Viola Hoffman Hymes
Narrator

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Interviewer

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Viola Hymes	**-VH**
Rhoda Lewin	**-RL**

VH: You ask me the questions and I answer them?

RL: Well, I think you should start by telling me who you are and where you came from and where your parents came from.

VH: All right. My name is Viola Hoffman Hymes. My father's name was Aaron Hoffman and my mother was Lena Hoffman. We moved here from Chicago when I was ten years old and my parents bought a duplex on Thirty-Fourth and Hennepin. I went to Calhoun School, West High School and to the University of Minnesota, so I'm a complete product of education in this state. My father was with Albert Picken Company and they were, at that time, suppliers of hotel equipment. My father's territory was Minnesota, parts of Wisconsin and North and South Dakota. He was gone from home a great deal of the time, and my mother finally moved up here, very reluctantly, because all our relatives and our friends were in Chicago. And for years, just as some families say, "Next year in Jerusalem," we used to say, "Next year in Chicago." [Laughing] My mother particularly; her brothers and sisters and my father's brother all lived there. For years after we moved here, I couldn't smell cigar smoke and fresh coffee perking without tears coming to my eyes. That was nostalgia, because every Sunday everybody used to come to our home. That's because my mother's sisters didn't have any children, and so they would come to our home every Sunday for Sunday night supper. And my Uncle John, Joseph Krahnke(?), that was my mother's sister's husband, he just was marvelous with children. He used to play with us, and my mother and his wife would be so afraid. He was so rough with us, because he would toss us up in the air, but we used to love it! [Laughter] And so it was very lonesome when we moved here because we were a very closely knit family, but it was the only way to be.

My father was a very interesting person. My father emigrated from Romania to the United States when he was twenty years of age. Like most of the young men that came, he came because of the draft. I don't suppose they called it the draft—I don't know what they called it in Romania—but he didn't want to go in the army. He had four brothers and they all came here. His father was a widower and he gave up his sons one by one to have them come to America, and he was always going to come, but he never did. He never could bring himself to leave. He was ninety when he died. I remember a picture of him . . . a long white beard, just like the patriarchs of old. A very handsome man. In my father's family, all the men—there were only men—were all very good looking. My father was very good looking, with sort of curly brown hair, bright blue eyes. He had beautiful skin. He died at age eighty-seven and he hardly had a wrinkle in his face. And he was very vibrant and very active. He came to this country hardly knowing any English, and my father spoke without one trace of accent. He had made up his mind he was going to master the English language, and sometimes he'd get his "r's" and "w's" a little confused, but that was the only way in which one could ever have told that he had not grown up with it, that English was a foreign language to him.

RL: You said he came hardly knowing any English. Do you mean they studied English in Romania?

VH: He really knew only a few spoken words. He knew Romanian and they spoke Yiddish at home. He went to Boston—I think his brother, who was married to my mother's sister, was in Boston, though they subsequently moved up to Syracuse—and this is how he met my mother, because they were both staying with my aunt and uncle. My mother was engaged to another man, but my father fell in love with her and he wanted her, and that was it. She broke her engagement [laughing] and she married my father! My father had a factory, in very short order. He was very clever with his hands; he knew how to cut uniforms and hospital gowns, and he had seventy-five employees. For years we had the old kitchen clock—I don't know where it is . . . you know how you don't value those things at the time—but it was really his factory clock, a clock he had in his factory. He had been very successful. And then in the panic in 1907, he had a strike on his hands and money was scarce, so he sold out to a firm called Kling Brothers and the following year they went in with Sears Roebuck. At the time he sold they offered my father stock or cash, and he said he would take the cash because he intended to set up again, but then the children started coming and he never set up. So you're looking at me . . . a potential Sears Roebuck heiress, that I am not. [Laughing]

My mother came from Sweden. Her great-grandfather had been a Rabbi in Sweden. That was on her mother's side. They emigrated to the United States, and my mother was two years old when they came here. So the younger children were born here, but my mother and her older sisters and older brother were born there. As I said, they went up to Boston and Syracuse—or Syracuse and then Boston; I don't know the order that it was—and her brothers were very successful. One of them was the executive director of the Loyal Order of Moose! They were people who were very articulate. And my uncle, my father's brother, who was married to my mother's sister, was an inventor, and he sold his invention to IBM and he made a great deal of money in IBM stock, and his son, who invested everything he had in IBM stock, became a millionaire many times over. His son was a lawyer and he died about five years ago. He, then, was my "double cousin."

