and she had to bring a bunch of kids along with her. I think you ought to interview my husband. He'd give you the impression about the hospital too, if you want it, and about the North Side. I think he could tell you plenty there. At the time I married my husband, there was a number of Jewish doctors in practice . . . Dr. David Siperstein . . . George Gordon . . . Dr. Seham . . . Manny Lippman came in later . . . but there was Dr. Hy Lippman, and afterwards he specialized in psychiatry . . . there was Dr. Moe Nathanson . . . Dr. Barron . . .

RL: Wasn't there a Dr. Abramovitz?

BG: Who?

RL: Was Ehrenberg Jewish?

BG: No, and all the Jewish women ran to him. And all the Jewish women ran to Adair, who was the head at the University. That's the story my husband ought to tell you, because it was an unwritten law . . . he specialized in OB/GYN, and my husband specialized in that, he had a residency at General Hospital, and Litzenberg, who was also head at the medical school, was very nice to the Jewish boys. And it was an unwritten law with Adair that he would take in the highest one in his class who was interested in OB into his office, and in Is's class, Wangenstein was number one, A.O.A., and my husband was number two. And Litzenberg said to Is Goldberg, "Well, hasn't Adair offered it to you, you should come in to work in his office? No? Well, why don't you ask him?" Well, Is was one of these timid guys. He was finishing his residency at General and finally he had nerve enough, he stopped him in the hall and he said, "Dr. Adair, is it because I'm Jewish?" The guy turned red and walked away! I'm giving you this, not so much about our life, but just the general atmosphere of anti-Semitism. And yet all the Jews lined up . .

. at that time it was so funny . . . I know the pediatricians used to say it, and not only that, we lived in an apartment for a while and four or five people we knew were married at the same time we were, and they had children, and they went to a pediatrician, but God forbid they'd mention a Jewish name. They went to Dr. Rada, and to Wilder, and to Robb. We used to say, what's the matter with the Jewish people, haven't they got faith in the Jewish men? My husband won't tell it to you the way I'm telling it to you, but I could feel what he was going through and what the other doctors were going through. Even the eye, ear, nose and throat men, the same way. Dr. Harold Cooperman used to say they'd go to Lomas and a lot of these other eye men, or throat men, and then when they'd finally come to the Jewish men they'd want to make a bargain, you should be cheaper. Now isn't that awful for me to talk this way?

RL: No.

BG: At times I feel I'm an anti-Semite to my own race. I'm not. What I'm doing, I'm just stating facts. Maybe I'm telling you a lot of things that you weren't interested in, but that's the way it was.

RL: No, that's very interesting.

BG: (Pause) I had a good time in college. I had a good time all the time. I like people. I enjoy having a lot of people at my house, I enjoy being with people all the time. Maybe I'm too much of an extrovert . . . I don't know. But I'll make the very best of a bad situation. If I can't have the best, I'll be just as happy with second best.

RL: Did your children go to the Talmud Torah?

BG: Yes, they went to Talmud Torah. We lived up North. Marvin was Bar Mitzvahed at Beth El, by Rabbi Aronson. Arthur was Bar Mitzvahed at Beth El. And then came the war, and I was in California and an old friend of mine who went to college with me, Rose Wasserman Leon, lives out there, and I said, "Rose, Stanley has to go to Talmud Torah. He's been going in Minneapolis. Where should I . . .", and she said, "Oh, send him over here where my kids went, to this place on Olympic." I sent him there and half the time Stanley didn't want to go, and I said, "What's wrong?" And he says, "I skipped a couple of days, and I'll tell you why I skipped, Mother. I learned this in Minneapolis a year ago. I'm bored."

I sat myself down and I wrote a letter to Rabbi Aronson. He always had a soft spot for me, my husband, my sister, my brother-in-law. Of course, it's my husband's aunt, Sarah Berman, that started Beth El and he even lived there before he married Bertha. Off the record, she was the "shadchan" between Bertha and him. So I wrote him a letter. "Rabbi, where should I send him? What should I do about a Bar Mitzvah? Stanley is eleven years old, and Is is in Hawaii and he's on his way to the Philippines." So he writes me a letter, a copy of what he sent to Rabbi Cohen in Los Angeles. He said at Sinai Temple, the biggest Conservative temple in L.A.—they had three Reform temples and one big Conservative

one and a lot of teensy, weensy little make-up things—he says, "Rabbi Cohen at Mount Sinai was a colleague of mine at the seminary. I know him very well. I am enclosing a letter I sent him personally, just what I wrote him."

