

AL 125

Interviewee: Leon H. "Rabbit" Robbins

Interviewer: Samuel Proctor

Date: September 23, 1990

P: This is an interview with Leon H. "Rabbit" Robbins here in his home in Gainesville, Florida. Today is September 23, 1990, and this is for the University of Florida's Oral History Program. I am going to talk with Mr. Robbins this morning about his family background and his early memories of Gainesville with particular emphasis on the early history of the Jewish community.

Leon, when were you born?

R: February 26, 1911.

P: So that makes you 79 years old. A young man, right?

R: Absolutely.

P: I said, "Leon H. Robbins." What is the H?

R: The story is that I was not born with a middle name. When I got ready to graduate high school everybody had middle names to put on their diplomas, so I took my grandfather's name, which was Hillel, and Anglicized it to Herbert.

P: So you became Leon H. (Herbert) Robbins. Where did the "Rabbit" come from?

R: In my early days as a musician there was a young trumpet player with us who used to tease me when my name was Rabinowitz and would say "Rabbitwitz." They cut off the "witz" and started calling me "Rabbit." I have been called Rabbit for sixty years.

P: So Rabbit has become your nickname. Everybody knows you as Rabbit Robbins.

Where were you born?

R: Blackshear, Georgia.

P: What about your father? What was his name?

R: David Rabinowitz.

P: From where did he come? Where was he born?

R: He was born in Kiev, Russia.

P: And he came to America when?

R: When he was five years old, I think.

P: He came in by way of Ellis Island, I presume.

R: That is correct.

P: Where did he go? I am trying to figure out how the family got to Blackshear.

R: Oh, no, not to Blackshear. That is where I was born.

P: Will you trace your father's movements?

R: When he came into New York, he lived on Hester Street, which was the Jewish section of New York on the East Side. Gertie Rabinowitz's father was in business in Alma, Georgia.

P: Who is Gertie Rabinowitz?

R: She is my first cousin. Her father and my father were brothers. They shipped him to Alma, Georgia.

P: What was in Alma, Georgia?

R: My uncle was in business there.

P: He had a general store?

R: Correct.

P: Do you know how he got there in the first place?

R: No, I do not.

P: So your father went down there as a youngster after living in New York for a number of years.

R: Yes. He came down to Alma and worked with my uncle. When he grew up he met my mother in Blackshear.

P: Now, before you get there, when your father lived in New York, was there a

family in New York that he lived with and worked with?

R: Yes. I am not sure, but I think it was my Uncle Herman, who was a bankruptcy lawyer. I think it was with him and an aunt of mine.

Incidentally, as a little aside, I got a call about a week or ten days ago from a lady in Ocala. She is on my father's side, and I had not heard from anybody in that family other than Leon Robbins, Jr., whom we called Junior, and Herman in fifty years. We talked for about ten minutes. She lives now in Ocala. I asked her, "How did you get my name, and why have we not heard from you people in the last fifty years? We have not had any contact with you." We talked and talked, and I ended by saying, "If you ever come up to Gainesville, come by."

P: It is not very far, so she will be by!

R: I would presume so. But she is my first cousin's daughter. Her grandmother was my father's sister.

P: So you are rather closely related.

R: Yes, but we had no contact with her. As far as we were concerned they were all dead.

P: So your father came to Alma, Georgia. What did he do there?

R: He worked with my uncle in the store.

P: And he met your mother, who was from Blackshear, Georgia.

R: Correct. She came over when she was twelve.

P: She came from where?

R: Russia. I do not remember where she was born. It was a town about forty miles from Kiev. That I remember.

P: Did she come to New York first, also?

R: Yes. In the old days, Sam, the fathers would come over first and work and make enough money to start bringing the children, one at a time as he could afford it. Of course, my Uncle Alex was in Blackshear, Georgia. He was there first. (Incidentally, I was named after my grandfather. His name was Leon, or Louis.) When my mother came over, she went directly to Blackshear.

P: She had family there.

R: She had her father and mother and her brother [there].

P: Of course, it was not unusual for Jewish immigrants, poor as they were, to go into a community where they had family or friends because this was the only way that they could sustain themselves [and] have a place to live and have a job.

R: I remember one funny incident, Sam. My mother always used to tell us about when she came over to this country and they were in Blackshear. When she and my Aunt Sadie Singer were growing up, they could not speak English, and all the kids would look at them like they were some kind of freaks.

P: Your mother had two sisters.

R: Annie Mazo and Sadie Singer.

P: What was their maiden names?

R: Gilmore. Actually, it was Gilmofsky, but it was changed to Gilmore many, many years ago.

P: How did your mother and father meet?

R: I do not know, but it was not far from Alma to Blackshear. Alma was about twenty-eight miles to Waycross, and Waycross was nine miles to Blackshear, so it might have been an arrangement. Who knows?

P: That would not have been unusual, either. You were born where?

R: Blackshear. We were not living there, though. We were living in Milltown, Georgia, which now is known as Lakeland.

P: How did that happen [that you got] from Alma to Milltown?

R: I was the first born, and my mother wanted to go home to her mother in Blackshear.

P: But how did your father go from Alma to Milltown?

R: I do not know. At one time he had a business in Pearson, Georgia, and I remember when he opened the store he told me he had so little money that when he got into merchandising he took the empty boxes and put them on the shelves to make it look like there was more there.

I really do not know how he got to Milltown, but I will tell you how we left Milltown. There was a flu epidemic there, and my parents decided they wanted to get out and move to Florida. They came down, and my father was looking around. He went to Palatka and decided that that was where he was going to move. Then somebody said to him: "There is a town about forty miles from here called Gainesville. There is a university over there. Maybe you would like to see that." So he came over here, and he liked Gainesville better. He liked it because of the school. I guess he was thinking about the future, the kids going to college and all, so he moved to Gainesville right after Passover, 1913. We have been in Gainesville ever since.

P: So your father started in Alma and moved around in south Georgia--Pearson, Milltown, places like that where he had little businesses. But you were born in Blackshear because your mother's family was still living in Blackshear.

R: That is correct, and my mother wanted to be with her mother.

P: Now, you have three brothers?

R: Yes.

P: Give me their names.

R: Alex, Robert, and Irvin.

P: Alex is deceased?

R: Yes, about six years ago.

P: Irvin lives in Gainesville. [What about] Robbie?

R: He lives in St. Petersburg.

P: All of you went to school here in Gainesville?

R: That is right.

P: How old were you when you came to Gainesville?

R: Two years old.

