

**Oral History Interview of
Nathan Luger**

**Interviewed by: Robert Weaver
April 24, 2012
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*World War II Veteran Interviews/
Lubbock Jewish Community***

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Nathan Luger as he discusses his involvement with World War II, and his faith. In this interview Luger starts by describing his home and life in New York, then moves on to explain his service during World War II and the bombing of Japan. Luger then explains why he moved to Lubbock and discusses the Jewish Community in Lubbock. The interview ends with Nathan's second wife, Marci, recounting how she worked to feed the homeless in Lubbock.

Length of Interview: 01:05:45

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Introduction and background information	05	00:00:00
His involvement with the bombing of Japan	11	00:08:44
Traveling around for his job and living in Lubbock	18	00:18:44
The Jewish community in Lubbock	26	00:26:47
Prejudice he has faced for being Jewish, and his Jewish faith	36	00:38:30
How he felt about the Holocaust	42	00:45:18
Feeding the homeless	53	00:55:15

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Robert Weaver (RW):

This is Robert Weaver. Today's date is April 24, 2012, and I am here with Mr. Nat Luger, in Lubbock, Texas. And Mr. Luger, if I could get your date of birth?

Nathan Luger (NL):

My date of birth is May 27, 1919.

RW:

May 27, 1919.

NL:

That's correct.

RW:

Well, like I said, we're just—I'm just going to ask some questions and we'll talk a little bit. Trust me, this can pick people up across the room, but we'll put it there.

NL:

Oh okay. Okay. Well, I didn't know that.

RW:

So were you born in Lubbock?

NL:

No, I was born in New York City.

RW:

New York City?

NL:

Brooklyn, New York.

RW:

Wow.

NL:

I had a large family. We had twelve people to our family and at one time, when World War II—before it even started and later on—[phone rings].

RW:

That's all right.

NL:

That we had five brothers from our family in the service at one time. And I have a twin brother. He passed away.

RW:

What was his name?

NL:

Saul Luger.

RW:

Saul. Did he serve also?

NL:

Oh yes. Yes.

RW:

What branch?

NL:

He was in the army.

RW:

In the army?

NL:

Yeah, he was in the army.

RW:

So what did your parents do there?

NL:

Oh, they just lived in Brooklyn, New York. They came from—my parents came originally from Europe in the 1800s and started—they were immigrants to the United States, and eventually, they became citizens of the country.

RW:

What'd your dad do for a living?

NL:

Basically, real estate.

RW:

Real estate?

NL:

Yes.

RW:

Okay. And—well, let me see. Obviously, you're growing up there. Did you go all the way through school and everything there?

NL:

Yeah, I went to high school. Yes, went to high school. Went into service and served the country.

RW:

What year did you join the Air Force?

NL:

Well, actually, at the time, I was drafted into the army and I wasn't exactly delighted with the army. When the—the Air Force was kind of growing so it belonged to the army and so I switched over to the Air Force.

RW:

What are they called? The Army Air Corps, I guess?

NL:

Yes, the Army Air Corps. Yes, Army Air Corps. Right.

RW:

So how did you—you mentioned B-25s. How did you get into piloting? Or were you piloting? Or were you navigator?

NL:

No, I wasn't a pilot. I was a radioman gunner. We communicated in Morse code because Morse code travelled a lot further than the normal voice.

RW:

Really?

NL:

Oh yes. Yeah. So we—of course, when you fly, you're flying in large flights, so you're away from your base and the Morse code travelled further so that was our communications. And that's how I got into Air Force. I transferred over to the Air Force. They needed a radioman and I was a radioman. In fact, when I was first in the army, we communicated by flags, like they do on a ship. And then, we went to—from there, to we got radios and start using those.

RW:

When they drafted you, where did you first go for basic training?

NL:

Oh, I went to—somewhere—it's in New Jersey. I don't even remember the place now. I really don't remember exactly where it was, but it was someplace in New Jersey. And when I completed basic training, they sent us Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

RW:

Fort Bragg. That makes sense.

