

Temple Israel Archives

Interview of Jed Dreifus

November 6, 2002

Page 1

MEMPHIS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SECOND INTERVIEW - JED DREIFUS

MLM: Today is Wednesday, November 6, 2002. I am May Lynn Mansbach and I am at the home of Jed Dreifus, 4827 Princeton Road, Memphis, TN, to interview Mr. Dreifus for the Oral History Project of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South. Your parents moved to Memphis in 1936. Do you know why they moved?

JD: Yes. My Father had been in the furniture business in Detroit for a long time. They knew they wanted to move away from Detroit - they really didn't like the terribly cold winters up there. He had a jewelry department in his furniture store and had learned something about how the jewelry business operates and he decided that he wanted to go into the jewelry business. He spent a year traveling all around the country looking at different cities to find a business opportunity where he thought it would be a good jewelry business. He settled on Memphis and came here in 1936 to open a jewelry business.

MLM: And it was primarily because of business opportunities?

JD: Yes and the fact that it was competitive factors - you know how much competition in the kind of business he wanted to be in.

MLM: So he then shifted from the furniture business to strictly the jewelry business? JD:

That 's right.

MLM: Do you remember the city as a young child when you moved here?

JD: I remember the parts we lived in. We lived in Hein Park and I went to Snowden School - pretty much around the corner from where we lived. I remember going to the YMCA downtown to play basketball.

MLM: How did you get to the YMCA?

JD: You mean how was I transported there?

MLM: Yes

JD: I don't remember - I may have been driven by my Mother or I may have taken a street car. I don't remember that for sure.

MLM: But the mobility around the city was safe and people moved around?

JD: Absolutely. In 1940 we moved from Hein Park to Waynoka where my parents lived for some 60 years. In Jr. High I went to Pentecost Garrison School, a private boys school. It was on Union Extended, almost down to Parkway. It may be the Teaching and Learning Academy in that same building. I used to ride my bicycle all the time. That was perfectly fine to do.

MLM: That was a big distance actually?

JD: A few miles.

PAGE 2

MLM: Back and forth, that was good exercise.

JD: You could ride back and forth and ride over the viaduct. It was perfectly safe to do. It was probably in 1940 to 42 or 43 - something in that time period.

MLM: You shifted from a public to a private school - from Snowden to the Pentecost Garrison Academy?

JD: Yes

MLM: Your parents shifted you - why did that happen?

JD: I wasn't doing particularly well at Snowden and I was really bored with it. I got into a modest amount of trouble and they thought I wasn't properly challenged there, which I guess was right though.

MLM: You found that you got the proper challenge and proper instruction at the private school?

JD: Yes, I think so. You know good academics and lots of athletics - which I remind my grandson at this age of all the things he does. I told him I didn't know if he considered that a great compliment.

MLM: Your grandson lives next door? How old is he?

JD: Yes, in the back yard. He's almost 15.

MLM: How long did you stay at Pentecost Garrison?

JD: For 3 years - that's as long as it went. It started earlier than I went there - but I only went through Jr. High School. Then I went away to Choate in Connecticut - that again was because my parents didn't think there was any high school in Memphis where I could get a good enough education. I don't know if they were right or wrong, but that was how they felt about it.

MLM: I wonder if that contributed any to your work form and your devotion to public education in Memphis as you've been very steadfast?

JD: I'm not sure that contributed to that really. I have mixed feelings about that 3 year experience. Educationally it was fine, but I think it was a tough time to be away from family. Jeanne and I discussed it over the years and thought we would only send a child away to prep school if we had a really difficult or unusual problem here. And we didn't so we didn't. We sent them all to a 5 or 6 week summer session which we thought was always great, but we never sent any of them away full time. The only time we really considered strongly was with daughter Emily who was a bussed child, first in Lester Jr. High and then in East High. There were some difficulties involved with that. We sent her up to Andover - I guess for a visit because I was friendly with the people who were running things there. It was clear they would have taken her for her senior year. She went up for a 4 day visit and came back after 3 days. She said it was a wonderful school and I'd have to do terribly hard work and I don't want to go because of all the honors I've got coming up for me as a senior. The most interesting thing about this is her attitude about the East High change that day because all of a sudden it was her choice and not our choice. She was much more accepting of the situation there.

PAGE 3

MLM: In the previous interview the question was asked if you had ever experienced any anti-Semitism or if you ever had any problems because you were Jewish when you were in any of the private schools or even later when you were in college?