P: So you have no memory of the move itself, of course. Your earliest memories are of Gainesville itself. When your family moved to town, where did you first live?

- R: The first place that I can remember was in northwest Gainesville, NW 4th Avenue or someplace in that area. We had a fire, and it burned us out of the house. Then we moved to North Main Street in one of the Stringfellow homes. There were about four or five two-story, white, wooden houses right there on Main Street, and we moved into one of them. Incidentally, the Sobols lived in one of them, too, and a family you might not know, the Manassas.
- P: Were the Sobols related to you?
- R: No. They were here before we got here, and so were the Manassas.
- P: What did the Sobols do?
- R: He had a pawn shop in the back part of the old Woolworth building on Main Street.
- P: Which is now Chesnuts?
- R: Correct. About a third of the back, I would say, [was the pawn shop].
- P: Earlier than that was where the Endels [Marcus and Jacob] had their general store.
- R: That was their building. The Endel brothers or something. It [M. Endel and Bro.] was on the [pediment on the] top of the building.
- P: That was the first Jewish family [in Gainesville] that we know of. They arrived here in 1865.
- R: I can tell you who is related to the Endels--the Burkhims.
- P: The Burkhims were related to the Endels through marriage. When did you move to University Avenue, to the big house that I remember in the 1930s?
- R: Before I graduated from high school, so it must of have been around 1925.
- P: So you moved from Main Street to the house on University?
- R: Yes, and we were there for twenty-six years.
- P: Where was your father's store?
- R: The first block of University Avenue as you are going west on the left-hand side. It belonged to a man named Mr. Miller. He owned the whole block, and he and

my father became very good friends.

P: It was on West University Avenue?

R: Going west toward the University, it was on the left-hand side.

P: Was it approximately where you later had the store?

R: Yes, yes, it was right in that area. One time he had three stores there. The Busy Bazaar was the main one he started. [There was also the] one he called the Blue Bonnet Hat Shop, and [the other was] the United Shoe Store.

P: They were not all in the same block?

R: Yes, they were.

P: There was a drug store on the corner.

R: Yes, and I will tell you who owned it.

P: Canova's was the drug store, was it not?

R: Yes, but that is not the drug store I am thinking about. The drug store on the corner was where the Bobroffs used to have their shoe repair shop owned by Mr. Clayton's wife's father. They were German, and when World War I came along, they closed them up because of the anti-German sentiment. Jim Clayton was the grandson.

P: Starting at the corner near the courthouse square going west toward the University, I remember for years there was a drug store there, and your cousin Mazo worked in that store.

R: That was Canova's. They were on the corner. We later moved there and opened up the men's shop.

P: Before the drug store was there?

R: After the drug store.

P: Wait a minute. The drug store was there on into the 1960s.

R: Yes, so it had to be before. In fact, my father went bankrupt there during the Depression.

- P: During the early 1930s. I arrived in Gainesville in 1937, so this all transpired before then. So when your father came to Gainesville, he probably had some resources in order to open up a store.
- R: I imagine he had a little bit, but in those days there was nobody with a lot of money.
- P: Oh, I am sure there was very little money.
- R: He became real good friends with Mr. Miller, who, incidentally, contracted tuberculosis and was in bed most of the time. I do not remember the arrangement, but my father, I think, gave him a month's rent when he decided to move to Gainesville, and my dad went back to Milltown, closed the store, packed up the family, and came on down.
- P: How did the Singers and the Mazos get here?
- R: The Singers lived in Lake Butler. He had a store there, but he was not doing very well, so he moved here, too. My aunt Annie, the Mazos, lived in Screven, Georgia, which was beyond Blackshear about twenty-five or thirty miles. Then they moved to Waycross, Georgia. Back in the Depression days they were not doing well, either, and they came here from Waycross. Both of them, like my mother, took in boarders.
- P: Do you know anything about Sam Singer, what his background was, anything about his history, how he ended up in Lake Bulter?
- R: No, I do not know. I know he was not very successful in anything he ever did.
- P: They moved to Gainesville, and I remember the house they had on SW 4th Street.
- R: Behind the bank. As you are going west there was a bank on the corner by Wise's Drug Store. You turn left there, and there was where Uncle Sam and Aunt Sadie lived.
- P: They lived downstairs, as I remember. Somebody lived upstairs. Earl Jernigan and Sophie Michaels lived upstairs also for a while.
- R: That is what they did in those days--they took in roomers and boarders.
- P: Yes, but it was a separate apartment upstairs.
- R: Yes, I know. My Aunt Sadie fed the Pi Lams, who were the Phi B Ds [Phi Beta

Deltas], I think, in those days. And my mother fed the TEPs [Tau Epsilon Phi].

P: And Mrs. Mazo fed everybody that was left over!

R: That is correct.

P: Where was Sam Singer's store in Gainesville after he moved from Lake Butler?

R: When my father opened a men's shop on the corner, he sold the old business to Uncle Sam.

P: I want to reconstruct where the Jewish businesses in downtown Gainesville were.

R: Uncle Meyer's store was behind the old Sears Roebuck store on SW 1st.

P: That would have been immediately behind where the Bobroffs later had their shoe store.

R: Yes, but on the other side of the street.

P: The bank's parking lot is there now. The parking lot was the site of his store.

R: Yes, that is where Uncle Sam's house was.

P: No, his house was a little bit farther along in back of Wise's Drug Store.

R: I will tell you who else was there--Fred Cone's father-in-law, the Bevilles.

P: But the Singer house was on NW 4th Street. You had to go to the corner past the Florida Theater and take a left at that corner and go down right in back of the bank.

R: There was the Beville's house and then Uncle Sam and Aunt Sadie's house next to the Bevilles.

P: But their house was about two blocks away from where Mr. Mazo had his store?

R: Yes, about that.

P: Reconstruct in your mind where other businesses owned by local Jewish families were located in downtown Gainesville. Where was the Bunses' place [of business]?

R: On the south side of the square.

P: Where they later lived in their house and had the little store downstairs was on SW 2d Avenue.

R: When he got mad at the synagogue, or the Jewish people [who were members], he formed his own and had services upstairs. [That congregation was] mostly college students.

P: But was that where they originally lived?

R: No. That was on SW 2d Avenue. That house is still there.

P: That house is still there, but when your family first moved here, is that where the Bunses were living?

R: Yes, their business was on the south side of the square.

P: What business were they in?

R: Same thing.

P: General merchandise?

R: Yes.

P: They sold everything. Do you know how the Bunses ever got to Gainesville?

R: No, but they were here when we got here, too.