So he writes Rabbi Cohen a letter that he married us, he Bar Mitzvahed our older son, my husband's in the service, my husband's a doctor, he delivered Hillel, his son—Doctor Gordon delivered the first son to the Rabbi, Is delivered the second one—and Rabbi Aronson asked a special favor of Rabbi Cohen, to be nice to me because I'm a stranger in town even though I have a few relatives here. That was in August. I went down and I enrolled Stanley and I joined the congregation, which you must do, 'cause I felt if Is won't be back the next spring, we had decided that by delaying, Stan may not want to be Bar Mitzvah. Who knows when the war is gonna end? To come back to Minneapolis would be a monkey-business, training him here, having it there. Rabbi Aronson felt it was a good decision, I should have it done there.

So when I went to enroll him, the man says, "My goodness, Minneapolis is known for the best Talmud Torah in the United States!" And he fixed a date for the Bar Mitzvah when he's thirteen, and so on, and then he said to me, "He'll have his lessons." I said, "You of course teach the maftir the way they chant, don't you?" "Oh, no. Only the special ones that eventually get into the movies, who have a voice, are trained that way." I said, "But Mr. Thomas!" He said, "I even applied to your Minneapolis Talmud Torah, but for the fact that the weather's cold there, I would have preferred going there to being here." I said, "Look, Mr. Thomas, if my husband isn't back from the war for this Bar Mitzvah . . . But regardless, I'm having a recording made of his Bar Mitzvah to send to the grandparents in Minneapolis and my husband overseas. It's a must, and I'll pay you extra." He said, "I'll let you know." You know, they were so un-Jewish in Los Angeles at that time. Now, when you go there, you see one on every corner, a synagogue.

All these months I tried to get to the Rabbi to meet him personally. I called, he never called me back. He's too busy, he's out of town. The day of the Bar Mitzvah came, and the shammes checked with me. I have a brother living out there, and my older sister and brother were living out there for the winter. My sister Toby and her husband came from camp. So I had some family and I had a lot of Minneapolis friends, a lot of Jewish doctors were there that I knew very well, so it was quite a crowd there that morning, and I asked about serving there. He says, "Oh, we can't. President Roosevelt just died and we're going through a month of mourning. You can't serve." I said, "Not even a Kiddush?" I thought I'd serve the luncheon there, whatever it was. It would be easier than the small apartment that I found. Half the time I was on the street, because you couldn't even have a place to live! I said, "Well, if I can't have a luncheon, how about some sponge cake and some wine, some whiskey?" My mother and my sisters made the strudel, this real Romanian gorgeous strudel, and sent it air mail special . . . 500 pieces! "No, you can't!" I was embarrassed! So I had the immediate family; I couldn't even invite friends in that small two by four apartment I was finally living in -- I moved five times in the two years he was gone!—for lunch, and then I invited everybody for the evening. I still didn't meet the Rabbi.

My mother's sister was still living -- Fanny Singer -- and my aunt and uncle lived in L.A., so I asked my uncle to have an Aliyah, but I guess he was too old. So all right, you go along. Anyway, Bar Mitzvah morning came, and I had an awful time with my son. Stanley said, "I'm not going on. My father isn't here, I don't want to go." You can imagine the turmoil I went through with the whole deal, not only the father not here, but my father-in-law had died when I was overseas, and my mother was a widow, my mother-in-law was a widow, no one else but just the few there. Well, they called somebody up to the Torah, a lady, so my son Arthur got it. His father wasn't here so they give him the honor of having that Aliyah! I'm mentioning these details because there's a reason for it. When my son got through, Arthur—he was named after this Aaron Goldberg, this relative way, way back who never had kids—he turned around and shook hands with the Rabbi, a nice-looking man with a Van Dyke beard, who says, "And who are you?" Arthur was fourteen, and he says, "I'm the Bar Mitzvah boy's brother." "And by the way, where's your father?" "My father's overseas." And Arthur made the rounds and sat down, and Stanley was very good. He had the recordings made; they did it, maybe, because I offered them some extra money! But have a little compassion, for heaven's sake! He did beautifully. I've got the thing here, and his children get the biggest bang out of it; they say, "Grandma, is that you crying?" and I say, "If you knew what I went through!"

