

GERALD CONE

Interviewed by Jeannette Schreiber

December 6, 1995

JEWISH ARCHIVES PROJECT

Washington State Jewish Historical Society and  
Manuscripts & University Archives Division, University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

Interview with Gerald Cone, December 6, 1995. Interviewer: Jeannette Schreiber  
Tape 726A, side 1

SCHREIBER Let's begin with your father and how he to the United  
States and where he came from. ^

CONE Yeah. My father--his Russian name was Zamakowsky, Samuel (Sul),  
Zamakowsky. He was born in about 1880--we think 1880, give or take  
a little bit--it was 1880, in the town of Beldz, which was in  
Bessarabia. Bessarabia originally, or going back quite a number of  
years, had been Rumania; later it was taken over by Russia. The  
native language--the people there spoke Rumanian. Later, of course,  
they had to speak Russian when it was taken over by Russia. < ?  
Therefore my father spoke both. But actually Yiddish was his native  
language; all the Jewish people spoke Yiddish. He lived in Beldz,  
and recently when I was at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.,  
they had a list of all the communities in eastern Europe which were  
totally Jewish communities, which were totally extinguished during  
the German occupation, and I looked over the list and Beldz was  
included in it. I had never heard much of it, but my dad did  
mention the name. At any rate, when he lived there, in Bessarabia,  
which was then a province of Russia, he was of course eligible for  
the Russian draft. His mother died either in childbirth or very,  
very young. His father died when he was about eight or nine years  
old. He was raised by an older sister. The older sister married  
and her husband was a rope maker.

My dad then, at age--I guess age 18, whenever they became  
eligible for the draft, which I think was 18--he was drafted into

the Russian army and did not like it very much. It was not really a very pleasant life for anybody, but particularly for a Jewish draftee. He, in due time, was shipped out because at that time, which was about 1899 or 1900, there was a lot of friction and preparation underway for what later became the war between Russia and Japan, and at that time he was shipped out with the military shipment to Japan in preparation for that war. He already knew that he did not plan to stay in the army the full term. When they passed through the Suez Canal--my dad always had a very hazy idea of geography, but he knew when they passed through the Suez Canal that they were very close to Palestine, and he decided that he was going to jump off the ship as they passed through the Canal and make his way to Palestine. The Suez Canal was very narrow and the ship passes very close to the shore. At night he stood at the rail of the ship and gauged the distance from there to the shore. He could not swim--he had never learned to swim, and he debated long whether he should make the big jump from the railing of the ship onto the shore. As he used to tell it, he decided that it would take two jumps and he was not prepared to take that risk of making it in two jumps; and he let it go. Otherwise I think I would have been telling you this story in Israel instead. He did not jump because, as I say, he decided he wouldn't take two jumps.

He went on, and the next scheduled stop of the ship was at Colombo, which later--the name was later changed to Sri Lanka. It's known as Sri Lanka now. It was at Colombo, and he decided that he was going to jump ship, escape, desert, there at Sri Lanka--Ceylon, it was Ceylon then, and when the ship arrived there--he had decided

he was going to get off there--a quarantine was in effect and the ship didn't dock, so he couldn't get off there. The ship went on and it ultimately came to Shanghai. It also went to Tientsin and I'm not sure whether he deserted at Shanghai or at Tientsin, one or the other, but he had a long series of experiences then, because for the next several months he lived the life of a refugee, one step and sometimes half a step ahead of the authorities who were after him and other deserters, and if they had been caught, certainly life would not have been very pleasant for him.

He had a series of experiences there, and the one that led to our name. One morning the authorities rounded up a whole group of-- I won't say vagabonds--homeless people who were obviously refugees, were not established people there, and they lined them up for questioning as to their identity. I think they were Jewish, or they were largely Jewish. While he was waiting in line, wondering what he was going to tell them when they picked him, when they questioned him, a man--this was in Tientsin, I'm quite sure this was in Tientsin --a man, a total stranger, sidled up to him and in a semiwhisper said to him, "Your name is Solomon Cohen, you arrived this morning from Shanghai, second class," and the man disappeared. When my dad came to the head of the line, and they asked him, "Who are you?" and he said, "I am Solomon Cohen, I came this morning from Shanghai, second class," and the man looked up on his official records there and he saw that that was true, that a Solomon Cohen had arrived that morning from Shanghai, second class, and they told him, Go on your way. And he kept the name. He gave up the name. The name of Zamakowsky disappeared at that moment. When he came to

Seattle later on, my Aunt Semi, who became my Aunt Semi--my mother's sister--said, "At least if you're going to have the name 'Cohen', don't spell it the way everybody else does, spell it differently, spell it 'Cone'. So he said, Okay, it didn't make any difference to him, and he took that and that's how he got the name. 52.

There were many such stories connected with..., including one time when he again was apprehended by the authorities. Another time, my dad also was apprehended by one of the authorities who was identifying strangers, and he managed to convince him that he spoke only Rumanian, that he did not speak Russian and therefore could not be a deserter from the army because he did not even speak Russian. He convinced them that he was a Rumanian, that he had lost his passport, and that he was writing home for a copy. That was a consular official. That consular official wrote a letter certifying that my dad was a Rumanian citizen and he lost his passport and he was writing home for a copy and it would be back shortly. And my brother has that letter today. My dad kept the letter, and Mort and ..... have that letter now. ✓

SCHREIBER I'd like to make a copy of that.