NL:

To get—to get into the—what do you call it? The artillery. To the—we were using seventy-five millimeter cannons. And I would help direct the fire of the cannons, the seventy-five millimeter cannon.

RW:

And is that what you didn't like about it? I mean, was it—why didn't you like what they had you doing then?

NL:

Well, I wasn't military-minded. [Laughter]

RW:

Were you trouble? Is that what you're saying?

NL:

Well, what—this is the funny part about it. When I was going—finished basic training, so I was assigned to this hundred and twelfth field artillery, HD. So I asked the sergeant, say, "Hey, serg—" That was just a buck private. I said, "Hey sergeant, what does HD stand for?" She says,

“That HD is horse-drawn.” [RW laughs] So I got into a horse-drawn World War I field artillery outfit. The hundred and twelfth field artillery.

RW:

Wow. [Laughs] How long did that last? Do you know if they—

NL:

I was in there about a year. And at which time, we went through about five or ten stampedes of the horses. So I didn't exactly fall in love with the horses because we—

RW:

Yeah. Not a lot of horses in Brooklyn.

NL:

We ate, and slept, and did everything with the horses. And it wasn't—for a little Brooklyn boy, New York boy, who never even saw a horse that was quite an experience.

RW:

How else was it different from growing up in the city?

NL:

Well, we was just out in the country. We sold them. We were out in the country. The only time we went in the country, normally, was for vacation from New York.

RW:

Well, when did—so when did you ship out?

NL:

Oh—well, I shipped out after—after I got training in the Air Force, we shipped out and ended up in the island of Attu, the Aleutian Islands. And we were there for over a year in combat duty. Of course, we were flying over the Bering Sea when we flew. We were on patrol—biggest part of the time, we were on patrol for enemy ships in the sea. And we flew about twenty-five or thirty feet over the water. You could see the propellers turning up the water as we were—how we flew most of our time.

RW:

Wow. [Laughs] I don't know if I could handle that.

NL:

The Bering Sea is—the weather there over the Bering Sea is the worst in the world.

RW:

Oh yeah. I imagine.

NL:

And so if you went down, you were going to die. That's all there is to it. And when the first—six months—well, about three or four months I was in the service, in the Air Force, a formation of graduates were just graduating from flight school. We were flying—they were flying a formation, and the leader of the flight said, "Get closer. Get closer." So one plane got so close, he sheared a plane—the tail off the plane in front of him and they crashed and all burned to death. That was my first experience with what we were going to be up against.

RW:

Oh wow. So that was early on in doing that?

NL:

Oh yes. Yeah. When we were first in training.

RW:

So how long were you over there?

NL:

Overseas?

RW:

Overseas.

NL:

Oh, about a year and a half.

RW:

It was about a year and a half?

NL:

Year and a half, yeah.

RW:

Up until the end of the war? Till '45, or?

NL:

Just about, yeah. And of course, we were stationed in that on an [0:08:40] island. When we got

back, they sent us to Atlantic City, right off the ocean. [Laughter]

RW:

So you mentioned something about bombing Japan, when we were talking a minute ago. So tell me something about that. What was the name that they gave you? You said—oh, you mentioned—anyways, tell me about it. I'm sorry. [Laughs]

NL:

Well, we were told that we were going to fly—drop bombs over Japan. But our planes, or B-25s were only limited in mileage and that was a whole lot further than our planes normally could fly because we didn't have enough fuel to go that far. So what they did—where they kept the bombs, what they call the Bombay Door, the Bombay area, where they kept the bombs, they took half of the Bombay area and filled it with a huge tank so we can have more gas. And then, they attached tanks on the wings. That when the tanks—those tanks we used up, just dropped in the ocean. And that gave us enough time—enough fuel to go to Japan, bomb it, and get back.