JD: Well, I think I answered that before. In Elementary school some kid who I don't see as a man called me "a dirty Jew" and I took the appropriate opportunity to beat the hell out of him. That was at Snowden. At Pentecost I never had any problems, but it became interesting that in the 9th grade when the guys started getting involved in fraternities, they were doing things that I wasn't involved in doing - so I had some sense about that. At Choate I never experienced any anti-Semitism - there were very few Jewish kids there at that time. The only thing that I was aware of was that I was graduating, there was a senior honor given to the outstanding blah blah blah of the school. One of my faculty members, with whom I was very close, indicated that I had been nominated and he had pushed it and I didn't get it. He kind of said at that time that the faculty wouldn't vote for a Jewish kid to get it. That was the only experience that I remember from that.

MLM: In college and graduate school?

JD: I didn't run into anything. There I had a lot of Jewish friends and a number of good non-Jewish friends. My first roommate from Choate was not Jewish. I developed some very close friends who were not Jewish, but I also had a number who were and are Jewish.

MLM: Do you feel that being Jewish has ever hindered any of your achievements in any way?

JD: I don't think it has.

MLM: You mentioned in your previous interview that the directors of Camp Nebagamon were great influences in your life. What was it about them that was of great significance to you?

JD: That camp at Nebagamon was and continues to be a significant player in our lives. We have become very close to their successor and directors and are still very good friends today. We continue to be involved. In those early days. Muggs Lorber was the founder of the camp and I had much respect for him as a camper and then it changed when I became a counselor and saw him with different eyes and I didn't have as much respect.

MLM: You were a camper and a counselor?

JD: Right

MLM: Where is Nebagamon?

JD: Lake Nebagamon, Wisconsin, which is about 25 or 30 miles from Duluth, MN. It is in the northwest corner of Wisconsin.

MLM: At the time that you were a camper, they were very important to you?

JD : His wife Janet was important to me as a camper and as a counselor. She was at that stage in my life of the high status adult with whom I could relate. I remember she was an important adult in my life. We did have many conversations about things which were important to me at that time of my life. I was 16, 17, 18 years old.

PAGE 4

MLM: It was somebody a little bit objective from outside the family who was understanding?

JD: Right

MLM: That's wonderful - it's important. Jumping ahead- I'm really amplifying a lot of what was on an earlier interview. There is so much more to get into. You were in the jewelry business for 35 years after you graduated from Harvard Business School.

JD: Yes.

MLM: You went into your Dad's business - you took it over ultimately. What have you learned from your perspective as a businessman? Is it different from what you thought it might have been? Is there a business perspective? How has your perspective as a business man contributed to your personal philosophy?

JD: I was a businessman in downtown Memphis for most of my business career .from when I started until the early 80s. I was always downtown. Our corporate offices were above the downtown store - so I really had a major sense of downtown.

MLM: Where were you located?

JD: At 55 So. Main, which is on Main St, between Monroe & Union. I was never what I'd call "the business elite group". I was on the Chamber of Commerce but was not active in that and I didn't hobnob with who I would consider the business leaders of the community. Part of it goes back to the whole racial issue . We always did a large African American business. Particularly our downtown store, well over 1/2 of the business was African American. It's interesting and tragic how little respect African Americans were treated at our business and every other business initially. Never a courtesy title, for example, how we talked to people, how we sent out mail. It was well into the 60 's before there was ever a courtesy title in how we talked to people, how we sent out mail. That wasn't just for us - it was all over the city - there was no such thing as "Mr. & Mrs.". It 's terrible, but it was really the way it was. I just think I had some sense of that in those earlier years - of the disrespect. I don't know that I had any other answers to that particular problem.

MLM: Jed, would you say then that your experiences, your observation and your participation in business with a lot of African American customers led to your involvement in the Civil Rights Movement?

JD: Yes, part of it only - there were a lot of other things. Jeanne and I joined a group called "The Memphis Better Schools Committee" sometime in the 50's - shortly after we were back in Memphis. That was an integrated group that met at the Board of Education - there was virtually no place that an integrated group could meet in those years. The Board of Education and the YWCA I think were the only places in Memphis. We had some black friends then, with whom I'm still friends today. That had a lot to do with it. Then my Mother was always out prodding the community with all sorts of pre-civil rights activities. She was always a pusher in a sense on both my Father and me to have more community involvement in a lot of these areas.

MLM: This would be a good time to talk about some of activities that your Mother was involved in. Her name was Myra. Dreifus?

JD: Yes.