CONE I should do that. I could get that.

SCHREIBER ...put it in the archives.

CONE I could get that, because little things like that saved his life, and probably saved the lives of many other people in similar situations. He could do that because, having been raised in a community that was perfectly bilingual--the natives all spoke Rumanian, but they had to also speak Russian--so he could speak ^

either language with equal fluency, having been raised where they spoke both.

He finally, finally realized that it was getting too hard to stay there and he stowed away on a ship, and he really was not sure where the ship was going, but it was coming to Seattle. After the ship had been out for a day or two he realized that he could not stay stowed away on it for a three-week's trip without food or water or anything, and he gave himself up, and of course they had to feed him and so on through the rest of the trip, but they kept him detained there--they were going to return him. So he decided that he had to sneak off the ship. It docked in Victoria first, and he tried and tried but could not get off. He was not able to make his way off the ship. So he stayed on and the next stop was Seattle, and here he managed to sneak his way off. So that's how he arrived in Seattle.

He arrived in Seattle knowing no English. I guess he had some coins. He had some money--not a lot, of course, but a little bit that he was able to make his way a little bit, and he often told the story that he went into a restaurant, and sat down at a lunch counter, and listened and the man next to him ordered hamburger, so he said to the waiter, "Hamburger," and for the next several days, or I don't know how long, he lived on hamburger, because that was the single word that he knew.

In those days, many European--young, Russian men were arriving in the city under a variety of circumstances, and my dad heard somebody, either in a restaurant or someplace--he heard a couple of men speaking Yiddish, and of course he was then able immediately to

establish identity with them. And they, one of them, invited him to come up to the shul. That was before Bikur Cholim but there was a shul, because this was--no, Bikur Cholim was already established, I believe, at that time. At any rate they went to the shul and, as I say, there were many Russian young men arriving, and one of the men there invited him to come to the house for a meal. That was the man--that man had, and I don't know whether this was by design or not, that he invited him to come to a meeting, but that man had five unmarried daughters. And my dad met one of them and ultimately--she was my mother. That was Rickles. That was Gerish and George Rickles. My dad was about 20, 20 or 21, it didn't matter. Going back--well, that's how he arrived here. He met, then, the Rickles and I believe his first job here--my uncle, Sam Mosler, owned a bakery at that time. He already had a bakery. They had been here a number of years before and he was established, and he had a bakery, and my dad's first job was driving a horse and wagon delivering bread for my uncle. The horse's name was Maud. He remembered it. The horse's name was Maud. He loved that horse. For some time that was his job, delivering bread. Later on he got started in other businesses, too. Essentially, that's how my dad came here.

My mother's family, which I'll just go over rather briefly because I think it is written down, but I think I'll go over it very briefly. My mother's father, Rickles, George Rickles, came from close to that area. It was the Ukraine and it may have been Bessarabia, I believe it was Bessrabria also. Bessarabia had a very big Jewish community. She tells a story that is really a very painful story. My mother told me this story; of course it was known

in the family. At the time that they were fleeing Russia, it was not legal for them to leave, and they had to hire a smuggler, a , a non-Jewish person of course. Did I tell you that? ^

SCHREIBER Do you remember the year?

CONE Just about. It would be about 1887, it may have been '86 or '87. I think that I can probably identify--get that year. They had to hire a smuggler, a goy, to use their expression, someone who lived around there, who knew the area well, to guide them across a very marshy area at night to get them out of there, across the border into-- where Poland, wherever the next country--I think it was over a river or certainly through a marshy area. My grandmother at that time had an infant child, and going through this marshy area at night, very fearful that the child would cry out and attract the attention of guards, and their life would be at risk, she held the baby to her, very closely to prevent the baby from crying out at night and giving them away. She held the baby through her . The guide who was taking them, the smuggler who was smuggling them across the border--many times they would betray people and take their money and then turn them in to the authorities. This man didn't, he was honest, decent, and he successfully guided them across and they arrived across the river the next morning, and she had held the baby to her so tight that she had smothered the baby and the baby died. ^

She had ten children and all the other nine grew to really long life, they were a long-lived family. My Aunt Esther just died at 101, and my mother was 86, and all of them lived long, except the one who died in infancy under those circumstances.



So they, then, came to this country. They came and she had, I would have to judge, she had three or four--no, she had five or six children at that time; the last two or three, the last three, I believe, were born in Seattle. I can check on that. P. Alan Rickles, my uncle, and my Aunt Esther who, as I say, just died at 101. P. Alan Rickles were born in Seattle. They came about 1887 or maybe '88. Seattle--Washington was not yet a state; Washington was still a territory. It was before the fire. And I am not sure exactly what in the world brought them to Seattle--it's a little bit vague. As I understand it, and I think I can check on this, my grandfather, that is, my mother's father, had a brother whom we never knew very well. It was either a brother or a cousin who had come to this country also, from the same area, of course, through New York. For some reason he came to Seattle and my grandfather and his wife, my grandmother, came to Seattle just because he was there, and he led the way and they came there.