RW:

How'd they figure that out? [Laughs]

NL:

And don't forget, where we carry bombs on the wings, we carry bombs inside. And our B-25 was one of the few, we actually had a canon—B-75 cannon in the front. [RW laughs] That we did for target practice.

RW:

Oh wow. Well, I mean, was it successful? How many times did you run over the—

NL:

We only did it one time.

RW:

Just one time?

NL:

Over Japan. Yeah, one time.

RW:

How come only one time? Did they drop the bomb then, or—

NL:

Well, the reason we only did it one time was just, more or less, something experimental because it wasn't—never been done before so, and they didn't feel it was worth it to keep bombing no more bombs than you can carry, considering we had to carry so much fuel. So it really wasn't so successful, but it was an attempt to let them know that we could bomb them.

RW:

Sure, sure. Do you remember the name of the rest of your crew? Their names?

NL:

Oh, I don't remember their names. I have a short snorter with their names on it, but—if you want, I'll show it to you later.

RW:

Sure, sure. Please.

NL:

I'll show you that card, too, if you want to see it—"I bombed Japan" club.

RW:

Oh yeah. Yeah. [Laughs] There was an "I bombed Japan" club. Yeah. So I guess, you did that—

NL:

Cut that off for a minute. Cut that off.

RW:

Sure, sure. Yeah, just a second.

[Pause in recording]

NL:

In the newspaper, about us bombing. They had the one about Doolittle, who bombed off aircraft carrier. We bombed all the way from Lyon.

RW:

Why do you think it wasn't in the newspaper? Just to keep it secret?

NL:

Oh yeah. It was strictly secret. Yeah.

RW:

Well, when—

NL:

In fact, we—when we first got there, a Japanese plane flew a bomber. It wasn't—no, it must've been an observation plane, actually flew over at two, and we had the sirens going off and planes—our planes were taking off to go after it, but—

Marci (M):

Is that on?

RW:

It is now, yeah. But you can say whatever you want.

M:

Nat, did you tell him about a lot of your—in the Quonset huts, a lot of them didn't come back. You survived about three different rotations of people.

NL:

Oh yeah. So, see, we were in—I have pictures back in my collection of the pictures of those bomb—those Quonset hut—half-moon shaped huts. And I was in one of the huts with other crew members besides my crew. And it emptied out four times and I was the only one that survived. So it was amazing.

RW:

Yeah. Rough time, and I can't imagine. You know? I just—

NL:

No, you don't expect to come back alive. No, no. Oh no. You don't expect to. And the airman—now, the other Air Force guys didn't get what we got. We got a ration of two cartons of cigarettes, and a case of Coke once a month. That was our special deal we got.

RW:

I'll say. That was your hazard pay. Wow. Well, when—

NL:

Okay. You got the thing on? Okay.

RW:

Yeah, yeah. I got that part on there. So I guess when the war was wrapping up, well, I guess they

dropped the atomic bomb. Did y'all know that was going to happen? Or did you hear about that after the fact?

NL:

No. We didn't know about it until after it happened. Yeah.

RW:

How'd it feel when they did that?

NL:

Oh, we were delighted. [RW laughs] We were just really delighted. Oh, we were so glad. We were ready to get home, get this war over with.

RW:

So did they—you said they took you back to Atlantic City? Is that what you said? [Laughs]

NL:

Yeah. They took us to Atlantic. Now, Atlantic City, then, did not have gambling. So what we did, we'd—they'd put us up in fancy hotels, you know, after eating army—Air Force chow, boy we were treated like kings. At the hotel, food anytime you want. You could go dancing, do anything at the hotel. Well, our pastime was getting on the boardwalk and goo-goo the women going by. [Laughter]

RW:

I guess you missed those, too, right? Being out there on an island, you don't see a lot of girls. Well so, after that, I guess, they give you your papers? Or did you stay in the military?

NL:

Oh no. No. Well, actually, they sent us from there to Lubbock.

RW:

Oh. To Reese?