We were in the olden days very close, but as the years went by we didn't see one another quite that often. There were four of us. My sister Frances was the eldest and then I came. Then, my sister Gertrude, who was two years younger. My brother, Elliott, was three and a half years younger than my sister Gertrude and five years younger than I am, and he, of course, was just a little boy when we moved here. It was very lonely, because we were used to this family solidarity, and my mother had many friends she had known as a young girl and had many friends there. The Fantas[?]—Dr. Fantas, one of the first doctors in Chicago, and Victor Fantas, his son, who was in the printing business—we all grew up together. In our neighborhood we'd all go out to play games after dinner—alley-alley-are-on-free, and all those other games that kids play—and so when we came here we really were very lonely, because we were at an age where you don't necessarily make friends. Well, you do, eventually, but it's a change. I often feel very sorry for children whose parents move around a lot. We made only the one move, but our son Alan moved five times before he finally settled here. He's, "My son, the *doctor*." [Laughing] But gradually we made friends, and as I said, we went to Calhoun school, and then West High.

RL: Did you live in a Jewish neighborhood, or what you'd call a Jewish neighborhood?

VH: We lived on Thirty-Fourth and Hennepin, and my two closest friends were not Jewish girls—Lottie Babcock and Marian Jones. There were a number of Jewish students in West High School at the time, but West High School was a very mixed group. They had children from very poor families and middle class families, and there were children whose chauffeurs used to bring them to school! They were the Lake of the Isles people. They didn't send their youngsters to private schools in those days. I can remember the Carpenters' children . . . they would have the chauffeur let them off a block from school, and then they walked. They didn't want the other youngsters to see how they were arriving with chauffeurs! But these two girls that became very good friends of mine lived in my neighborhood. And Helen Hurley is another one. The four of us were very good friends. I really didn't have any very close companionship among the Jewish girls until I went to the University. I had this traumatic experience of changing classes, because I had been skipped a half a year in Chicago, where I was at the top of the class and then they moved me in the middle of the year to the next grade, where I had to start all over again. And then, when I came here, I skipped a half a year, and then they changed from the semester system to the quarter system, and I was supposed to graduate in June from Calhoun but they sent us to high school in March, and then I went over to the University after three and one half years in high school, and graduated college in three years! So the result is that my peers were always several years older than I was, and I didn't date 'til probably two years later then any of my friends, because they were all mature, and they were older.

RL: Did your family join a synagogue?

VH: Oh yes, we joined Temple Israel. My father was Orthodox, but at that time my father didn't have too much interest in religion, and my mother was Reform and we belonged to the Reform Temple in Chicago. And so we joined Temple Israel and I went to religious school. I did have a couple of good friends, come to think of it, from religious school. One friend was Zetta Goldberg, who married a Berman, and the other one, her first name was Esther, and I don't remember her last name, but she moved away and married somebody out in California. At the University, probably my closest friends were Zetta Goldberg Berman and Helen Harris Perlman. Helen is the sociologist. She is internationally famous, in fact, and she's written basic textbooks in social service, for social workers. So that's about it. It was just the average life of an average Jewish girl. [Laughing]

RL: What year did you graduate college?

VH: I graduated in 1926. We're having a fiftieth anniversary of my class in June.

RL: What did you major in?

VH: Well, I was in the School of Education and I majored in a combination of English and Journalism and Speech Communication, and that's what I taught. Then I went away to teach high school. I taught one year in Keewannee, Wisconsin, a very little town, and that took quite a bit of adapting. And then I was two years in Superior, Wisconsin, and a year in East Chicago, Indiana. You see that "pull" back to Chicago. I had a chance to get back there, in that East Chicago system, which was along the south shore of Chicago . . . And then I met Charlie in the summer, when I came back here, and we were married.

RL: This would be about 1930.

VH: Yes, we were married September 21, 1930. I'd always had a number of non-Jewish friends, in high school and then through college. And then, after I went away to teach school, practically all my associations were with non-Jewish people, so after I was married here I really continued, in much of my outside activity, the contacts with non-Jewish groups. So that's why, when I hear about all the antisemitism of the 1930s, I spiraled in from a different kind of an angle.