PAGE 5

MLM: She was very active in community affairs?

JD: Yes

MLM: What were her projects that were her accomplishments?

JD: I don't even know what they all were. She was very involved with The Mental Health Assn.

MLM: Was promoting the development of it and the funding of it?

JD: Yes. I don't really know any specifics.

MLM: Was this before or did she really develop it?

JD: I don't really know. You could ask my granddaughter who just was at Elmwood with her class and did some pre Elmwood work and my parents are buried at Elmwood Cemetery. Abby went to the library in the Memphis Room and looked up her great grandmother so she may know more of this than I do today.

MLM: That would be wonderful if she wrote a report on that.

JD: I haven't seen it yet.

MLM: If such a report exists, perhaps we'd be able to get a copy of it?

JD: I don't really know much of the specifics of that. I don't really remember. The thing that she was most well-known for was the school feeding program - The Fund for Needy School Children. She sort of got involved with that to begin with, with Frances Coe - a good friend of ours and who was a long time member of the Board of Education. Frances used to tell Mother that there were kids in school who didn't eat lunch and Mother didn't believe it. So she went to a school or two and saw what went on in the lunchroom. The kids with no lunches would put their heads down on the table while everybody else had lunch. She was appalled by this. She went to the Board of Education to try to do battle as she was wont to do and found a woman there who was in charge of that program who had lots of Federal money, but didn't choose to give it out because a parent smoked or a parent drank. She had all sorts of punitive reasons.

MLM: So she withheld from the children?

JD: From the school and the children because she didn't approve of such a thing - a terrible woman. So anyway Mother went into battle with her and the Board of Education and finally got those things broken down. I think E. C. Stimbert was the superintendent at the time. I don't know the timing of any of this - but late 60's I'd guess. Basically I would guess that somebody like Joyce Morrison would know the details of that better than I do. Joyce was active in that.

MLM: So your Mother was instrumental in getting the money released so that the hungry school children could eat?

JD: Yes and that would stop the terrible practices that she saw in the schools. That eventually went into a breakfast program as well, which I think still exists today in a number of schools. She got a group of volunteers who worked with her on that, but I think Joyce is probably the best person to fill in any details on that.

PAGE 6

MLM: So she helped with art and supported the Mental Health Assn. and the Fund for Needy School Children. Were there any of her organizations?

JD: I'm sure there were. I don't really much remember. She never was an organization person. She didn't choose to join existing organizations. She was much more anxious to go out and do things on her own - which is what she did.

MLM: She preferred to staff them?

JD: Things like the Catholic Jewish Women she choose not to get involved with because there were too many meetings or whatever.

MLM: Where do you think the interest in impetus came from - from her and perhaps you?

JD: Before we moved to Memphis she took a course or two in something called "The Merrill Palmer Institute" in Detroit and I think that got her interested in early childhood education - but that didn't mean as early as we now talk about it. She was interested in some of those things from her previous experience and she had a good friend in Detroit who was a social worker who may have been connected with that.

MLM: Does the Merrill Palmer Institute still exist today?

JD: I don't know. Then she came to Memphis with prior feelings about this and then she was appalled by the racial disparity that she saw when she came here. This was so evident in those early days. This was so evident in those days - for example—African Americans couldn't go to the movies - there was a special balcony where they could go. They couldn't go to the Zoo other than on Thursday, which was the maid's day off generally across the city. They had to go to the back of buses. They couldn't drink out of water fountains. The list goes on and on and she was just always appalled by that.

MLM: That was not true in Detroit?

JD: I assume that it wasn't in the same ways it was here. I'm sure there were a lot of discriminatory things. I don't think you saw signs that said "Whites only" in a lot of places.

MLM: Did your Mother's sensitivity to this and yours in your business lead you to understand the difficulty in race relations and the position of African Americans that led you to want to do something about it? You've been involved in a number of activities primarily in LeMoyne Owen?

JD: There were a lot of things before that. The things that got me involved were the black friends that we made. Early on Fred Davis was our good friend and he continues to be from the Memphis Better Schools committee. I remember him saying that my Mother's house was the first white house he'd ever been in. So that was early on and a lot of things that I'd done after that - especially from 1968 on. I think my relationship with Ben and Frances Hooks which was very close over many years and still is. I had friends who were in the Civil Rights Movement and who had experienced many of the indignities that we talk about. I think all of that helped me move to want to do some things in those areas. As I said on many occasions, I don't think there is an African American person my age who lived in Memphis who couldn't tell a personal story of indignities done to them.