NL:

To Reese Base, yeah. To be discharged. And when we got to Reese, they had about probably at least a few hundred B-17s that they were—came back from warzone and they were preserving them to use in the future. Well after they got them all preserved, they went ahead and jumped them all out.

RW:

[Laughs] That's the military.

NL:

Oh yeah. Yeah. That's what they did. They jumped to where they scrapped them after they—

RW:

Well, so here at Reese, did you go back to New York? Or is that how you wound up in Lubbock?

NL:

Yeah, yeah. I was discharged, and went home. Well, actually, while I was here, I was courting a Tech girl, and ended up marrying her, and then took her to New York.

RW:

What was her name?

NL:

Connie.

RW:

Connie?

NL:

Connie.

M:

Edmonson. Connie Edmonson.

NL:

Yeah. Edmonson was her original name. Yeah. In fact, I have a picture of her here somewhere.

RW:

Well then that Foodarama thing?

M:

Uh-huh.

NL:

Let's see.

M:

But she was not—she didn't like New York. She longed for West Texas and country music.

RW:

It's a little bit different. [Laughs] [Papers shuffling]

NL:

The picture was here.

M:

I saw it while ago, honey.

NL:

Yeah, I know it was here.

RW:

Maybe this is it. Maybe it's upside down on this—is it in this one?

NL:

No.

M:

Yeah, it is. Right here, she is.

RW:

Is that her?

NL:

Yeah. That's my first wife. And we were married fifty years. She died just before our fiftieth anniversary.

RW:

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

NL:

She got pneumonia and last few days and that was it.

RW:

Well, so I heard just now that she wasn't fond of New York? Is that—

NL:

Yeah. I came home one day and she was in tears. I said, "What's the matter, honey?", "I'm lonesome." So I said, "Well, I'll tell you what you do. I'll buy you a ticket to go on a bus to your hometown, which is Loop, Texas. And if you think you'd rather live there, we'll move back." So that's what we did. After she came back, she said she'd rather live in Texas, so we moved to Texas.

RW:

Well what were you doing for a living in New York, when you got back?

NL:

Well—oh, I was just—got jobs at different places I could get.

RW:

Well when you—so you came out here. What year was that?

NL:

Oh, it was about 1950.

RW:

About '50?

NL:

Nineteen-fifty.

RW:

So what did you start doing for a living then, once you got out here? How did y'all figure that out?

NL:

Well, I just had different jobs, and eventually, I got to work for Toledo Scale Company.

RW:

Oh, that's right. Jane told me about that.

NL:

Yeah. And eventually, there was an opening in Amarillo, and I didn't get it, so I just decided to go into business with myself. That's what I did till I retired.

RW:

So was the weights and measures for a highway?

NL:

No, no. It was scales for grocery stores and butcher shops. So that's what I did until I retired.

M:

And Texas Tech.

RW:

And Texas Tech?

M:

Um-hm. He travelled to New Mexico, and you know, all around.

RW:

All over? Do you remember any stories from that time? I bet a lot of crazy things happened.

That's what I'm guessing.

NL:

Well, not anything special.

M:

The little motel that he stayed at in Clovis is still there, and he said that he'd paid six dollars a night. [RW laughs] And he stayed there so many times, he forgot to pay one time and he drove—

NL:

That was in Roswell, where I didn't pay and—

M:

And he drove all the way back and the guy said, "Oh, you can pay me next time. I'm not worried about it."

RW:

Roswell. Wow. My mom was born there so you probably drove right by their house.

NL:

Probably. I wouldn't be surprised, yeah.

RW:

My grandpa worked for Navajo—

NL:

Yeah. I did a lot of work in New Mexico. Yeah, I was licensed in New Mexico and in Texas. You had to be licensed to work on scales.

RW:

So how long did you do that? Did you say?

NL:

Oh, quite a long time. Probably, I'd say, about twenty years. Yeah, I was doing that for a long time.

RW:

Why did you stop?

NL:

Well, I just retired.

RW:

Oh, so you just retired?