RL: Explain that a little bit.

VH: Well, you see, I didn't feel that discrimination. I'm not saying this discrimination wasn't there. For instance, I tried to get a job in Minneapolis schools, and I can remember when I applied. You couldn't apply 'til you'd had two years' experience, and I applied after I'd had two years' experience. Mr. Franklin McWhorter(?) was then Superintendent of Schools, and I had an interview with him. The Superintendent used to interview people! I thought I had done quite well with the interview, but as I walked out, I saw Dudley Parsons—not Dudley Parsons, Jr., but his father, who was head of audio-visual before his son became affiliated with the schools—and he stopped to talk to me. I had known Dudley from before—I think we had met at the University, but he was older than I was—and he stopped to talk to me and he said, "Well, Viola, don't count on anything. You know they don't hire any Jewish girls here, any Jewish men or Jewish girls, so don't count on this job." Well, they sent me out to be interviewed by the principal at Central High School. That was Caroline Barron. She was the principal out there. And she was very gracious, and very nice to me, but I didn't get the job. I may not have gotten it for that reason, I may not have gotten it for some other reason, but I remember that incident. I was one of the founders, with Clara Painter, of the Minneapolis Citizens Committee on Public Education.

RL: Now, that dates from what year?

VH: That was in the early 1930s. That was before my children were in school. You see, I'd been very active in education circles, and I had such a nostalgia, after I was married, for school, because it was the first time, since I'd been in kindergarten, that I wasn't entering a school building in the fall! I used to walk by just to smell [laughing] that kind of smell that comes out of the school building. [Laughing] To me, it's just like perfume. To anybody else, it was a stink! But my contract had read—and I'm not making this up, this is really true—my contract read, "Teachers shall be dismissed for gross immorality, or marriage in the case of a woman!" And a few years ago I was going over some old papers and I found that contract, and by heaven, I had not imagined it; that's just precisely what it said. We were married in the Depression, and it was considered immoral then, anyway, for two members of one family to have a job. And of course I had to give up my job in East Chicago when I was married. I didn't have a chance to get a job in education after I was married. I would have liked it, but I didn't have a chance! And so I became active in citizens groups and became very active in forming the Citizens Committee on Public Education.

RL: What was your purpose in forming it?

VH: Well, the schools were in a very bad way, financially. They needed an increase in millage and it was necessary to get some citizen support for the public schools. We did manage to get citizen support, so we were able to raise the levies and get more money for the schools and that kind of thing. It was the first one in the country. There are hundreds of them now.

RL: How did you find out about this need for an increased mill rate? Did you talk to somebody in the school system?

VH: Well, my sister had been national president of the National Council of Jewish Juniors. So when I was married, the first organization I joined was the Council of Jewish Women. Belle Rauch was the President of the Minneapolis section at that time, and Bea Grossman and I, who were married at the same time—that's Mrs. Louis S. Grossman—Bea and I were the Bulletin editors. We both had babies that year, so at the end of the second year we reported that we had produced eight Bulletins and two babies! [laughing] The following year I became Vice President in charge of Education, and so it was through that vice presidency and my work with the National Council of Jewish Women that I renewed my contacts with the non-Jewish groups in the community and I got to know

Clara Painter, who was in the process of forming this group, you see, and so I was the Council's representative to that group.

RL: In what ways was Council involved with the non-Jewish organizations?