Sp.

Their first home here was in the Green River valley, on a farm near where Kent or Auburn are now, maybe near Renton, but it was up the river, and one of my mother's earliest memories--that river used to flood very frequently, high floods. With dams it's under control now, but I remember even as a child when the Green River had disastrous floods. And one of my mother's earliest memories was of a man carrying her--she was a child, I suppose maybe three or four years old at the time--and he put her on his shoulders and he waded across the river. This memory stayed with my mother all the time, wading across the river on this man's shoulders. So that was in 18--that would have been about 1890, or early 1890s, '91 or '92,

somewhere in there, because she would have been possibly three or four or five years old. They settled. He became a founder of--he was one of the founders of Bikur Cholim. He was always active in the community. My grandmother was always active. Both of them were very active in the community. My mother--actually she was born in Europe, but she came here so young--she was about a year or a year and a half old--that she always felt that she was born in America. To her, she was born and raised.... She went to school here, through grammar school. They never went any farther than that because girls--most did not go through high school, but certainly girls didn't. She was starting to work. A little side light--after I got in the printing business she was telling me that her first job, one of her first jobs, was for a printing firm in Seattle, and she still remembers this--they were printing labels for cancer

, and her job was to count out--the sheets would come off the press and she would count them out before they delivered them to the customer. And what she remembers so clearly is that when they were supposed to deliver a thousand sheets, she was told to count to 950 and deliver that. She was told she always had to deliver short count. That's one of the things that stayed in her memory.

To go back, well, to start, I think that an interesting part is the life in Port Angeles. My father was always--he was an adventuresome person and always restless, and he changed businesses a number of times. In 1921--I was six years old, I was born in '15,--when I was six years old, he decided to move to Port Angeles and start a furniture store there. This was pretty far out for a Jewish family here in Seattle, or any place for that matter. So we

moved. We moved at that time to Port Angeles and I started first grade--well, actually I had started first grade in Seattle, but I changed in the middle of the year and finished first grade in Port Angeles. Port Angeles--you're familiar with where it is, it's up on the Straits and at that time it was about a six- or seven-hour trip from Seattle. It's faster now of course. At that time, the town had 10,000 people and it was a mill town. There were two main mills in the town--Zellerbach Paper, they made Kraft paper, and there was a big plywood mill, Peninsula Plywood, and they--I believe it was Peninsula Plywood, at any rate a plywood mill--and they were the main industries of the town. We moved there, and the town at that time had probably eight or ten Jewish families: Sol Levy--

SCHREIBER Already living there....

CONE Yes. Well, either they were already there or they came the same time we did, as a child. I don't remember specifically whether they were there just before us or just after us. They were there the same time we were. Yes. And I can quickly go over who they were.

SCHREIBER Sol Levy...

CONE Yeah, Sol Levy, his wife, Sadie--they came from England. All my parents generation who I knew came from Europe, and they came from England, and I was quite impressed with them, 'cause I didn't know any Jewish people who spoke with an English accent, and they did. It was pretty impressive to me [?born]. Sol Levy and his wife, Sadie, and they had two children, Leon and Sybil. Leon was the same age as me, and we were quite close all the time that we were there. Sol Levy and his brother-in-law, Meyer Cohen, and his wife, Clara, and they had two children, two sons.

SCHREIBER What were their occupations?

CONE Yeah, I was just going to come to that. I'll tell you. They had two sons, Sylvan and Leonard. Leonard became a dentist and Sylvan died some time ago. Leonard became a dentist here in Seattle. They operated--Sol Levy owned and operated, along with Meyer Cohen, two wholesale grocery firms. One was the Commission Company and one was Cash and Carry. They were both wholesale grocery firms and rather substantial and successful, and they lived there many years. I counted--I think they were there before we were there and they remained after we left, but ultimately they moved to Seattle where Leon became a dentist and I still see him from time to time. There also was another family, Al Lasky and his wife, Mildred, and their daughter, Sidell. And he operated a tobacco shop, well, a cigar stand--in those days cigar stands were more common than they are now--on the main street downtown on First, near Alder, near Lincoln Street, and he sold candy and sundries and tobacco and cigars and cigarettes and so on.