P: They were already living in Gainesville.

R: Yes. The Greenbergs were here.

P: Who are the Greenbergs? Do you remember their first names?

R: Abe Greenberg and Clara were the parents, and my friend, the one I was raised with, was Max. There was Max and Morris and two girls: Molly, who was the oldest, and Esther. The youngest lives in Jacksonville. He was with Lerner's for years. At first he was in business for himself. He went to work for Lerner's for many, many years and retired. The last I heard about Morris, he was doing some kind of work with Vogue Shop. Incidentally, Morris's son, Robert, lives in Gainesville. He is a doctor.

P: What did the Greenbergs do?

R: They had a store on the south side of the square and a restaurant across from campus. I did it all, Sam. I am the last one of them. No one else is going to remember this.

P: Was that the only Greenberg as far as you know still living?

R: I am not sure whether Molly is living or not. Esther is dead. Morris is living in Jacksonville. Max works for Burdines in Miami. He had a drapery shop for years.

P: But Morris lives in Jacksonville now?

R: Yes, and his son Robert lives in Gainesville and is a doctor.

P: I know Bob Greenberg.

R: Morris is his father.

P: I did not realize that that Greenberg connected up. Who else lived in Gainesville? The Sobols had a store too?

R: Yes, where I told you, in the back part of where Chesnut's is now. Later, they ran a dry cleaning plant on West University Avenue.

P: A pawn shop [was in the Chesnut's building]?

R: Yes.

P: Tell me about the Sobols.

R: I will tell you this: to my knowledge, of all the Jews in Gainesville at that time, I think the Sobols and Buneses were better off financially than any other Jewish family.

P: They were more affluent than the others?

R: Yes, I seem to remember that.

P: What were their names? Do you remember Mr. and Mrs. Sobol's names?

R: William and Fanny Sobol.

P: And the son? They had one son?

R: They had two sons. The older one went off his rocker and spent all of his years out in the insane asylum at Chattahoochee. When he died they brought the body back to Gainesville and buried him in our cemetery.

P: What about the second son?

R: "Hymie" [Hyman] Sobol was a lawyer with Sigsbee Scruggs. He died of lung cancer when he was twenty-nine.

P: He was a graduate of the University of Florida?

R: Right.

P: And he was practicing law here?

R: Yes. For all intents and purposes, he had one son. The son who was in Chattahoochee was named Meyer.

P: The younger son that died was not married?

R: Yes, he was. He married a New York girl named Beatrice Rose. They had one son, and when Hymie died they moved back to New York. We have not heard from them since. We are talking about sixty-five years ago.

P: Are the Sobols buried in our cemetery, and Hymie is buried in our cemetery?

R: Yes.

P: But we do not know whether his son ever returned to Gainesville to visit the grave?

R: I have no idea, Sam. When Beatrice Sobol remarried, Hymie's son was adopted by his step-father and changed his name. Hymie's son would be fifty-five or fifty-six years old.

P: Do you remember the son's name?

R: Jimmy.

P: James Sobol. Old man Sobol's name was William.

P: What were the Bunses' names?

- R: Abe and Villa. They are the ones who set out their own plot out at the cemetery with the picket fence all around it. They have much more room than they need, and there was a big hassle about it.
- P: They did not have any of their own children?
- R: No. They adopted Freddy. I think Freddy lives in St. Petersburg. He comes up once in a while. He has three children.
- P: He is married and has children, too?
- R: I guess so.
- P: Let us go through others that were living here when your family first came to Gainesville. We have the Sobols, the Greenbergs, the Bunses, and the Rabinowitzes. That is four families.
- R: There were more than that. The Manassas were here.
- P: Tell me about them.
- R: Mr. Manassa had a store on SW 1st Avenue next to where the Beasley [& Williams] furniture store is [14 SW 1st Avenue]. The Edelsteins had a store there, too.
- P: And it was a general merchandise store?
- R: Yes. The Parneses were here, too.
- P: First let us get the Manassas out of the way. Can you remember their names?
- R: There were four boys who grew up together: me, Maxie, Hymie, and Junie Manassa. Junie was killed one night. He was changing a flat tire. They were going from Jacksonville to Waycross, Georgia, and a car hit him and killed him. He was twenty-some years old. Some of the descendants of the Manassas live in Jacksonville.
- P: What were the Manassas' father's and mother's names?
- R: I do not know.
- P: Do you remember where they lived?
- R: No. You can get the information about the names off the tombstones.

- P: What about the other three boys? You say that there are descendants living in Jacksonville?
- R: Yes. They were girls. Annie was one of them. There was Claire, who is about my age. A couple of the sons lived in Pensacola. I think they are buried here, but I am not sure about that. I saw Claire the last time I was out at the cemetery, lord knows how many years ago or what the occasion was.
- P: You mentioned the Parnes family.
- R: They were related to the Edelsteins.
- P: Do you remember first names?
- R: No. I was about six or seven years old.
- P: Were they in business, also, downtown?
- R: Yes. Mr. Parnes and Marcus Edelstein's father died within a week or ten days of each other during the flu epidemic here back in the end of World War I.
- P: That is right, the Spanish influenza. Mr. Parnes had a little business downtown?
- R: I would presume so. Remember I was six or seven years old then.
- P: What about their family? They had children?
- R: The only thing I know is I think they were related to the Edelsteins.
- P: Tell me about the Edelsteins. Were they living here when your family arrived?
- R: Yes, they were already here.
- P: Who were they?
- R: Hymie, Willie, and Marcus.
- P: They had a store on University Avenue.
- R: No. The Manassas had one back then in the same area, SW 1st Avenue. There are some boutiques in there now in that block. They had a pawn shop, too.
- P: So there were two Jewish-owned pawn shops in Gainesville.

R: Yes, I think so. Carl Salzman had a store right there.

P: I remember that. Do you know anything about where the Edelsteins came from or who they were?

R: No.

P: They were living here when you arrived?

R: Yes.

P: Do you remember Mr. Edelstein?

R: Yes, I do. I think I was seven or eight when he died. I just barely remember him. His wife later became Herman Leibowitz's wife.

P: I remember her. She was kind of a strong woman, and she held the family together until she married Herman. What about Herman Leibowitz? From where did he come? When did he enter the picture?

R: He was from Norfolk, Virginia, and he used to be an auctioneer selling out stores. Before that he had gone to a conservatory. He had a very fine voice, and he studied opera. Then he got on the road as an auctioneer and came to Gainesville. I guess he met Mrs. Leibowitz.

P: She was a widow, of course, by that time.