VH: Well, Council was involved with any number of non-Jewish organizations. Like the World Affairs Council . . . now whether that was formed a little later or not, I don't know. Fanny Brin, by the way, had very broad non-Jewish contacts, and she was the one who, both through her presidency and her relationships with these other women, kept the Council of Jewish Women right wherever there was any women's movement or civic movement. It was the Council of Jewish Women that represented the Jewish woman in the community. They were very active. They sponsored the South Side Neighborhood House, if you remember. It was supported by what then was called the Community Chest, and the Council. And there were any number of other activities of the Council of Jewish Women that were in the non-Jewish community. Now there were people in the Jewish community that didn't like that at all. They thought that a Jewish woman ought to be spending her efforts on behalf of Jewish causes, that she had to be spending her efforts on Hadassah, and on her synagogue or Temple sisterhoods, and that there were enough non-Jewish women to do this kind of work. It sort of seems strange now, but through the years that I was active in the Council of Jewish Women, this was an attitude that we always had to buck, the attitude of "Why should you be using Jewish money for non-Jewish causes?" And the Council was having to constantly explain that it was concerned with human welfare everywhere, that it was concerned for children, for the poor, for the elderly. The Council of Jewish Women was the first organization to have any kind of a national structure in relation to the elderly, and had the first Golden Age Clubs in the country. So the Council pioneered both nationally and locally in a lot of those kinds of social services that we take for granted now, and later got the non-Jewish women interested and got them to go along with them in some of these things. But the Rabbis very often didn't like it; they felt that we were siphoning off the volunteer woman-power, and that we were using Jewish money, though we say, "Well now, wait a minute, you talk about this as 'Jewish money,' but this is money that is earned by Jews in the general community. So why is it 'Jewish money?' It's money that's owned by Jews, but that doesn't make it necessarily [laughing] 'Jewish money'." And then, of course, the idea was that this was prophetic Judaism, which is consistent with the Council; I've always said it's in the quotation from Isaiah, "Is this not the path that I have chosen for thee? Is it not to aid the poor, to help the oppressed, the widowed, and the orphaned?" And the Council of Jewish Women did a lot for Jewish youngsters and in the Jewish community, too, but there was resentment. I sometimes think when we talk about the antisemitism of the 1930s, the insulated and the isolated attitude of some of the Jews was just as great. And when I think back on it, I think that some of us who were active in the general community were looked down on by many of the Jewish community leaders because of our activity in the non-Jewish community. I often had people say to me, "Viola, why don't you use your abilities and your time and your efforts for the Jewish community?" So it was a very separatist attitude.

RL: I think that's very interesting. So you married Charlie and you came back to Minneapolis. Where did you live?

VH: Well, Charlie and I, the first couple of years we lived southwest. We rented a house on Fifty-Third Street and then we bought a house in 1935 on Pratt Street—the Moses later bought the house next door to us—which is in Washburn Park, just off Nicollet Avenue. We lived in that house for twenty-one years. Then after our children were grown we sold that house and we bought a rambler in Edina. I wanted a house all on one floor, but neither of us liked living in Edina. We didn't like the isolation, the "ethnic purity" of Edina. I think this would have been overcome in time, but mostly Charlie hated that bumper-to-bumper drive at sixty miles an hour to get down to the operating room. By the time he got in to surgery, he was exhausted by having to come in! Now it doesn't seem far at all. It was Fifty-Seventh and Chantry Road, which is now called Vernon Avenue; it was Old Highway 169. Now it's close in! In 1956—Dick, in the meantime, had gone into the building business—I searched for a lot in the city. I missed the city in many ways. I've always been intensely interested in the political aspects of the City of Minneapolis, and I missed the city very much, so we looked for lots and then very fortunately found a lot where we built our present house on Cedar Lake.

RL: When did you get involved in politics?

VH: Well, I was DFL chairwoman . . . they had a chairman and a chairwoman, and I was the chairwoman of the 13th Ward DFL in 1948 when Hubert Humphrey ran for Senate. I can remember organizing the 13th Ward for Humphrey.

RL: That wasn't your beginning in politics though?

VH: That was the first time I held an office of any kind. And then when I became active in the Council of Jewish Women, I really dropped out of politics, because the Council is non- partisan, non-political, and I didn't really come back into politics until I ran for the School Board in 1963, after I went on to the presidency of the National Council of Jewish Women. Now I'm not active in politics any more, at all, except to go to our precinct caucus, which I feel is everybody's duty, and usually I'm willing to serve as a delegate for the next step up. But that's about as far as I go . . . [laughing] as far as anybody wants me to go, either.

RL: Do you want to back-track and talk about the Depression a little bit? You were just getting started when things were really getting bad.