So Stanley chanted the maftir and after he got through, the Rabbi got up. Do you think he even said to the boy, "Okay"? Well, he walked up to the pulpit as though the boy was a nothing! What does that do to the child? And he gets up and he says, "We have a very important speaker here this morning, a captain from the Marines who was called home because of a death in the family, and he's going to give the sermon or say a few words." God bless that marine. I looked to thank him and he had disappeared that morning, so I never knew what his name was and I never saw him again. All he talked about was that he came back for a heart-break, a mother died or a father died, and how wonderful it was to come into a synagogue and to see a child, not only to see a Bar Mitzvah while there is a lot of killing and bloodshed, but to see a Bar Mitzvah boy, whose father is in that bloodshed, doing so well. And he turned around and even told Stanley how good he was. I mean, how did the Rabbi feel? [Laughing] There's no feeling with some people! Well, it was over, and so many of the people came up to congratulate me, though they didn't know me from Adam.

And all of a sudden when we were about ready to leave a very attractive woman with gray hair, a very pretty woman, comes up and says to me, "You're the mother of the Bar Mitzvah boy?" I said, "Yes." "You should be very proud, how wonderful he did. He knew his Hebrew so well." I said, "Yes, I was very proud." "And the other boy who was there, I take it it must have been some of your family?" I said, "It is our older son. My husband is in the service." "Well, where did they learn the Hebrew so well?" [Laughing] This is a compliment to the Minneapolis Talmud Torah. I said, "At the Minneapolis Talmud Torah." This is Rabbi Cohen's wife. And she calls her husband over—I still hadn't seen him, he's never said a word to me—"Did you know that this lady lived in Minneapolis and her children were trained at the Talmud Torah?" He said, "Oh yes, that's right."

"Jacob, didn't you have a colleague that was the head of a synagogue there?" He says, "You mean David Aronson?" I'm standing there, not saying a word. "That's right, David Aronson!" But do you think he even said, "Mazel tov," to me? And I was a darn fool to send him a box with fifty pieces of strudel with a great big check on top of it! You know, I don't know why I'm saying all this to you, but I'm like opening up what's been in me all these years. (Pause)

Here's your example of what I had. Four or five months later Bertha Aronson came to L.A. for a national Women's League convention and she called me. I said, "Bertha, I have to see you. I haven't seen you in a long time." So we went out to lunch and before I knew it, out came the tears. She was crying as bad as I was, doubly so because she felt so close to us, and so did the Rabbi, to think how badly Rabbi Cohen treated me. And besides that she was telling me she had gone to one of the meetings the day before—the luncheon—and instead of giving the brochah, they were giving the Lord's Prayer! That's how Jewish they were! Now, they have become healthily Jewish out there. I've been out there about ten or twelve times with nieces and nephews' weddings, with what have you, and wherever I turn, everything is Jewish and everything is confirmation and everything is Talmud Torah and everything is Bas Mitzvah. I look around, and I've thought, is this the same California I lived in twenty or thirty years ago?

RL: It's really changed.

BG: And don't you think six months after we moved back I see on the Beth El "Shofar" that Rabbi Jacob Cohen of Los Angeles was going to be the Friday night speaker at Beth El? And my husband, who came out of a very Orthodox home—my mother-in-law gave her life that her kids should go to Talmud Torah, should know their Hebrew. That came first and then education second, even if you had nothing to eat or nothing to wear—that's how my mother-in-law felt about education! Of course, the service changed my husband. They got other ideas. He was almost a goy when he came home, you know what I mean? It's done that to a lot of them. "All right," I said, "Is, I know you are bored with Friday night services, but this is a must." And I explained it to him, "I just want to go and see that guy, I want you to see him." So we went. We came downstairs—it was still up North there—and Rabbi Aronson was standing with Cohen and Rabbi Aronson said, "Jacob, this is a couple you have to know. I don't know if you remember the lady's face. You should, but it's been a while, maybe, since you've seen her. You've never met the husband. This is the boy you Bar Mitzvahed." He looked at him as if to say, "What are you talking about?" So now I can see, when people move to other cities, when they are not taken in, at least decently—I didn't ask to be wined and dined, I didn't ask for anything—but at least he could have shown me the courtesy to have said, when I called so many times, "I'd like to meet you before the Bar Mitzvah." That's why you wonder sometimes about Judaism . . . when our own act that way.

[End of interview]