R: Yes, that is correct. And they were married.

P: He stayed on in Gainesville and took over her store?

R: No, he opened up a store on the front part of West University Avenue going toward the University, part of where Chesnut's is now. Woolworths [which was then located in that building] wanted that so they could expand their store, and I think they paid him \$10,000 to move out. He moved across the street [to operate] L & L [Lieberman and Leibowitz] Mens Shop, the store we bought. [Leibowitz bought out Lieberman one year later. The Liebermans then moved to Jacksonville.]

P: Originally your father was in that area.

R: Yes, but long before Herman Leibowitz.

P: When did your father die?

- R: My father was fifty-seven years old, so it had to be during World War II. I remember coming home from Wendover Field, Utah. They told me he was dying, so I flew home.
- P: Let us see if we can remember any of the Jewish families that were living here in those early years.
- R: I am not sure if the Feinbergs were here or not before we got here, but they were one of the early families.
- P: What was their name again?
- R: Ben Feinberg. It is spelled the same as "Fineberg," but it is pronounced "Feenberg."
- P: What business were they in?
- R: Clothing, general merchandising.
- P: Downtown?
- R: Yes.
- P: Tell me a little about that family.
- R: I really do not know much about them. I remember he became disenchanted. He had an awful habit of biting his fingernails. He used to bite his nails all the time.
- P: Did he have children?
- R: I am not sure. If he did, I did not know them. I am trying to remember if there are any other families. Oh, the Burkhims were here. They were related to the Endels.
- P: The Burkhims go back into the nineteenth century.
- R: Yes, they do.
- P: But they were living here when you arrived?
- R: Yes.
- P: Were they part of the Jewish community then?

- R: Yes. They were German Jews. They were not religious, really. I remember we used to have the High Holy Days at the Masonic Temple upstairs. He always sat in a chair right by the door. Young kids like me wanted to slip in and out--we did not feel like sitting there for the long service--and he was always on us about leaving. He sat in the front first chair as you walked into the room where the services were being held.
- P: The Burkhims also had a downtown store?
- R: Yes, on the west side of the square.
- P: All of the businesses in those days were around the courthouse square.
- R: Yes, that was the central part of Gainesville.
- P: All of these businesses owned and operated by Jewish families were small, owner operated. They were not big operations in any way at all. [They had] limited capital and ran kind of hand-to-mouth operations.
- R: Except maybe the Sobols. The Burkhims and Willie Edelstein had a store on the west side of the square.
- P: Together or separate stores?
- R: No, separate. They were wiped out. I am sure you remember the big fire downtown--the Thomas Hardware Store.
- P: The earliest fire I remember was the 1937 fire, which wiped out the block where Sears was located.
- R: That is right, Cox Furniture Store. Thomas Hardware Store had a funeral parlor in the back and also a paint operation. I think the paint exploded.
- P: It happened in the night?
- R: Yes, and there was a tremendous fire, and it wiped out Willie, as I remember. But I think the Burkhims were out before that. Willie, instead of going back into the retail business, went into the insurance business.
- P: When I came the Burkhims were in the automobile business, were they not?
- R: That was the son, L. J. Burkhim, Jr. He had a men's store, too.
- P: The fact that they had a "Jr." in there indicates that they were not part of the

community.

R: Yes, that is true. In those days it was frowned upon [to name a child after a living relative]. He had a men's shop kitty-corner, across the street, from the old Florida Theater. He married a Gentile girl from Williston, Florida. When she died there was big a hassle about her being buried in the cemetery. The big hassle was, of course, because she was not Jewish. What a lot of people do not know is that [the land] where the Jewish cemetery is now was donated to the Jewish community for burial, and we really do not have any control about who should be buried there and who should not because it was given to us by the city. We have always acted like we owned it.

P: Actually, it was not given to us by the city. It was given to us by two donors. One was a non-Jewish man from South Carolina, and the other was Pinkoson.

R: You know, he has a family over in St. Augustine.

P: Yes, and they are distantly related to Joe Lichter. That plot was given by the Pinkosons for a cemetery when two of the young children of the Josephs family died. The Josephs came from New Jersey in the late 1860s. They were related to the Endel family. Two of their children died within a week of each, probably the result of some sort of smallpox or something. They were the first known Jewish deaths in Gainesville. They needed a cemetery, and they received that property. So it was never given by the city. It says specifically in the original conveyance that anyone who is Jewish can be buried there. It does not provide any powers beyond that.

R: You know, there is still a Pinkoson descendant that lives here, Charles Pinkoson. He is a retired doctor.

P: I know, an eye, ear, nose, and throat man.

R: I do not know if any of the Pinkosons are still living over in St. Augustine. I went to law school with one of them. He was very, very smart. I think it was Joe Pinkoson.

P: I think that there are some Pinkosons living over there. I was at the cemetery last week when my cousin died in St. Augustine, and we were in that cemetery.

R: Who is your cousin?

P: Morton Payne.

By the time your family arrived here, the Pinkosons were no longer Jewish as far

as you know. They were not part of the Jewish community at all.

R: That is right. He married a gentile person.

P: Right. Was his name Charles Pinkoson, and was he the sheriff?

R: Yes, a big, heavy-set man.

P: So you remember Charles Pinkoson. It probably was his father, then, who would have donated the land for the cemetery because that was back in 1871. By the time you would have remembered, Charles Pinkoson would have been another generation. You could not have remembered anything like that happening forty years before your family ever arrived. Do you remember any Steins living here at the time you came?

R: No.

P: Were all the Endels gone by that time?

R: Yes.

P: How about any of the Josephs? Does that name ring a bell?

R: No.

P: Think of any other names of people that might have been among the earlier settlers.

R: As far as I can remember, I have named them all. I remember when we started the synagogue there were fifteen families.

P: By that time the Weils [Joseph Weil, professor of electrical engineering, later dean, College of Engineering] had arrived. Let us talk about the Jewish community's activities before there was a congregation. The congregation came into existence around 1921 as a chartered group and did not build a synagogue until a few years later.

R: That would have been 1924 or 1925.

P: But before that there was a Jewish community. People were basically Orthodox to the degree that they could be in a little community like this.

R: Except the Birkhams.