Let's see, oh, there was the Steinberg family, Sam Steinberg and his brother--I think his name was Sam. But anyway they were two brothers, and they operated a men's clothing store and they were the only ones who I knew of who were quite observant, and he was observant to the extent that he kept his store closed on Saturday, and opened on Sunday, and that was a real hardship because his--I mean a hardship--I say a hardship--it didn't hurt him any except this it did because his customers were mainly loggers who worked out in the camps during the week, and the only time they could come in to town was on the weekend. He was well known and he

was respected for his integrity and all, but he would not open the store on Saturdays. I remember my dad talking about it. My dad respected him for it but he would tell me how people would sometimes even call him at home and plead with him to come and open the store on Saturdays, and he never did, so he was able to maintain that, even in a small town. The rest of the Jewish community were not that observant. There were one or two more people--there was a dentist, Dr. Michaelson, and there was a--Michaelson--and Pearl, Moss Pearl operated a hotel on the corner of First and Lincoln and he had a daughter, Molly, who also was about the same age as I was. And there was another family by the name of Shore, and they had two sons. I didn't know them well. They moved away. And that was about the whole family--the whole Jewish community at that time. There was no organized Jewish community except that at the holidays, at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the small group of people, as small as they were, would hold services. The services were held in the Moose Hall--the Moose Temple, the Moose Hall--on Sixth and Lincoln. Their building is not there any more. None of these buildings are there any more, but it was at that time, of course. They would hold services, all day, on Yom Kippur, which was a real drag to us as children, but we did not stay there all day although we were supposed to put in an appearance, at least.

But then--let's see, I said we moved there in 1921 which we did, and we were there until 1925, and we moved back to Seattle and we were in Seattle until 1928. My dad had sold the business, but the person he bought it from was not successful with it--

SCHREIBER

You were in Port Angeles?

Sp.  
Moshe?

? sold it

CONE Port Angeles.

SCHREIBER Yeah. You said, "Seattle."

CONE Oh, I'm sorry. Well, we came back from Port Angeles to Seattle in 1925 because my father had sold the business in Port Angeles. We stayed here for three years. We lived here for three years on 31st Avenue, 538 31st Avenue. I forgot to tell you that our address in Port Angeles was 125 East 8th Street.

SCHREIBER [chuckle] Okay.

CONE I'm sure you'd be interested. Oh, yes, it was on the corner of 8th and Lincoln. Not only the house not there, the whole area's not there anymore, or scarcely, it's changed so.

Let's see. We came back to Seattle in 1938.

? from

SCHREIBER Before you get back--

CONE I'm sorry, 1928--I'm sorry, yes, what were you--

SCHREIBER Before you get back to Seattle, did you have any experiences with antisemitism, you or your family?

CONE Antisemitism was not bad but it was present. I say present...

SCHREIBER What form?

CONE You knew you were Jewish because other kids would sometimes make a remark or an observation about it, a Jewish--it was not bad. My dad and the other Jewish people operated businesses successfully. If there had been real antisemitism--I mean serious antisemitism--it would have interfered with their business. We never had anything like that. On the other hand, I would certainly say that it was known. Kids would make remarks, not viciously, I think. They would be repeating things they heard at home. Snide remarks are often--contemptuous remarks, but not vicious. It never bothered me and I

don't think bothered anybody seriously. Nevertheless, I would have to say, certainly, it was present. We were not excluded from anything, not from anything I know. Sol Levy was a very active, community-minded person, and one of the thing that he did--he founded the first Cub Scout pack or troop in United States. He had gone to Victoria and he had known somebody who--the Cub movement was just beginning, and he founded the first pack in the United States, which was in Port Angeles, and I of course--Leon and I were both members of it, so there was nothing; I mean, any organization that there was there, we were part of. We were not excluded from anything. On the other hand, if we had wanted to join the golf club there, I don't know whether we would have been excluded. That never would occur, have occurred in a hundred years to us, so I don't know. There might have been some exclusion there, but there was never anything--

SCHREIBER --anything, nothing hurtful.

CONE No, nothing hurtful, other than an occasional remark, which is kind of hurtful, but not seriously, nothing that I have any . . .

**[end of side 1]**

Tape 762A, side 2

CONE Yeah. During the three years that we had been back in Seattle from 1925 to 1928, I went to feyder here, the feyder was on 15th and Alder, and I was Bar Mitzvah, at Bikur Cholim. The rabbi was Winograd, Rabbi Winograd. The shamas was Doris, and we used to go down to the Collins play field. The biggest thing when we went to shul, when we were supposed to be in shul Saturday, was to go down

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to the Collins play field which was a block away and which was more attractive than the shul.

Well, we went back to Port Angeles. Then I was 13 years old and Sol Levy.... When I was growing up in Seattle, we had no--we were members of Bikur Cholim and we had no contact at all with Temple De Hirsch. We were the Reformed and were really quite a world apart from us. But when we were back in Port Angeles, Sol Levy was quite Reformed in contrast to us, and he knew Rabbi Koch at Temple De Hirsch, and so he made arrangements with Rabbi Koch to conduct a Sunday School, really a Sunday School in Port Angeles there, and there were about four students in it, Leon Levy, and myself. And Rabbi Koch sent Sol Levy materials and Leon and I prepared and all, and we were confirmed. We came down and we were confirmed at Temple De Hirsch. I guess I was 14 years old then and that would be 1929. But we were confirmed at Temple De Hirsch with Rabbi Koch. The rest of the Jewish community ultimately--all were people that we knew--as far as I know, all left Port Angeles. There are many more now there, but they are all new and so far as I know they don't have any connection with the Jewish community that I knew then.