M:

Well, no. The highway, Interstate 27, took his building.

NL:

Yeah. They—it was the first section of I-27 that my building was located on. I had my own building.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Yes. And that was the first section. And so, when they—when I—when they took my building, I decided it'd be time I'd quit. I was on about another year or so, and then decided, well it's time to take it easy.

RW:

Sure. Well how did that happen? I mean, how did they let you know when—

NL:

Oh, they let you know. They give you so much time to move your—to get out of your building because it became a part of imminent domain.

RW:

Imminent domain, yeah.

NL:

Right, so I decided, well it's time to quit.

RW:

Where was it located?

NL:

It was located right—not too far from the fairground in Lubbock.

RW:

Okay. So, right over there.

M:

A and one block—one block off of Broadway and A. Is that correct?

RW:

That's about where the interstate is.

NL:

Yeah, that's where it is. The first section.

RW:

Well, when—oh, go ahead.

NL:

They gave us—they didn't give us a very good deal for the businesses, the homes, the people who had homes in that area, they got a good deal. They got brand new homes from the old chunky homes that they were in. And I asked them, I said, "I don't want any money. All I want is another building like I got." They wouldn't do it. Said, "We don't do that. We just give you so much for your building and that's it." So I went to court and fought them. And I think they gave me a little more, and I didn't have a choice.

RW:

Well, when—and now, I've got a bunch of questions. I'll just go the way I'm thinking.

NL:

Okay.

RW:

So was your first wife Jewish?

NL:

No. No, no, no. No, she was Methodist.

RW:

I figured. Methodist? So when you moved out here, did—I know that was about '50, then there were definitely—the congregation was going pretty well and there were people—

NL:

Yeah. It was a small congregation.

RW:

Small, but they all knew one another.

NL:

Oh yes. Oh yeah. Sure.

RW:

And so did you sort of get right into that? Or did you stay with her?

NL:

Those were the days when downtown—when downtown was the center of the city. And cotton was ginned by hand. It wasn't—they didn't have machines then. And what they'd do, they'd bring Spanish people from Mexico to pull the cotton.

RW:

Oh yeah. The—what'd they call—the—

NL:

The truckload. They'd come in with truckloads.

RW:

Bracero. Braceros, I think.

NL:

Yeah. Well, we called wetbacks.

RW:

Yeah, yeah. But there was a program the government did to bring them all over.

NL:

No, no. The government didn't. That was private. No, no.

RW:

Oh, that was private?

NL:

The government didn't have anything to do with that. No, no. No, no. No, that was private. They would bring truckloads of Mexicans in to pull the cotton. And some of the Jewish stores that were downtown was Levine's. Of course, they're still there. Levine is still there. Then, I don't know if you remember, there was—Jerry Jarod had a shoe shop downtown. You probably didn't hear of him. Then, Bernie Barish [?] [0:23:05] had Buds Men Shop.

RW:

That one I knew. Yeah.

NL:

You knew Bernie Barish. Yeah. And Rosen—Rosen's had a wholesale drug outfit. They sole sundries. [RW laughs] They were all downtown. And of course, Skibell's had several stores downtown. Ladies—

RW:

They had a women's store, yeah.

NL:

Yes. Women's clothes.

RW:

Because I just talked with Bob Skibell the other day at his restaurant. He definitely wants me to go back there. He sold that restaurant on me. He gave me a free burger.

NL:

Oh, did he sell it? Did he sell the restaurant?

RW:

No, no. He was trying to sell me on it. He said, "Bring all your friends. Get everybody back." He's funny.

NL:

Oh yeah, sure.

M:

Gardski's, right?

RW:

Well, this one was. He's working—there's a place on 50th and Indiana now that he opened up because I guess he—

NL:

Oh. He opened up one on 50th and Indiana?

RW:

I guess he sold Gardski's, and—

NL:

Oh, he sold Gardski's? Oh, I didn't know that.

RW:

And now, there's a burger place. They just built that.