- P: What did you do about kosher food?
- R: We got it in Jacksonville from Jack Becker, and then the Safers after he went out of business.
- P: There were actually three kosher meat markets in Jacksonville. There was Jack Becker's [business], which had been started by his father. Then there was the Safers' [market] on Adam Street, and the third one was owned and operated by a man named Morris Hammerman. How did the meat get to Gainesville?
- R: By bus. After several times when the meat spoiled my mother gave up on keeping a kosher house. The maids "helped," too, by mixing up the dishes.
- P: But to begin with, the families attempted to maintain as kosher a house as they could under the circumstances. How about Passover time?
- R: We had that, too. I do not remember where Mama would get the stuff. I think what happened was we would always go to Jacksonville and drive back because we would get matzo there.
- P: You would drive over there?
- R: Yes.
- P: Meat was delivered by bus for the families that wanted it up until what time?
- R: When we used to go over there, I would think that we used to get meat ourselves, also, but we did not go that often. Sometimes the meat came by bus, and it would spoil. But I remember vividly going over there to get Passover supplies.
- P: Before there was a synagogue, High Holy Day services were held in the Masonic Temple. Where was it located?
- R: On North Main Street.
- P: Right where the railroad used to come down the street?
- R: That is right.
- P: I know we are going back to a time when you were a child, but who were the leaders in the Jewish community, the people who made the arrangements and did the things that needed to be done?

R: I would think Mr. Sobol had something to do with that. He had a strong personality [and was a] leader.

P: Who led services?

R: We did not have a rabbi, so it had to be somebody local. I cannot remember who conducted services.

P: In early years I remember there was a man from Jacksonville who was brought over for High Holy Day services, a man by the name of Marks. His children live in Jacksonville now. Bernie Marks is a retired veterinarian. His father used to come over to conduct High Holiday services. I think that would have been in the 1920s. To begin with, you must have just used local talent.

R: We did: members of the congregation. I do not even remember who used to blow the shofar.

P: I would like to talk about the building of the synagogue, and I do not think we have the Ben Feinberg story on here, so I want to get that story on.

I am going to tell the story again of how we acquired the piece of marble. After the congregation was incorporated in 1921, the small Jewish community--some fifteen families--felt that it needed a building. It had been using the Masonic Temple for High Holy Day services, so a property was secured. Rabbit [Leon Robbins] did not remember exactly why that particular lot was found, but it was centrally located and, as Rabbit said, it was probably cheap. Everybody being poor, that is all that they could afford. How much do you think the building cost?

R: Fifteen thousand dollars.

P: Do you have any knowledge of who built the building?

R: No.

P: When they built the building originally, did it have the side room which was later used as the social hall, or was that a later addition?

R: That is a good question. I think it was there. To be honest, I am not absolutely positive whether it was added onto or not. That is where the kitchen was and so on. Incidentally, when we first got married and my wife was pregnant, she taught Sunday school there, right after she moved to Gainesville.

P: I remember that. Anyway, because the Jewish community was so poor, it was decided that perhaps the non-Jewish community might help support the building

of this synagogue, and it did. There were gifts, not large gifts, that were given by local businesses and local people to the Jewish community.

When they went to Mr. Thomas from Thomas Funeral Home and asked him for some money, he said, "I will not give you any money, but I will give you the marble for a cornerstone." They were happy about that. When the piece of marble arrived, it was obvious that it was a tombstone. When you look at it today, that is what it is. It could not be used as a cornerstone. They could not give it back to Mr. Thomas. That would not have been a very gracious thing to do. They did not know what to do with it until [Joseph] Weil, not yet a dean but teaching in the College of Engineering, came up with the idea of chiseling onto the stone [the names of] all of the charter members of the congregation, [and] that is what they decided to do.

They had a board of directors at that time, and by the way they did have a woman on the board of directors. Mrs. Leibowitz was on the board of directors. I do not know that there was another Jewish congregation in the state at that time that had a woman on its board. Anyway, it was decided that that was a good idea.

Then they had to figure out a way to determine whose name would go in what position on the stone. Well, the Weils went first. He was the recognized leader of the Jewish community, so there was no argument that the Weils would go first. The rest of the names were put into a hat and were drawn out of the hat. (I do not know who did the drawing.) That would determine the order in which the names would be chiseled onto the stone. They drew the names, and in that order as you see them on the stone today is the order that they were drawn out of the hat. There was some room left at the bottom of the stone, and that is why the three Edelstein boys are there. Their names were not in the hat to begin with. They were unmarried, and their names were just to fill up the space.

That was fine for a while until the Buneses--they are about fourth or fifth down on the list--became very upset about it because they had always regarded themselves as leaders in the Jewish community, and they were just down with everybody else. They decided that there had been fraud in the drawing. According to them, their names had been left out and certain other people's names had been left out of the hat so that favored ones could be in the first drawing, and in some way the others were secreted into the hat later. They became so sure of this that they first demanded through the synagogue board that the plaque be taken out of the synagogue since it was fraudulent, and a fraudulent thing should not contaminate the synagogue itself.

When the board refused to do that, the Buneses withdrew from the synagogue and began establishing their own congregation, their own synagogue upstairs in

their house. So for a while we had two congregations in Gainesville.

Mr. Buns then brought suit against the congregation in the district circuit court; he sued for the removal of this plaque. The case was heard in the circuit court in Starke, Florida. The judge ruled that this was not a matter for a judicial hearing or judicial settlement.

R: Was that Judge A. Z. Adkins?

P: I think it was, yes. As he said, and I have the papers on that, "This is a Jewish community matter, and it should be settled amicably within the family itself," and he threw the case out of the court.

Mr. Buns then took it to the Masonic Lodge. He was a Mason, and there were other members of the Jewish community, like the Burkhims and Leibowitz, who were members of the Masonic Order here in Gainesville. He tried to get the Masonic Lodge to act because he said that it stood for religious equality and all of those things. Well, the Masons refused to do anything about it either.

It was later suggested, and I do not know the basis for this, that this was the beginnings of the Jewish exclusion policy on the part of the Masonic Lodge here in Gainesville. In the 1930s when others like Sid Grossman attempted to become Masons in Gainesville, they were denied. Their applications were turned down. I think Sid Grossman became a Mason through the Masonic Lodge in Jacksonville.

Anyway, that was the reason for the Bunses' alienation, which continued until after Mr. Buns died. He never rejoined the synagogue, and you remember that she did rather reluctantly. When Hillel was first organized on campus, she became a patroness of Hillel. When she died she left her money not to the synagogue, but to the cemetery.

One of the people in the synagogue was this Ben Feinberg. His is the name that was chiseled off the stone. Tell me what you remember about that, Rabbit.

R: I do not remember anything about what the causes were, but I do remember that he went in at night through a window.

P: According to Dean Weil, he pried open a window and crawled through.