One of the little memories that I have--I think I mentioned this to you but I can tell it again if you like--was of my dad always raised chickens, all the time that we were in Port Angeles and my dad--we always had a garden, not much of a garden, but he always raised chickens, and he always wanted to bring chickens down to my aunt in Seattle, but of course they would not accept them unless they were killed by the shorker; ritually slaughtered by the



shorker, so we had to bring them down alive. And that was always quite an experience. We had to bundle up the chickens, and I remember once, one got out. We were on the ferry and Lank was chasing the chicken around--a miserable experience, but we managed, we brought the chickens down alive, and my dad always had them caponized because he wanted them to be big and fat. So we brought chickens down. We raised Plymouth Rock chickens and Rhode Island Red chickens. Those are the big fat varieties, really the best roasting chickens. My dad looked with scorn on the white Leghorn chickens, which are the common chickens that the chicken ranchers raised. He considered them fit only for the goyim. I'm not sure he worded it that way but they were not fat enough and big enough. So we raised chickens all the time.

SP.

That was one of the--when I came home from school, every day coming home from school, there were two tasks that I had to do before I could do anything, before I could meet the other kids to play with at all. The first thing was to feed the chickens, and equally important with that was to chop wood and get the wood boxes in kitchen filled, because we never had electric power, any electric service or gas. We never had electric stoves then. I'm not sure if they were in yet then or not but I know that we didn't have any. But we had to chop kindling, had to chop three sizes of wood, and fill the three different boxes every day: kindling for the kitchen range, and then the pieces a couple of inches in diameter or so for burning in the kitchen range, and then the big pieces for the space heater that was in the . So feeding the chickens and chopping the wood were absolutely essential jobs. People don't have

A

much appreciation for jobs like that these days. The other one was to empty the pan of water under the ice box. My dad would usually do that or I would do it, but occasionally one of us would forget and the water would overflow and flow out over the kitchen floor, and I still remember how upset my mother was at the water flowing out over the kitchen floor if we had forgotten to empty the pan under the ice box.... Well, let's see, where can we go on from there...?

SCHREIBER So then you stayed in Seattle from when?

CONE 1925 to 1928

SCHREIBER And then...?

CONE Back in Port Angeles for two years and then back in Seattle again. Yeah, see in 1925, I was 10 years old, and my mother and dad were --they knew my Bar Mitzvah would be approaching and thought we ought to be back in Seattle. So we came back, but then, as I say, we had to move back again because the man who had bought my dad's business ultimately was not successful with it, and he had to take it back so we had to go back there. It entailed quite a bit of moving.

One of the things--one of the stories that I remember my mother telling me--when the first Sephardic Jews arrived in Seattle--the first ones to come were Ashkenazim. The Sephardic community first started coming a number of years later, and I think the first of them were in the early 1900s, and I know that--

SCHREIBER Very early, a few came.

CONE Maybe a few--

SCHREIBER But the bulk came after World War II, in 192--

CONE World War I

SCHREIBER After World War I, yeah, around 1920.

CONE When the first ones came, which may have been early 1900s, I don't know just when, and I know I have read about this before, but my mother told me the stories so vividly. The Jewish people who were here already were not at all sure about these newcomers. They were so different. The biggest difference was that they did not speak Yiddish, and even parts of their liturgy, songs, and food customs, very different--language different. They were not at all sure that they were Jewish. They had to satisfy themselves first. My mother said that my grandfather was one of those who was deeply puzzled, or a little bit bewildered by these people who were so different from them. There was some, of course, and we hear a great deal about this--there was friction between the communities to begin with and sometimes people now find that hard to understand. Looking back on it I don't find it that hard to understand. There was friction between the German communities, or the descendants of the Germans who were here, and the eastern European Jews who came then. We had --most of the people who I was friendly or close with did not have a great deal of contact with the others and there was--there was just a separation between the communities. There certainly was a separation between the Sephardic and the Ashkenazi communities to begin with, but over a period of time.... In our own family there was none. I had Sephardic friends, the Frankel brothers, Alhadeff brothers, and others who were just as close as anybody else. In our family, my mother would just not hear of any separation at all, but I know that it was, that there was in many cases. But that

diminished, it steadily diminished and, of course, in time disappeared.... Well, let's see....

SCHREIBER So when you came back in 1928, you came back (to) Seattle?

? from

CONE Yes.

SCHREIBER By that time you must have been in high school?

CONE Thirteen--I was 13.

SCHREIBER You were 13, so that's--no, but you said 14.

CONE I was--

SCHREIBER No, you were in Port Angeles.

CONE No, I'm sorry. We went back to Port Angeles for two years then, that's right. We lived in the Schloss apartments, 125 25th Avenue.

SCHREIBER Okay.

CONE [chuckle] 125-25th Avenue.

SCHREIBER All right.

CONE 25th and Cherry, that was.

SCHREIBER That was the heart of the Jewish...