VH: Well, we were married in 1930 and Charlie had been in a specialty practice just two years at that time. He had been in general practice and then he went back and took Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat, and he went to Vienna and studied in Vienna for a year, too. Charlie supported his mother, really, so he is almost eleven years older than I am, but he couldn't have gotten married before that because he had to be making a living enough to take care of a family, and to take care of his mother also. Well, we were married in the

Depression, and we rented a duplex. We got along, and we decided we wanted a baby right away because Charlie, even if he couldn't play baseball with the kid, at least he'd be young enough to enjoy the youngsters! So we were married in September, and Alan was born a year from the following November. That's about fourteen months after we were married. We didn't think about the finances, whether we could pay for having a baby or not [laughing] . . . we just had it! We didn't really know where we were going to get the money to pay the hospital bill, and two days before I left the hospital and took Alan home, somebody came in and paid for a cataract operation that they had owed Charlie for two years! This man had gotten a job, and a paycheck, so the two-years-old money for the cataract operation paid for the baby, so we didn't have to leave the baby there in the hospital! [Laughing] But when I look back on the Depression years, I can't say that we felt it very strongly. Sure we didn't have very much money, but you didn't have very big expenses either. I had a full time maid for about five dollars a week, and food was cheap, and we bought the house on Pratt Street for a very small amount of money, a very small amount down, and the interest on the mortgage was four percent, very little. During the Depression, of any deprivation, all our friends were in the same boat. They were all professional people too, and we had many good times together. We raised our children together, and the men played golf at Oak Ridge, and we would come out with the kids later in the day, and we would go back and forth to one another's homes.

But that isn't the part of those early years that hang like a pall in my memory. The thing that hangs like a pall was Hitler! Hitler was just coming up, and those were very, very frightening years, because there was the fear. In the first place, you know, people who say that nobody knew what was happening to the Jews, that's a lot of baloney. Everybody knew what was happening to the Jews. We didn't know all the horrible details, but plenty of them were known, and very well known, and I remember Fannie Brin going to Germany in 1932 or 1933 and coming back with reports of what lay ahead. And you always had the hope that it wasn't going to be as bad as it sounded, but of course, as you know, as the years went on it got worse and worse.

We didn't want too much of a separation in years between our first and second child. We had decided we only wanted two children. Charlie really wanted four, but I got pregnant with Dick, and I can remember how depressed I was, thinking I had already brought a child into this world, and was bringing another child into this world, and were we Jews in America going to suffer the same kind of fate as the Jews in Germany, and in Europe? It was a very, very sad and frightening time for all of us. And later, when Charlie wanted more children, I just couldn't bring myself to have any more children because of the feeling that I had. And my feeling was not unique to me; it was universal among most of the young women. It was not worry for ourselves, it was worry for the children. What kind of a world were these children we're bringing into this world going to live in?

RL: That's a very contemporary thought . . .

VH: Well, maybe it's because my perspective on life is different now. It may be because I saw this potential to happen, and it didn't, that I am more optimistic. I have some anxieties in terms of the grandchildren—I guess we all do—but it isn't like it was then. Back in those days, sometimes we'd get the news, you know, and we would just sort of sit there, not even being able even to talk . . .

RL: Where were you getting the news from?

VH: You'd get it on the radio and get it in the newspaper.

RL: Oh . . . I see what you mean. I thought you were getting some special newsletters or something . . .

VH: Oh, no, nothing. What else do you want to know? To go on, you'd better ask me some questions, to start a chain of associations again. [Laughing]

RL: You were involved in school things, but you weren't involved in labor things?

VH: No. I've never been. I had the support of labor when I ran for School Board, but it's really the first time I had any contact with labor. I get along just fine with them, though.

RL: Because there was a big strike in 1936 . . . the Teamsters' Strike.

VH: Yes, I remember that strike. No, I wasn't involved, or touched.

RL: Were the teachers unionized then?

VH: No, the teachers' unions, as I remember, came considerably later than that. But that Teamsters' Strike . . . I guess they struck the food industry, and it was a very unhappy time in Minneapolis history. None of us were directly involved with it in any way, so again, it was just what we read in the newspapers. But it gave the city a very black eye because they'd organized a vigilante committee, and one of the vigilantes had been killed. Some rioting took place down in that fruit market area around First Avenue North and Sixth Street and in through there, but I really knew nothing more about that than what I read in the paper. It didn't touch the lives of any of us in any way.

RL: When you went out on dates with Charlie, where did you go, what did you do?