PAGE7

MLM: Fortunately the situation is much better now largely thanks to people like you.

JD: Thanks a lot . I have a funny story to go in this. Althea Price, who was the wife of Hollis Price, who was the President of LeMoyne Owen College for many years, was a good friend of ours, as was he. She is a highly educated woman who came from New York State. She tells the story about being in Goldsmith' s Dept. Store and she was thirsty and here is a fountain that says "White Only". Well she didn't pay any attention to that. She got some water and a guard taps her on the shoulder and says "Girl, can't you read?". Then she turns to him and said " No *sir*, I never did I learn to read". That 's a funny story, but everyone has a personal story.

MLM: There are so many questions that come up from all this, but what do you think is the best method of leadership to improve the situation?

JD: There are a lot of things about the whole leadership area, but I have to go back a little bit. When we were growing up in the pre-Civil Rights era, I don't think any white Memphian knew any black Memphian other than their maid or their gas station attendant. I think white people didn't have any idea that there were educated articulate black people that they could get to know and talk with. I think that was one of the first things that had to happen - for people to have some contact . I think getting to know people on a personal basis is what enabled a lot of people to step into leadership roles. That would never have happened before. I think another thing is just the willingness and ability to speak out and take forthright positions. I felt very hampered in that when I was in business. My Mother used to push my Father and me to do certain things and we felt that we couldn't do it in a business that was appealing to the mass population - some of whom would have agreed and many of whom would have disagreed and we might have lost some important business. So we were always restrained about what we did. I think a lot of things that I have done have been quiet things that I thought that I could do in the context of the business I was in.

MLM: How long ago did you sell your business?

JD: 15 years ago. 1987.

MLM: So in a way that was liberating for your community involvement.

JD: Most of the things I was involved with I started long before that. For example, I want to be on the Memphis Board of Education. I really had a desire to do that - but I didn' t think I could take the posit ions that I thought I wanted to take - again because of the business stature - and then when the business stature was over, I thought I was too old to do that. I thought I was.

MLM: Do you think things are working now- that we've made enough progress?

JD: Never enough, but a lot. Things are very different than they were 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. But I think for a lot of African American people things are pretty good these days. But I think there is a large mass of people that have been totally unaffected by these good things. But I think there is still a huge number of very poor under-educated or uneducated African Americans in Memphis and for those folks I don't think things are any different. I don't think we've not made enough progress until we help those people to get significantly from where they are.

PAGE 8

MLM: How do you think that will come about or do you think we will ever be successful with the larger mass that remains?

JD: We may remove that larger mass - we may shrink it or reduce it. There are a lot of things that go on in the community. I think the early childhood initiative is tremendously important. I think education all along the line is very important. I think helping people find appropriate jobs is very important - but often that gets hung up with rules and restrictions that the people are limited in how they can do it.

MLM: So do you think that the main challenge that remains is to make a dent in the mass that remains?

JD: I think that is a huge part of it - but it's hard to do. You've got lot of poor people, angry people, people in jails, the problems are immense - look at the school statistics - the poor test scores - which goes back to the lack of parental involvement and to the schools themselves. There are a lot of factors in it. It's slow - awfully slow.

MLM: Do you think that LeMoyne Owen has played a role in helping this group?

JD: It has played a role, but not as large a role as I wish it had. LeMoyne Owen has a lot of first generation college students - the first people in their families ever to go to college. This is very important. Some of them come out well educated and able to assume an important position. But I think others don't. But I wish the school was stronger than it is. Unfortunately most of the community leaders went to LeMoyne Owen before colleges were integrated. You know we praise the Ben Hooks and Willie Herentons and a few other people, but they were pre college integration.

MLM: How do you think that has affected LeMoyne Owen?

JD: Do you mean the ability to get action ?

MLM: Yes

JD: That has hurt black schools all over the country because many of the people that would have gone there now for various reasons choose to go some place else - so they've lost a lot of their better schools. But most schools have all struggled financially - some of them are not coming back as strongly as they have.

MLM: Do you think that the position of the traditional historical black colleges, which LeMoyne Owen is, is analogous to the women's college? So many of the women's colleges have integrated and a few have remained steadfast saying that it is more important to have an option of an all female school. Do you think that analogous to an all black college?

JD: I think it is. I think it is perfectly appropriate to continue to have black colleges. Some of them are better integrated than others. LeMoyne is pretty well integrated with faculty and staff, although they are not very well integrated with students. It's open to white students, but they just don't have many who apply there. Some of the schools are more integrated than others. But I think it's appropriate to have black schools, just as they have women's schools and Catholic schools and Jewish schools. I think it's appropriate for these schools to continue to exist.