CONE That's right. The three years previous that we lived there was at 538 31st Avenue, which was 31st and Cherry, and that was--there was quite a Jewish neighborhood, not Jewish in the sense that some eastern--there were some Jewish communities in the east which were almost entirely Jewish. It was not that heavily Jewish, but certainly quite heavily Jewish. Brenner's delicatessen, bakery, was on Cherry Street at 28th. Weinrod's grocery was on 30th and Cherry. There were other Jewish grocery stores, two or three in the area, so there was enough of a community--there was a fairly solid Jewish community in that area at that time. We all went to Garfield High School and Garfield was quite heavily Jewish, and also other

Sp

minorities. There were a good many--there weren't so many Chinese and Japanese, but there were some, and of course blacks, at that time Negroes. There were quite a few of them there. Garfield was really a melting-pot school, and an outstanding school, an exceptional school. There was no friction. Oh, (the talu(b)ah torah. Sp. was on 25th, 25th and Cherry, at the time. So that was the heart of the Jewish--the Jewish area had been 15th, 16th, and 17th and Yesler, and up to probably 20th, 23rd and Yesler, because there were many Jewish businesses in there. Brenner's, Litman's Bakery on 23rd, near Yesler--Brenner's originally had been on Yesler at about 16th or 17th--and other Jewish stores were all along Yesler in those several blocks. Bikur Cholim of course was built on 17th and Yesler. My uncle and aunt, the Moslers, who we were very, very close with, built two apartment houses. They owned two apartment houses on 15th and Yesler, on the corner of 15th and Yesler, and that was two blocks down the hill from the shul, which was on 17th and Yesler. They, my cousins Nate and George, all went to Pacific school which was just two blocks away from there, also on Yesler.

SCHREIBER That was the elementary school.

CONE Yes, yeah. My mother went to Old Central School, Old Central School, which was in the area where the Seattle Center now is. They had moved by that time. When she was small, when she was in grammar school, they lived in a house--I don't know the exact location of it, but it is probably--it was about where the Space Needle or those buildings in the Seattle Center. It was about where the Space Needle is now. But I never knew the house because 'cause it had gone before my time. But she went to the Central School which was

somewhere in that area, I don't know exactly. I'm not sure where the school was.

SCHREIBER out of the way places that she lived. ^

CONE I suppose it was, but that was very early. That's before they had moved to the Yesler Way. I don't know where they lived in the days before my dad came. I don't have any memory of that. The earliest house that I have a memory of was on 22nd just off of Yesler, 22nd just north of probably two or three houses, north of Yesler. All the Jewish people, practically all the Jewish people--they lived there. There also was of course a large Jewish community around Broadway High School, around what's now the Broadway area. Those were the earlier people, the wealthier, better established, and many of those houses are still ^

SCHREIBER So you graduated from Garfield.

CONE Yes.

SCHREIBER And after that?

CONE Let's see, that would be 1932. At that time my parents had moved to Tacoma. They moved to Tacoma in 1931, and I still had one year left. I was a junior at Garfield. I still had one year left and I didn't want to move to Tacoma. I really hated the--I had moved around a great deal. We had moved--I've skipped over a number of these, but we really moved. I had changed schools a great many times, and that last year of high school, I really did not want to move to Tacoma, so I lived with an aunt of mine, my Aunt Sophie Steiner, on 31st Avenue and, I lived with her for that year when I was a senior. Then in 1932 I graduated from Garfield. At that time my parents were living in Tacoma and they lived there for quite a

number of years. My dad operated a dress shop there, and later when I went over there to visit--but that was three years later--my brother had become very friendly with Floyd Lamton, and I was visiting my brother's friend, Floyd, at his house when I met his sister who was Molly. That was four years later, after that. Molly had been born and raised in Tacoma. But I rescued her from Tacoma. So after we were married we came back to Seattle. My parents stayed in--well, they didn't come back to Seattle, as I say my dad really

. They had come back to Seattle and lived here for a couple of years and then went back to Tacoma again. And then they had a house, and they lived in Tacoma until my dad died, and my dad died at age 76, 1956. And then my mother moved back to Seattle, and lived here until she died, which was--she lived until 19--'til she was 86.

SCHREIBER

ffinished high school. Did you take a job or go on?

CONE

No, I was at University. I went to University of Washington here from 1932 to 1936. I took a job and I worked for Green Winkler, a hotel- and restaurant-supply firm, until we were married--Molly and I were married--well, including a year after that, until 1939 when I went into the--was drafted into the Coast Guard. I went in the Coast Guard. I shouldn't say I was drafted. I knew I would be. I mean I was soon going to be drafted, and actually, I didn't wait; I volunteered. I knew by volunteering I would be able to choose the branch of service that I was in rather than being drafted and being sent. So I volunteered and I joined the Coast Guard, and that was 1940. Well, it was right after Pearl Harbor. I was still working

for the hotel and restaurant supply, and it was right-- Pearl Harbor was December 7th.