VH: Well, Charlie and I didn't date very long. We married about two months after we met . . . though I had met Charlie about three years before, but I'd been away to school and he went away to Vienna, so our paths didn't cross again until the summer of 1930. There were still the places that went on for years, like the Nankin. The Nankin later turned much more into a restaurant, but when it was in the Radisson Hotel, it was a nightclub kind of thing where you went to dance. That was the place to go and to be seen with your date, particularly with the Jewish kids on Sunday night—the Nankin, and the movies. Gosh, only the Nankin stays in my mind now. Most of our social life when I was at the University took place there at the University. There were two Jewish fraternities—

the SAMs (Sigma Alpha Mu) and the Phi Eps (Phi Epsilon Pi)—so there would be the fraternity dances. There were no Jewish sororities at that time. And there was . . .

RL: Menorah?

VH: Menorah Society. There was no Hillel then. Menorah fulfilled that function, and they always had a dance, and they had meetings. And then we had parties at home, too. I remember my confirmation class—there were four boys and four girls—and for several years afterwards we used to have a party every Saturday night, and we'd take turns at one another's homes, and about the most daredevilish things that we ever did [laughing] was that Matt Levitt had learned how to skid the car on Lake of the Isles on the ice . . . speed it up and turn it around [laughing] into a spin . . . and that was our daredevil activity. [Laughing] My mother would have just died if she had ever known how we'd spin on Lake of the Isles, and think that this was just the greatest thing in the world!

RL: You actually drove out on the ice?

VH: You drive out onto the ice, and you race the car and then you throw on the brake, and then you turn into a circle spin. And that was a kid's idea of great fun! I'm sure Matt Levitt's parents never knew what he was up to. [Laughing] Let's see, who were some of those boys? There was Hanford Weil, who subsequently has moved away. I don't know where Hanford lives any more. And Rees Rosten, whose name then was Rosenstein, and they later changed it to Rosten. And Sam Jacobs and Matt Levitt . . . they were the boys. Now, I don't think I can remember the girls. Del Grathwohl was one of them . . . and I don't remember who the two other girls were! [Laughter]

RL: Did you belong to Scroll and Key?

VH: No, I didn't. I didn't really know the girls when I started at the University and I wasn't friendly with any of them. I just never had too much connection with them. Nor did Helen Harris Perlman, who was my very close friend. So neither of us joined. They later became a sorority.

RL: Did Temple Israel have study groups and activities for the young people in those days?

VH: No, there was our Confirmation class, and you had a Confirmation dance and they had some other little social events before you were confirmed, but that was the extent of the social life. They didn't have the kind of organized youth activities they have now.

RL: That was when Rabbi Minda had just come, wasn't it?

VH: No, Rabbi Minda came after I was confirmed. I was in the last Confirmation class with Dr. Deinard. He died the next year and then Rabbi Lefkowitz came in for one year, and then Rabbi Minda. My sister was in the first Confirmation class that Rabbi Minda confirmed. Temple was over on Tenth Street across from the Francis Drake Hotel, so you didn't have a building where you could develop programs for your youth. They just had bought that very lovely old house on 24th and Emerson, and they subsequently tore that down—I don't remember when—but that Temple was built, I think, when I was away teaching school. So it didn't have that kind of cohesiveness for youth. They began to have it when my sister was confirmed. I think they had more youth activities around the Temple then. There was considerable separation between the German Jewish youngsters, at that time, and what used to be referred to as the North Side group. For the German Jewish youngsters, these barriers had already begun to fall, but their parents didn't like seeing them fall. The parents tried to keep it ethnically pure [laughing], if you know what I mean, but already there was inter-dating, and we were kind of between and betwixt. We had friends from both the groups, from the German Jewish group and from the other young people, although I didn't know any of the Jewish young people from the North Side until I started the University. But at that particular time—I think you mentioned Scroll and Key—there was sort of a snobbish attitude, that those of us who came from the South Side, we kind of thought they were a little bit something or other, you know what I mean? [Laughing] But later I became very friendly with Rose Berman. Rose was ahead of me in school. Zetta married her brother and Rose married David Goldstein, the Rabbi. And I remember my sister going out with David Goldstein, and so there was much more of a mixture, an inter-relationship, at college. Up through high school there wasn't any. And then, of course, at that time nobody could have been president of Temple Israel if you didn't come from a German Jewish family. There was Ralph Hamburger, who was president of the Temple, and Hanford Weil's father, Jonah Weil, had been president. The first one who became president of Temple Israel who had not come from a German Jewish background was I. S. Joseph, a little Romanian boy from the South Side, and I'm sure that some of the old-timers there must have been quite grieved at that development! [Laughing] But from that time on, they weren't so ethnically pure any more.