PAGE 9

MLM.: To offer the options?

JD: Yes. A lot of African Americans students need or choose this option because it is often a more caring opportunity and more nurturing situation and they are more comfortable than if they were in Memphis States of the world - The University of Memphis.

MLM: Especially if they are first generation and they are thrown into a competitive environment which they're not familiar with or used to,

JD: Competitive is part of it, but that isn't the major point that I'm making. It an environment that they are more comfortable with, an environment that they are more used to - it is primarily African American. It isn't as much the competition as it is a comforting or familiar situation.

MLM: How is LeMoyne Owen doing? Do you think they will be able to maintain LeMoyne Owen in Memphis?

JD: I think they will. LeMoyne Owen has had a lot of problems as you know and a lot of them have been well publicized. It's terribly underfunded. There are management issues. They have a new president - I'm no longer on the Board, but I hear he's doing fine and they're showing immediate successes, which I'm sure he's not responsible for, but he benefits from them .

MLM: You've been a long-time supporter of LeMoyne Owen - you've been on the board, you've been head of the board, chairman of the committees. You've helped it as long and as much as you can .

JD: I've been on the board for 19 years.

MLM: You're no longer on the board there, but are you still involved in your other interests? The Memphis Better Schools and Rotary and all that?

JD: The Memphis Better Schools - I don't know if it still even exists - I'm no longer involved with that. I'm still involved with Rotary. Rotary now runs one of the programs which I am most proud of which is something that was initially started by the Memphis volunteer placement program which is a program that Frances Hooks and I started in 1968. It has continued in one way or another up until the present time - not that organization anymore . One of the things we started in 1969 was sending kids from Carver initially to eastern prep schools for summer school. We had one child the first year, 5 the next year. That program has gone up and down, but Rotary now runs that - Carol Barnett runs it and does a wonderful job with that. They are now sending 60 students a summer away to these schools. Carol deserves the bulk of the credit for that, but she has made that program blossom. I still have some involvement with that. She runs it - no one else runs it. But I work a little bit on that.

MLM: 60 students from Memphis - that's wonderful.

JD: It is wonderful.

MLM: What proportion of those go away from Memphis area to college ?

JD : I don't know the proportions, but she just gave me a number yesterday in a brochure she had printed on this. It listed some of the schools the students are attending—the students had been in the prep schools the last few years—and it is all over the board, but it's all the eastern schools as well as everywhere else. They go to a lot of places.

PAGE10

MLM: That ' s wonderful. I know that a lot of institutions are very interested in having well prepared black students.

JD: One of the reasons that the prep schools have continued to work with us all these years is that ,_ essentially we have sent them good kids. We do a real reasonably good screening job - not as well as I wish we did, but they have primary successes with the kids we've sent. Not 100% - but mostly. If we sent them kids who give them a lot of trouble, they wouldn't keep coming back saying they want to take our kids and give them all these scholarships.

MLM: Is there anything about public education in Memphis or race relations that I haven' t asked you that you think is important to record?

JD : The other thing that I was involved which is interesting is what Ben Hooks and I started in 1968 which was a monthly breakfast meeting

MLM: Is that the Dialogue?

JD: Yes. We started that after Martin Luther King was assassinated and Ben was really the one who got the community leaders to come to it. Initially, we had the president of every bank, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, the Police Chief, the head of all the television stations and people of those kind of positions in the community. We would meet monthly for discussions . A lot of these people had never met each other before this began. We often would get to discuss everything that was going on in the city. I think that opened a lot of eyes and led people to begin to understand better and to know each other. Those meetings were all off the record and that was understood and the newspaper editors were there. Occasionally after a meeting there would be an editorial about some things that had come from the meeting that were never attributed to the meeting and that was fine. Those meetings have continued almost until now although the character of the people has changed We're not getting the big city leaders anymore . They have other things that they thought were more important to do - but we're still getting a broad cross section of the community. But it has existed in one form or another until the last year in one form or another and now there is some talk that the Chamber of Commerce is wanting to do them again. I don't know whether that will happen or not.

MLM: That is very important.

JD: I think it has been very important in the life of the city. It started in 1968 It was originally called "The Ben Hooks Discussion Group: It was changed to the "Thursday Morning Discussion Group". Over the years he often brought in people to talk about specific things, always with question time. In the beginning we just argued with each other primarily.