SCHREIBER December '41

CONE We're getting up to '41, that's right, because we were still living --Susan was born already at that time, and I joined the Coast Guard, and of all places that I was first dispatched to, I was sent to Port Angeles. And I was stationed for a year in Port Angeles. I was in the unit which patrolled the port, the harbor, and I lived in--we stayed in Port Angeles. Susan was six months old. She was born December twenty-second, 1941; we moved there in June of '42, and we were there for a year. I was in uniform, I was in the Coast Guard. Then, I was transferred to Tacoma, doing the same thing. That is, I was a member of a unit--at that time the Coast Guard had the responsibility of patrolling the harbor, to keep track of the movements of all the ships entering and leaving. So we had small boats and we kept all the information on ships entering and leaving the harbor. So then I was stationed in Tacoma, so I was in the Coast Guard through the war. My brother was in the Coast Guard, too. He became an executive officer aboard a ship, the Siam, patrolling the Aleutian Islands--very , very rugged duty, very stormy, very dangerous duty. He had gone to officer's training school. They sent him to officer's training school, he became a Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant--an Ensign, I mean. I'm sorry, he became an Ensign, and was executive officer aboard the Siam in the Aleutian Islands. And my mother did her share of worrying over that, because it was pretty isolated and the Japanese were all over --the Japanese had taken a couple of the islands there, I think, I



forget the names of them. Well, Sitka's the town, they had taken the farthest-out islands. The Aleutian Islands are a long string of islands and they took the first two of them, and my brother's ship was patrolling the rest of 'em. So, very stormy weather and almost in direct contact with the Japanese, so it was kind of rugged duty and we were all glad when the war ended with Japan.

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not in  
Aleutian.

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SCHREIBER When did you get into the printing ...?

CONE Right after the war, at the end of the war. At the end of the war, Molly had--Molly was very [?accomplished in] journalism already. She was editor of her paper in Tacoma, and we knew we didn't want to live in Tacoma, we wanted to come back to Seattle. And we got started in a small shop at 909 3rd Avenue. And it was just Molly and me that started with, and it grew from that. It was mimeographing and multigraphing at that time. And then the following year Gary was born, and about a year after that my brother joined me, and then he was with me all that time. And I had no background in the printing business at all. We really started in that primarily because Molly could write well, and we were interested in doing some advertising work where we could use her abilities, and I rather liked printing. I mean, although I had no background in it, I enjoyed it. And so it just seemed very natural to start it. It just seemed ... natural, so we did it.

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SCHREIBER That's a good reason.

CONE Well, yeah, I think other things might have also, but that one worked, yeah. And of course Gary is continuing in it now. Gary's doing fine now.

SCHREIBER So you stayed in the business until you retired.

CONE Yes.

SCHREIBER Okay. Now what about some of the community activities? Do you recall--aside from being president of Beth Am and AJC, were you involved in anything else?

CONE Community activities? I started the Viewer Swim Club.

SCHREIBER Okay, all right, the Viewer Swim Club.

CONE The Viewer Swim Club. Howard Angell was president of the View Ridge Community Club. There was a more active community club, and he needed some help writing a newsletter, so I volunteered--I helped him write a newsletter, and we kept up a newsletter for quite some time. One day, one Sunday afternoon, he was over at our house and I was remarking to him that the community was becoming better established now. There was not much--there aren't new things developing, and we don't need a newsletter so much any more. We decided, well, maybe we ought to start something new, and we kind of hashed it over for a while, and we thought of the idea of a swim club. So Howard Angell and I started it. We found the location down there. We got together, oh, a dozen people or so. I remember we solicited people for ten dollars the first day, just to put together a mailing and the first bit of information together, to gather people who were interested, and then we got together enough contributions to make a down payment on the property there, and we got the thing underway, and so that's what started the View Ridge Tennis--Swimming and Tennis Club. Yeah, I started that, and as you know, I was active in Beth Am.

One little memory that I have of the starting of Beth Am.... Before we started Beth Am, there was some suggestion of Temple De

Hirsch starting a branch in the north end. There was talk of it, or suggestion of it. Dorothy Saran was very interested in it at the time, and Dorothy Saran and I went to a board meeting of Temple De Hirsch, and I made a pitch. I made a presentation to their board, asking them if they would be interested in starting a branch in the north end. They took it under advisement, and they asked Dorothy and me to wait outside while they discussed it. So we did, and then we came back a little later, and they said that they had decided against it, that they were not interested in opening a branch, and so I sat--I remember I sat with Dorothy in the front lobby there, and I said, "Let's just call a meeting, and let's get started." So the first meeting we called was at Dorothy Saran's house. We had quite a group, all of us, and then--and we got started. And within a very short time Dorothy came to me one day and she said, "I just can't go on with this," she said, "I've been in Temple De Hirsch all my life, and," she said, "I just can't bring myself to leave it." So she dropped out, and their name is still on the list there, that list of that first group, the founding members. You'll see Dorothy and Marshall Saran on it. I don't think they ever came to the second meeting, or third meeting. They may have come to the first two. But she told me one day, she just can't go ahead with it. So they were on there. But that's what led to the beginning of--it was our little group, but you know--you're familiar with the group of people who used to meet Friday evenings. Then others came along. [Belle Ruth Witkin] was active at the very start, and others whom I'm sure you're familiar with.

SP.

I didn't become president the first year. Actually, I was not that--I enjoyed starting it, but I was not that interested in heading it, and I didn't think of myself as president of it. The first year, I forget who was president the first year Logan, then Kramer [?] Lutz was either the first year or second year, maybe the first .... Was he the first?