R: He went in and chiseled his name off. The only other thing I remember about him, as I told you before, is that he had an awful habit of biting his fingernails. He later moved to Lake Wales, Florida.

P: And disappeared as far as this community was concerned.

R: Right.

P: So we do not really know what his bone of contention was?

R: I have no idea.

P: And we do not know when this chiseling took place?

R: No.

P: It was very neatly done. As you notice, it does not mar the names on either side of it. It must have taken him some time to do. It would also seem to have been a noisy kind of a thing to chisel that off, and there were Jewish families living right around there. The Weils were living in the next block.

R: That is true. Incidentally, in that same area was where the Edelsteins lived in World War I, and the Parneses lived right across the street from them. Mr. Edelstein and Mr. Parnes died within ten days of each other.

P: During the flu epidemic in 1918.

R: That is right.

P: Can you recall any other families that were living here after the Rabinowitzes arrived?

R: Before we got here?

P: Either before you got here or who moved here between 1910 and about 1930.

R: My Uncle Sam (the Singers) moved here, and my Uncle Myer (the Mazos) moved here.

P: They moved here in the 1920s?

R: Maybe in the early 1930s during the Depression. I think that was one of the reasons that they moved here.

P: I thought that they were living here at the time the synagogue was built. Did they come after that?

R: His name is not on that plaque, is it?

P: No.

R: It had to be afterwards because he would have been a member.

P: What about the Brownsteins? They had a big store on the south side of the square [later Ruddy's Department Store].

R: They came later. They went broke, and that is when the Rudderhans [M. I. and Gussie] came in and took over that business.

P: And the Brownsteins moved to Jacksonville. They had two daughters and one son, Sewell, who was an announcer.

R: He was a very good friend of Otis Boggs [announcer for WRUF]

P: Sewell died of cancer of the throat or something. His two sisters live in Jacksonville today. Mrs. Buns did come back into the synagogue. After Mr. Buns died, she could no longer operate that congregation herself. World War II came along, and that was an impossible thing for her to do. In the meantime, they had already adopted Freddy, who was growing up in the Jewish community. So with some reluctance, Mrs. Buns became reinvolved again in a slight way, and she did first begin supporting Hillel.

Hillel had been organized here in the 1930s. She was not interested in it then, but after World War II she became interested in Hillel and did donate some money to it. In fact, if I am not mistaken, the first Torah in the Hillel House was a gift of Mrs. Buns. The second Torah was given by the Marshall Ruffs when they arrived. I know that because we went to that dedication. I was very active in Hillel during those years.

Then Mrs. Buns began coming to services again. She would appear on Rosh Hashana and sit on the left-hand side facing the ark. I remember that. When she finally died, she left her money to the cemetery, not the synagogue, and we became involved in that big hassle with Freddy, who was represented by his lawyer, Jim Worshow.

R: He won the case, too.

P: The Bunses owned a considerable amount of property. They had given mortgages out to property in the area downtown and had foreclosed on the mortgages, so there were about twenty pieces of property which Mrs. Buns owned. They made that settlement, then, with the cemetery.

R: I remember an occasion when we had a speaker, and she thought the speaker

was so good that she applauded. Well, nobody every applauded anything in a synagogue. But she really applauded.

P: Do you recall the dedication of the synagogue when it opened in the 1920s?

R: I was there, and Dr. [Albert A.] Murphree was the guest speaker.

P: And he was the president of the University of Florida [1909-1927].

R: Correct.

P: You became a student at the University in 1928?

R: Yes.

P: Tell me about your relationship with Dr. [John J.] Tigert [president, University of Florida, 1928-1947].

R: That was a few years later. When I first started school in November, I started playing [in a band] with J. J. McCranie who was an SAE [Sigma Alpha Epsilon]. He graduated after a year. Then I started playing with Banzai Currie. You should remember him. He graduated in February 1932, and I took over the band. It had to be sometime after that when Dr. Tigert contacted me.

P: Why did he contact you?

R: He wanted to know if I could get the band back a week early to play for the National Farm and Home Hour, which was a national program that they were going to have. I made arrangements. The band got together a week before school started, and we broadcast from the auditorium on the stage. We were real good friends after that. He always remembered that, and he always reminded me of having done that.

P: And you and he came to the University at the same time.

R: That is right. When they had the luncheon for him, I was there. I think it must have been with Banzai or somebody. It was at the White House Hotel on Main Street, and we played there when he was honored for coming to the University of Florida.

P: How did you and [Walter] "Red" Barber know each other?

R: WRUF. He was there. Jimmy Butch was there. His name was James Leonard Butch, and when he left here he dropped the name Butch. He went to Cincinnati

and just used James Leonard. Dan Riss was here. He later left here and went out to Hollywood and did some acting. I saw him in a segment in one of the Perry Mason shows. Bill Bryan was also here.

P: What did he do in Cincinnati?

R: Same thing there as here: he was an announcer. They turned out some real good announcers here. There is another one I am trying to think of. [Ralph Nimmons.] His son later became a judge here. We broadcast from WRUF in the studio three times a week for \$12.50 a month.

P: Red Barber was the student announcer to begin with.

R: That is correct. All of them were student announcers. The one who was in charge was Major Garland Powell. The first year there was a fellow that had one leg. He either died or left, and then Major Powell took over. His wife just died a few months ago. I saw her for the first time in years at the dedication of the new wing [of the College of Journalism]. Ralph Lowenstein is the dean. Anyway, Red was there. He got to be well known with that Orange Grove String Band. He used to announce that.

P: His wife, the present Mrs. Barber, was a nurse at the infirmary.

R: Correct. Red was from Sanford. That was his home.

P: So he is a Florida person.

R: Yes. He was from Sanford. He came to school and met his wife here, and they got married.

P: Tell me about your student days on campus. You started as a freshman, as an undergraduate, in the fall of 1928?

R: Yes. We [our band] did a lot of playing. There was an F Club in those days that used to put on dances. Eddy Felson was in charge. I always kid him when I see him, "Where is my \$75?" They booked us at the football game in Jacksonville at the Women's Club on Riverside [Avenue], and they did not have many people come, and I never got the money. So every time I see Eddy, I ask him, "Eddy, where is my \$75?" He gets a big kick out of that.

P: Did you immediately in 1928 become a member of TEP [Tau Epsilon Phi]?

R: Yes. Nat Roberts was here. Joe Davis was here. Gus Feuer was here. Bernie Blank was here.

P: What was your TA number?

R: Forty-five.

P: The chapter was organized in 1925, so you were here.

R: Yes, right after the PhiBDs [Phi Beta Delta], incidentally.