MLM: Ben Hooks has held many leadership position primarily in the African Black community.

JD: Do you want to hear some of them?

MLM: Yes.

JD: He is a Baptist minister and for many years he had a church in Memphis and a church in Detroit. I think he was the first black judge in Tennessee. He was appointed to the Federal Communications Commission in the early 70s and served a number of years there. He was the national head of the NAACP for many years.

PAGE 11

MLM: That's what people remember him most for and he's been very active in the local community.

JD: Yes, he's done all kinds of work.

MLM: How does the community that you grew up in differ from the community you live in now?

JD: Totally.

MLM: You talk about mainly from the race relations, but there may be other perspectives?

JD: I was thinking about mainly in our own lives than I was thinking of the broader community.

MLM: Could you describe the differences?

JD: One of the differences is the people we see and the people we are in contact with. Most of our friends in Memphis today did not grow up in Memphis - they came from various places. I have very little contact with any of the people I grew up. There is no reason, but I was away in school for 9 years in a row and kinda lost contact with the people I grew up with. By the time I came back I was married and somehow Jeanne and I didn't connect very well with the people I grew up with. We saw different people. All the racial items we've been talking about makes Memphis a very different kind of community.

MLM: The freedom to get out and roam around - I don't know if Memphis is very different from other cities in that regard at this point in time - 2002 - the safety of your children moving around the city - the ability to go and do what you want.

JD: It's all considered more dangerous today - we worry about where our kids might be. We considered Memphis a much safer community in the early years. I don't know whether integration has helped or hurt that. In the early years there was a black world and a white world and the two didn't mix very much. I think today many of our safety concerns we perceive as being caused by members of the black community. I'm sure that is overstated and I'm sure it's not as much as people think, but I think that is really a strong element to it. I think if an unknown African American knocks on our door, we're all very cautious.

MLM: For that matter there are more strangers around whether they are African American or someone from another community from another background - I'm thinking there are a lot of Hispanics in the city.

JD: I almost never see any one that is Hispanic- I hear people talk about how many there are - but other than an occasional soccer game for the kids I have very little contact with that community, but I know it exists.

MLM: I think Memphis may not be so different from other cities - life is little more dangerous that it was before.

JD: Yes, we all feel that or a lot of us anyway

PAGE 12

MLM: What about the Jewish community that you grew up in - how does that compare to the one you are part of today?

JD: When I grew up I had primarily Jewish friends - particularly in the elementary school - kids of my folk's friends. We had very little interaction with the official Jewish life - I went to Sunday School, I always hated it. I don't think anybody much liked the rabbi who was here when I was growing up.

MLM: Who was that?

JD: Rabbi Ettelson. I think he was a scholar, but he was not a rabbi that people warmed up to. We never had much connection with the Temple in those early days

MLM: How about the relations with other branches of Judaism?

JD: There was almost none. The Reform and the Orthodox were pretty segregated from each other. I knew from athletics one or two Orthodox kids, but we never interacted very much.

MLM: Jed, you said you see some difference in the generational practice of Judaism in your family. What would the differences be?

JD: Well, I see what's going on with my kids. My daughter Amy who lives here. I think she is somewhat more involved with the religious activities at Temple than we were then - certainly when we were growing up, but I think that that is possibly because the activities now are entirely different. Our son who lives in North Carolina is very interested in the Temple Synagogue, I think they call it. He's the treasurer of his Temple and I assume is on the Board and he generally will go to services over the weekend. Sometimes when he travels and goes to New York, he will go to a Saturday morning service, which was certainly different from what we grew up doing. Our daughter Emily, who lives in Needham, Mass., is involved in her synagogue. I think her husband, Mark, has been on the board. Emily has been very involved with selection of a new rabbi and on one of the committees at the Temple. I'm not sure which one. Our children play a more active role than we did. I'm not sure what our son Jonathan will do. His wife is not Jewish and they are about to have their first child. They have done a variety of things connected with Judaism. I haven't heard them say what they will do with their children.

MLM: Their method of observance has all come about on their own?

JD: I think so. They went to Sunday School here, but I think beyond that, it is certainly things they've done on their own. Going back to a related point, which is not related to this, but it's interesting to me. Although my folks never had much interest or contact with Temple, Jimmy and Helen Wax became close personal friends of theirs. They had a very warm relationship, but it really wasn't based on anything going on at Temple per se.

MLM: Jed, thank you very much for your interview.

JD: It's a pleasure.