M:

Fiftieth and Indiana?

RW:

Across—there's a Greek place on one side, a light bite, or something like that. And right across—so it's right behind that tire store by Market Street, at 50th and Indiana. I forget—it's something-or-other grill.

M:

Oh okay. I didn't know that he had that.

RW:

Yeah. He just started it up and I had a good burger. [Laughs] I'll tell you that.

NL:

Okay. Yeah, I know. Real good.

RW:

But his family—yeah, Skibell's had that store.

NL:

Skibell will still tell y'all.

RW:

So did you run into them right away? Or how did you sort of get to know the community?

NL:

Well, I came to temple and met the local people. And come to services once in a while. And that's how I got to meet most of them. And when I was in the army—so I had a friend that blew the bugle. And once in a while, I'd ask him, "Hey, can I try blowing the bugle?" So I got where I could blow it. Not too well, but I could blow it. And then, when—one time, on the High Holidays, they always blow the shofar. So the rabbi went ahead—didn't have anybody to blow the shofar. So he got a record and played a record. And I walked up to the rabbi after the service was over. I said, "Rabbi, you know what? I think—I used to blow the bugle. I think I could learn to blow the shofar." So I practiced and after that, I blew the shofar for years.

RW:

Oh really? Every time?

NL:

Oh yes. I was the only shofar-blower we had, so I blew the shofar probably over thirty years.

RW:

Why did you stop? Just—

NL:

Well, I haven't stopped. I still blow it.

RW:

Still do it?

NL:

I blew it last year. Yeah, yeah.

RW:

Oh wow. I mean, I saw that in the newspaper, you know, but that was a few years back.

M:

And he's trained some younger people to blow it.

RW:

To do it?

NL:

Yeah. They always wanted a substitute in case I couldn't blow it. In case I kicked the bucket, they needed somebody to blow.

RW:

Well you never know. Maybe you were—well, you probably wouldn't be on vacation for most of that.

NL:

Oh no. Not during the High Holidays. No, you always try to—

RW:

Yeah. Not during the High Holidays. Yeah.

M:

He taught Kagen [?] [0:26:18] Luskey. And—

NL:

Yeah. Kagen [0:26:20] Luskey did a beautiful job. He was—they had Luskey's Western Wear.

RW:

Yeah, Luskey's Western Wear.

NL:

Yeah.

M:

And a little boy by the name of Berg. His last name is Berg. What's his first name? Little short—

NL:

Nathan.

M:

Nathan. No.

NL:

Berg. No—Gabriel.

M:

Gabriel. Gabriel.

NL:

Gabriel Nathan. Gabriel Nathan. He blew the shofar real well.

M:

And another young man. I don't know his name.

NL:

The other one I don't know, he's pretty new. Anyway, now, we have three shofar-blowers.

RW:

So, I guess, what—how was—what I am going to try to ask here? Was the community different then from now? I think it's—

NL:

Not very much. It got a little smaller. We don't have as many people. But it's pretty near the same. We still have Sunday school classes, and the rabbi conducts services most of the time on Friday night. And pretty—not too much difference, really.

RW:

So were you involved with any of the different sort of groups that were in there? There were all sorts of things?

NL:

Well, yeah. I was—I was treasurer of the temple at one time. And then, I taught Sunday school classes for about—I'd say about twenty years.

RW:

Oh wow.

NL:

Oh yeah.

RW:

Do you remember when you were treasurer? Was that early on?

NL:

Oh, probably about 1970.

RW:

Seventy?

NL:

Yeah. Treasurer at one time.

RW:

So were you, like, involved with—I don't know—B'nai B'rith? Or any of the other things that they had there?

NL:

Well, I was president of the B'nai B'rith.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Yeah. At one time.

RW:

What do you remember about that? You're the first person I've talked to who was actually involved. This is hard to track y'all down.