RL: Who was your obstetrician when your boys were born?

VH: Claude Ehrenberg. Dr. Ehrenberg delivered our two boys. I don't think there were any Jewish obstetricians at that time. Mel Sinykin started to practice maybe about ten years later . . . maybe a little later than that . . . because Mel went into the service, and he practiced after he came out. I'll tell you who else there was . . . Milton Abrahamson. Milton and Ruth were classmates of mine, and Milton was a year or two older than I am, but by the time he practiced our two children had been born. I think Milton had been in the army too. I'm trying to think who some of the classmates were at the University. There was Arnold Karlins . . . Arnold was in the law school . . . and Sam Ravich, who was in the medical school. And Jessie Ravich, Sam's sister, who is now an internationally famous sociologist, she married Professor Bernard, a professor of sociology. Clara was the eldest, and I didn't know Clara very well. She moved to New York and had been married in New York. But Jessie was working on her masters degree when I started at the University. Jessie was a very brilliant young woman, and when she married Professor Bernard her parents looked on her as dead. They just cut her off completely! It wasn't only that he wasn't Jewish, he was very much older, and she had been the pride and joy and light of the family, with this brilliant mind that she had. You've probably read some of her writings, since she writes in magazines and lectures, and now has been talking about the sociological development of women. Sam was her younger brother. Sam was in medical school and used to take me out occasionally. He was a nice boy, very sweet but very shy. Let me think who else . . . Oh, Bob Karon from Duluth, who was also in law school, and Rudy Segal and Jay Kline from Kline Motors.

RL: In those days, they said they had a quota for getting into the medical school. It doesn't sound as though there was any quota for getting into the law school.

VH: Well, there certainly couldn't have been a quota with medical school when Charlie was in medical school, because there were seven or eight Jewish men in Charlie's class. And they were all very good friends. Leo Shulman and Leo Rigler and Charlie and Max Hoffman . . . Max Nathanson was little bit ahead of them . . . and I've forgotten his first name, but there was a Shedlov in Charlie's class. Charlie had a picture of them; there're about at least seven or eight of them, out of a class of about fifty. I'm not aware that they started applying a quota when I was in school. They may have applied it later. And I don't think they could have been applying a quota in the law school, because there were a lot of young Jewish men in law school.

This is also around the time of the Country Club addition. The Edina Country Club addition was started out by Thorpe Brothers, and they very blatantly indicated that they wouldn't sell to Jews, that no Jews could come in there.

RL: What year was this?

VH: This was in the early 1930s, shortly after we were married. There was one Jewish family who lived there; Faye and Harry Altman were the only Jewish family who lived there for many, many years. That was developed by Thorpe Brothers, and Thorpe at that time was a very antisemitic real estate firm. Everybody knew they were. And the other very antisemitic real estate company was Douglas Rees, that later became Rees, Thompson, Scroggins. And Douglas Rees developed that Forest Lake area over in St. Louis Park, and this area where your house is. [Note: Interviewer lives on Park Lane, off Burnham Road, on the East shore of Cedar Lake.] And when we were considering purchasing a lot we saw the deed restrictions that said, "No non-Caucasians may live in that area except as servants." And no Jew could have bought in here, right where you're living, nor in that Forest Lake area, because this Rees, Thompson, Scroggins, which then was Douglas Rees, and which has maintained many of those policies since then, were blatantly antisemitic as far as permitting any Jews to buy in any one of their new developments. As their developments got old, and the affluent white Christians went somewhere else, then they'd slowly let the Jews seep in. But if you will look back on your deed—you probably have one of these Title Insurance Deeds—but if you look back on the history of your own deed, you'll find that no non-Caucasians—and by non-Caucasian, they meant Jews as well as non-Caucasians—could live here, except as servants. [Laughing] That was a very blatant and strong manifestation of antisemitism.

[End of interview]