SCHREIBER He was the first year. I don't remember who was the second.

CONE And he was another one who was the first president but never stayed that active. At any rate....

SCHREIBER Were you on the board at any time?

CONE Oh, yes. Oh, yes, sure.

SCHREIBER You were active.

CONE Yeah, oh, I was on the board. Oh, absolutely. But then I became president either the third or fourth year somewhere. And we had had the rabbi who was the chaplain at Fort Lewis. We had--I think he was the first one. He was a chaplain at Fort Lewis, and he came in his spare time and worked with us, and he was quite fine. Then we had another man ...

SCHREIBER Zimmerman.

CONE Zimmerman, who later left and went to South Africa. He was first. Was he before the man from Fort Lewis?

SCHREIBER He was after.

CONE That's what I thought.

SCHREIBER The first full-time rabbi.

CONE He was the first full-time. He was here for what, perhaps a year, I don't--then Rabbi Oles who was here I think for two years.

SCHREIBER No, four.

CONE Four?! All right. He was here for four years. He left in 1962? I think '62.

SCHREIBER That's when Rabbi Hirsch--

CONE That's when Rabbi Hirsch--Rabbi Hirsch came not long . . .

**[end of tape]**

Tape 726B, side 1

SCHREIBER Okay, we'll continue.

CONE I was ... president, I guess, president ... chairman, I forget what the title was, of the northwest region of the Reform congregations, and we were having a conference in Seattle, and I was presiding at a meeting--I believe it was a Sunday morning--I'm quite sure it was a Sunday morning, and Morry Sherman came up to me. I was up at the head of the table there, the head table--Morry Sherman came up to me and whispered, he'd just heard about a rabbi in New Haven, Connecticut, who seemed interested, who might be interested in our offer. I remember, I said, "Great! Go call him, go call him up right now!" We were rather--I won't say desperate, but we were certainly anxious for a rabbi. I said, "Morry, call him up!" Morry went and called him up. And he came back to me. He interrupted me up there. I was sitting up there and he whispered to me again. He says, "I talked to the guy and he sounds pretty good, he sounds interested." I said, "Morry, go call him again! Talk to him! Tell him, let's make some arrangements for getting him out here!" There was not the whole formal--you know, the structure for selecting a rabbi then that we went through when we selected this rabbi. I said, "Call him up! Let's make some arrangements. We'll figure out

some arrangements to get him out here," which we did. Of course ultimately he came for an interview, and ultimately he came. I remember well that it was the year of the fair, because--the fair was on,

SCHREIBER The World's Fair.

CONE The World's Fair, which I think was '62.

SCHREIBER Yes.

CONE I think so.

SCHREIBER It was on for two years, wasn't it? '61 and '62.?

CONE I thought it was one year but I can't say for sure, but that was when Rabbi--

SCHREIBER Rabbi Hirsch came in '62, that I know.

CONE Well, Rabbi Oles--I don't think we were a year without a rabbi.

SCHREIBER No, no, he came--

CONE He came after, I know, but I don't think that there was any gap in between.

SCHREIBER Maybe just a summer.

CONE That's about--yeah, yeah. Other--at AJC of course, I was chairman of AJC for a year.

SCHREIBER You must have served on the board of that one, too.

CONE Oh, yes, I was on the board for many years, both before and after then. Oh, the other activities--I've been active in other activities, not Jewish.

SCHREIBER Yes, that's what I...

CONE All right. The Oenological Society, I was a founding member of the Oenological, the wine society, and that was founded 20 years ago, and I was a founding member there, and I was on the board for

probably ten years until just two or three years ago, and I just kind of tapered off. I was on the board and an officer in the Mycological Society, the mushroom society, for many years, and I was a vice president there, and was active for many years on the board there, so those two. I don't remember any other activities at the moment.

SCHREIBER Weren't you involved in Suquamish...?

CONE I was president, yeah, yes, I was on the board--well, we had a board--them. Actually, Molly was president there, but I was very--I was a leader, I was active. Oh, my goodness, come to think--I don't know how much of this you want--I've been on the board and president of our condominium association.

SCHREIBER So activity, organizational activity is sort of part of your life.

CONE To a degree, yeah.

SCHREIBER You take responsibility.

CONE To a degree, I--yes. We moved in the condo, and I was president three years later , and I'm still on the board and I'm very active there, and Molly is, too. ^

SCHREIBER Okay. Do you have any comments that you'd like to make in general about life, or the Jewish community, or anything at all? You have your opportunity now. Your philosophy about life, whatever, and if you don't want to say anything, that's okay, too.

CONE I feel very grateful. That's what I--I just feel deeply, deeply grateful. I think that not only the Jewish community but the advantages that we have been given, the opportunity to live in Seattle here, and to be able to take part in the community things that we have are wonderful, and it's the envy of most--I think would

be the envy of most of the people anywhere in the world, and I just feel deeply grateful every day of my life that I've been able to take at least as much part as I have, and to be able to continue as much as I have.

SCHREIBER     Okay.

**[end of tape]**