NL:

Well, I—what we try to do was to—well, we tried to volunteer our services to the mentally retarded people and it never worked out. They kind of gave us a runaround. And finally, I thought, to heck with them. We're not going to do anything over there. Evidently, they didn't want any do-gooders. [Laughter]

RW:

Wow. You remember what else y'all did there? Or what else the—

NL:

At the temple?

RW:

Um-hm.

NL:

Oh, just normal activities. Nothing extra special.

RW:

Now, when—

NL:

Oh. The other thing that I did for the temple is when we had Foodarama.

RW:

I was going to ask.

NL:

See, I was in the scale business and I had butcher supply stuff. And I would be the man that would slice up the salami, pastrami, and all of the sliced meats at my shop downtown, where I had my business.

RW:

Now, when did—when did Foodarama stop? It's not still going on. Right? I mean, it stopped a while—

NL:

No, no. It stopped, I'd say, about five years ago. Yeah, yeah.

RW:

About five years ago? Why did it—why did it wind down?

NL:

They just didn't get enough people interested in it.

RW:

Well, now I have a bunch of questions.

NL:

The way they did—

RW:

Yeah, go ahead.

NL:

At Foodarama, besides having the deli, they had home cooked foods, and cakes, and cookies, and all kinds of—

M:

Connie made pecan pies, you said. Made dozens of pecan pies.

NL:

Yeah, pecan pies. And they had chicken soup and all kinds of Jewish food. And we really—people would just wait for it. [RW laughs] They just couldn't—well, no kidding. We used to have a line out there for the food.

RW:

Oh really? [Laughs]

NL:

Great success. I don't know why they quit. I guess they just didn't get enough people to be interested in it.

RW:

I've seen the signup sheets and the lists that would go out. The sisterhood sent out a lot of things and I've seen them when I've been messing with those materials and they're just several pages. Everybody had to sign up to bring stuff.

NL:

Oh yeah.

RW:

Yeah. Well, it's—I'm going to jump back a little bit here. So the rabbi—who was rabbi when you got here? Do you recollect?

NL:

I'll tell you—I'll tell you something funny about one rabbi we had. This was really a dilly.

RW:

Sure. [Laughter]

NL:

We had—this was a young rabbi, just out of school. Hadn't been long, been out of school, because he was young and had a young wife. She was a gorgeous thing. And she had a little baby and she would take the baby and walk up and down the street. That was when the synagogue was on 26th Street and Avenue Q.

RW:

Avenue Q. Yes, that's right.

NL:

Yeah. And so she walked out and, of course, like any woman, she had short skirt and would just walk around in normal weather. Boy, the women would have a fit about it in the congregation. They didn't like it. They finally got rid of her because they had to get a different rabbi. [Laughter] They couldn't have the rabbi's wife walking down with short-short pants—short clothes on.

RW:

Was that—what? The fifties, then?

NL:

Yeah.

M:

Who was the rabbi when you came here?

NL:

Oh, I don't even remember who it was now. Anyway, what else?

RW:

Well, do you remember any of the other rabbis before Klein? Because he got—when he came around sixty-ish?

NL:

Oh yeah. It wasn't long. Well, they had one of them over here. They had—there's one that returned. This guy here. He retired. He was there.

RW:

That's right. Stein. Sherman Stein.

NL:

Yeah.

RW:

Do you remember when he retired? Was that right before Hollander came along? Or was it—

NL:

Oh no. No. He retired, I'd say, about 1980. Yeah, he retired in the eighties.

RW:

Well, what do you remember about Rabbi Klein?

NL:

Well—he had—I always remember that Rabbi Klein had a brilliant wife. She would always cracked him a few— [Laughter]

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Yeah. And she was very active in temple. You know, some of the women, the rabbi's wives, some were active and some weren't. And she was very active with her husband. But as far as the other ones, I don't remember their names now.

RW:

Well what else do you remember about Rabbi Klein? Because everybody talks about him and has their own sort of stories about him.