P: Earlier than that there had been another Jewish fraternity on campus which went under.

R: You remember I told you about it. You did not know that they were originally here in 1921?

P: No. Tell me about that again.

R: They were kicked off the campus for not paying their bills. That was 1921.

P: What fraternity was that?

R: ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau]. They have been here three or four times.

P: So they came in 1921.

R: Yes, in that time period. I do not remember how long they were here, but they did not pay their bills, and they were kicked off the campus.

P: Now the PhiBDs came in 1925, also?

R: Yes, they were right ahead of the TEPs as far as organizations on campus.

P: The TEPs organized in February of 1925.

R: So they [PhiBD] must have been earlier, in 1924 sometime.

P: You came during its third year of operation on campus, 1925 to 1928. Where was the house then?

R: It was on old 9th Street [now 13th Street] where the Holiday Inn is on 13th Street. It was a white stucco building.

P: So they had moved from the house where they had colonized to what is now 13th Street, where Eckerd's Pharmacy is.

R: On the left hand-side of the street was a white stucco home, and that is what became the TEP House. They took the house next door, also, maybe because they were getting too big. It was a purple house. Later on that was a Spanish fraternity: Sigma Iota.

P: Then they moved to Lore's Court.

R: Yes. They disbanded during the war, and then they had two-weeks time to get together again after the war was over. Bernie Roth had a lot to do with it. They took the old Leibowitz house on the corner of 10th Street and University Avenue. Wait a minute, I do not remember the chronological order of that thing. I know after World War II they moved to Herman Leibowitz's house on the corner of 10th Street and University Avenue.

P: Which has now been turned around. That was also the Hillel House.

R: There were awful fights between us and the PhiBDs, or PiLams now. There were not that many Jewish students coming to school. Incidentally, all of the Jacksonville kids used to go to PhiBD. All of the ones from Miami went to TEP. Things have changed a lot.

P: But you had a lot of Jacksonville boys, too. The Mizrahis, for example.

R: The Mizrahis were some of the first ones to break the tradition.

P: When you were in the fraternity back in the late 1920s, what was it like? It was small.

R: From my own standpoint, I was a freshman in 1928, and I was always playing [music]. When they had fraternity weekends, I never got to go because I was always playing someplace else. On football weekends they used to have what they called Two-Hour Dances. I remember we played at the PiKA House for two hours, from ten to twelve, and then we had to play from twelve to two at the SAE house. We would pick up our instruments and music, run across the street, and set up at the Sigma Nu House. Then the F Club had dances on Saturday night, and we played for a lot of those, too.

P: Who was in charge of making all of these arrangements for you?

R: I was the business manager. I was everything. I had a phone in my room, so I did not have to run downstairs to answer the phone. I booked engagements out of town, also. That is how I went to college.

P: You did not have much time to be a great student.

R: No, I did not, and I was not because of it, Sam. But I made up my mind that I was going to graduate no matter how long it took, and I did.

P: With your mother pushing you!

R: She is the one who gets the credit, to be honest with you. I remember coming in at 8:00 in the morning from playing out of town. I would run upstairs and wash my face and brush my teeth and go to class.

P: You were afraid with your mother looking at you not to do it? [laughter]

R: Mama was insistent. Thank God she was.

P: That is right. When did you graduate from law school?

R: 1935. I had dropped out. As you mentioned, I was not a very good student, and a couple of times I had to drop out. I did not have time to study anything. In those days you needed only two years [of pre-law] to go to law school, and I graduated from law school in the summer of 1935.

P: Why did you decide not to practice law?

R: It was very difficult back in those days to get anybody to take you on. I tried Miami and a couple of other places and finally went with Zack Douglass here in Gainesville. I was paid \$7.50 a week.

P: Of course, that was the Depression period.

R: Yes. Then came World War II, and when I got out I was thirty-four years old.

P: You had practiced, then, until you went into the services?

R: Oh, I was in Miami for a while, for ten months.

P: But you practiced law until you went into the service?

R: Yes, but I was in Miami at the time. I left the man I was practicing with, and I came back to Gainesville. I had volunteered to go in, so I went in. When I got out I was thirty-four.

P: When did you go into the service?

R: Right after the war started.

P: 1941 or 1942?

R: Yes.

P: So you were a practicing attorney from 1935 until then in Gainesville and in Miami?

R: No. I was not making any money in Gainesville. I could not live on \$7.50 a week, so a couple of the boys from the band came up to see me one day and wanted me to take over the band again because they were not getting any engagements. I did, and the tail got to wagging the dog. I really quit practicing law there for a while. Later, after they left, I went down to Miami and got with a fellow named Otto Stegemann. I was not making any money [in Gainesville]. I lived in a hotel on Lincoln Road. I was not making much money there, either. In fact, I never did make much money as a lawyer.

When I got out I was not really enamored about going back [to law], and my mother asked me to take over running the old Lincoln Theater, which I did. I wanted to get married, too. After all, I was thirty-four. I was making \$65 a week.

P: That was big money.

R: Then when I got married I got a raise to \$75 a week. That was big money. When I got married we lived with my mother. I gave Kate ten dollars a week to do anything she wanted! She was thrilled. She had never had ten dollars.

P: Times have changed. What do you mean, the Lincoln Theater?

R: The first theater in Gainesville was on a piece of property that a black man named Metz owned where the Dorsey Funeral Home is now.

P: You are describing the first black movie theater?

R: Yes. We had that. I do not remember what happened [but we closed it].

P: Where is the Dorsey Funeral Home?

R: Northwest 5th or 6th Street, not far from Chesnut's. [Actually, 727 NW 2nd Street. Ed.]

P: That property is now the funeral home, but it was earlier a movie theater.

R: We called it the Metz Theater because Mr. Metz was the owner of the property.

P: And he was a black man?

R: Yes. I think he originally opened it, Sam, and we took it over from him. I do not remember why we closed it. Mr. [Oscar] Thomas was one of my father's very best friends.

P: So your father was still living when you took over the movie theater?

R: Yes.

P: Tell me about Thomas.

R: Mr. Oscar Thomas and Dr. DePass were very good friends of my father. Dr. DePass built the one [a theater] on 5th Avenue. There is a barber shop downstairs. It used to be a two-story building. They signed the notes for my father at the bank so he could get the money to buy the equipment, and they stood behind him. Truthfully, because of them we were able to make a real good comeback.

P: What do you mean "a real good comeback"? From where?

R: My father had gone bankrupt but started making money because the theater business prospered. When World War II started my father had died right after that, and they held on to it. There was a Cuban family that lived with my folks, and they helped run it for my mother. When we got back [from the service] is when I took it over. Then I went to Washington and got a permit to build the old Rose Theater.

P: Why did you need to go to Washington to get that?

R: They did not allow any building of any sort unless you had a permit. You had to prove that it was necessary.

P: The war was still on?

R: The war was over, but the conditions were such that you just did not go out and say, "I am going to build a theater."

P: [There was a] shortage of construction material perhaps?

R: That is right. I remember I pleaded my case before the board. I told them I was one of four sons who served in World War II, and my mother had held onto this old building until I could get back home. They turned me down. I walked out of where we had the meeting and was walking down the hall, and here came this

man running. "We changed our minds. We are going to issue you a permit." So that saved the day.

P: So the Metz Theater became the Lincoln Theater?

R: No. The Metz Theater was closed forever and a day. The Lincoln Theater was the one Dr. DePass built so my father could have a theater.

P: DePass built the building?

R: Yes. It cost \$5,000 to build it, tin roof and all. Both of them went on a note for \$600. My father needed money for equipment.

P: So Dr. DePass owned the building, and your father rented it.

R: Yes, for \$75 a month.

P: And they supported your father's borrowing the money that he needed for the equipment, and the Rabinowitz family, then, began to prosper as a result of that.

R: That is right. I took over the buying and the booking of the films after the war was over.

P: You enjoyed that, did you not?

R: I did. It was a hassle with the company. It is an intricate business. You do not buy, you lease [films] for a certain number of days. It was easier then than it is today.

P: How much was admission?

R: Oh, that is another story. We started off at twenty-five cents. We were not doing worth a darn. I said to Pappa, "I think maybe we had better reduce the admission." We reduced it to fifteen cents, and they came in droves. We had stage shows and things that they used to call Midnight Ramble. When the stage show was over at around 11:00 or 12:00 at night, they would have the show, a little dirty and risque [performance], and people used to flock in there.

P: It was only black audiences?

R: Yes.

P: You had no seating in there for white spectators?

- R: No. At the Rose Theater we had an upstairs which had a window where you could look out, and some of our white friends came and watched it from there.
- P: I was up there once or twice, so I know exactly what you mean. [laughter] And the Rose Theater was named for your mother, Rose Rabinowitz.
- R: That is correct.
- P: By the way, when did Rabinowitz become Robbins?
- R: I was nineteen years old. My lawyer [William Watson] drew up the papers and took them over to Judge Adkins over in Starke.
- P: So it was an official name change, but your mother refused [to change her name].
- R: My father never did, either, but my brothers changed their names to Robbins, too. They did not go through the courts. [Irvin, however, went through the courts through Judge Perryman in Starke.] You really did not have to [go to court], but I wanted to, and I did.
- P: Your mother had no objections?
- R: No. When I started a band, Rabbit Rabinowitz would not have been very appealing unless maybe I was a classical violinist! [laughter]
- P: So it became Rabbit Robbins.
- R: That is correct.
- P: I know she [your mother] was always Rose Rabinowitz.
- R: And my father was David Rabinowitz.
- P: What did your father die of?
- R: Subacute bacteria endocarditis, the opposite of leukemia. Unfortunately, he died about six months to a year before penicillin came out, which would have cured it.
- P: You say he was a good friend of Oscar Thomas. Was that the Thomas Funeral Home?
- R: Yes, and the Thomas Hardware Store.

P: I wonder if it was through your father that Mr. Thomas gave the marble piece.

R: It might have been because of him.

P: That might have been the clue I have been looking for all these years!

R: They were very good friends, and so was Dr. DePass. Dr. DePass was our family doctor, and he did not charge if you came to see him. We paid him \$75 per year.

P: You had him on a retainer?

R: Yes. I think maybe all the Jewish families did. The Jewish men used to have poker games, and he was the only one that I know of of the Christian faith who ever came and played.

P: So Dr. DePass was also a social friend in addition to his professional relationship.

R: That is correct. Did we ever mention Abe Berlein's name?

P: No, we have not mentioned Abe Berlein. Tell me about him.

R: Oh, my lord. He is one of the originals. He was the wealthiest Jew in Gainesville. On South Main Street, where the Western Auto Supply store used to be, he had a livery stable there. He dealt in mules. That is where he made his money.

P: His name is on the plaque, I think. What about his wife?

R: I do not remember what her name was. She was a friend of ours. In fact, we bought some candle sticks for Shabbat from her for twenty-five dollars.

P: Why?

R: Well, she needed the money, I guess.

P: What about Berlein children?

R: She had to have children. Well, [even] they [the Berlein children] had to have children. I cannot think of the name of the guy. Oh, what a schmo! He just died a year or so ago. He lived over in Newberry.

P: I know who you are talking about: [Foster Kessler].

R: He was here in Gainesville and sold insurance. They were [later] farmers. They were the first Jewish farmers I ever knew.

P: You say he [Berlein] had money?

R: Yes, Abe Berlein had money.

P: The son's name [the man who lived in Newberry] was not Berlein, though.

R: No. They [Abe Berlein and his wife] had a daughter. It must have been his daughter, and she married this Kessler.

P: So the Kessler that we knew here that was indeed the schmo, Berlein was his grandfather.

R: Correct.

P: But the Berleins were living here when the Rabinowitzes arrived?

R: Yes.

P: And, as you say, they had a livery stable.

R: They had a livery stable and made a lot of money on it--a lot in those days, anyway.

P: Can you think of any other names that we may have forgotten? Maybe you and I need to go over and look at the plaque again.

R: I was going to say the plaque might give me some reminders.

P: I think we have pretty well gotten everybody that was among the original settlers here.

Rabbit, thank you for doing this interview. I think we have covered everything that needs to be covered in terms of the Jewish community. If we can think of any other names, I am going to come back and either get them in writing or I will bring the tape recorder and we will add it. Think about other names that we might have missed.

Who is this name that you are giving me now?

R: Annie Wertheim. She was Junie's grandmother.

P: She lived here in Gainesville?

R: Yes.

P: So the Wertheims are still another name that we need to add to this list.

R: They lived in one of those houses that the Stringfellows owned on Main Street.

P: Was there a Mr. Wertheim?

R: Yes, but I do not remember him. Maybe he died long before I was here. But I remember her.

P: Did they have a business in town?

R: That I do not know. The name just occurred to me.

P: Do you think that her name is on the plaque? Probably not.

R: No, I think she died before this. But it is one of the old names.

[End of the interview]