NL:

Oh, I don't have anything, you know, particular. The only thing I can remember about Rabbi Klein: he had—his sermons had to be at least forty-five minutes, regardless. And they tried to get him to cut—he was just, "I'm the rabbi and I'm going to give you a forty-five minute sermon. Take it or leave it." That was it.

RW:

[Laughs] Were they good, at least, most of the time?

NL:

Yeah. They were good sermons. They were good sermons. The only thing, we almost fell asleep.

RW:

[Laughs] Well, when—[laughs]—I'm sorry. When he—right after retired, a few years later, they started working on making that new building, the new synagogue.

NL:

Yeah, yeah. In fact, at one time, I had some bricks from the new synagogue. Yeah.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Yeah, I did. I probably even have one of them out there somewhere.

RW:

Well, were you involved with that at all?

NL:

No. No, I wasn't involved at all. No.

RW:

Because I know the Skibell's—

NL:

They had—it was just a board of directors that was involved. Yeah.

RW:

So—well, which building did you like more? Because I've heard a lot of opinions. A lot of people like the old one.

NL:

Well, no. I think the new building is fantastic. Oh yeah. The old building was just too—it was in a bad location. We didn't have any parking. That was one of the big—worst things. We didn't have any parking. And incidentally, when we had the temple downtown on Avenue Q and 26th, there was a little house next to it and the rabbi lived in that house next to the temple.

RW:

Is that still there?

NL:

I think that house is probably still there.

RW:

I bet it is. Everything else is. I live right over by there.

NL:

So the biggest problem, basically—the old one, the hall where we had all kinds of affairs was called Houseman Hall. And this new one is Felden [?] [0:34:55] Hall.

RW:

Why though? Why the different name?

NL:

Well, Mr. Felden donated quite a bit of money to have that built.

RW:

Sure. Well, so—so people moved over there. And I'm going to ask a bit of a tricky question now because I have to ask it. Around the time that Rabbi—was it Weisberg, I believe, was there, some people had issues with how things were being conducted and split off. Is that correct? I believe—

NL:

Well, there's always issues. There's always—I mean, they have issues with everything. You can't please—they say, "If you have five Jews, there'll be six opinions."

RW:

I've heard that, yeah.

NL:

Yeah. No, that's just normal with people. I think it's the same thing with—with Marci's church. Of course, she's Baptist. So you hear complaints over there, too. That's just normal. You can't please everybody if you stood on your head.

RW:

[Laughs] Well, I know Shine—Dr. ShHine, and Oozie Man [0:36:05], and that some others stopped attending for a while.

NL:

I don't remember Oozie Man [0:36:09].

RW:

But I mean, I've just heard the story.

NL:

Oh yeah. Well, it was—there was—they actually had another temple here at one time, but it didn't last very long. It lasted about three, four years.

RW:

Sure. Well, I mean, and I don't want to make you say stuff that you don't want to say. But how did people feel about that? Do you remember? Or did you have an opinion on it?

NL:

Well, they just weren't happy, and they just started another temple. I don't know what the hell all happened was. [RW laughs] But—listen, this same thing happened with her church, where they broke off and they started—some people left her church and they started a church somewhere else, so it happens in all religions. It's nothing new.

RW:

No, nothing new at all.

NL:

Oh yeah.

RW:

Now, where did—what's your congregation?

M:

Southcrest Baptist. We didn't split. We just asked our pastor to leave.

NL:

In fact, we both—we both sing in the Southcrest Baptist choir.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Yeah. She and I both sing there. Yes.

RW:

So do y'all do double duty? Do you go to both? Or how do y'all manage the—

NL:

We do. We go to both. Most of the time, she comes with me and I come with her occasionally. Of course, we—we're there almost every Sunday, just singing in the choir.

RW:

Sure. Yeah, I guess you have to be there for that.

NL:

Oh yeah. They're the greatest bunch of people you ever saw.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Oh yeah.

RW:

How is it—how is it different for you—or either of you? How are the two types of services different? I mean, obviously, you have Baptist and you have Jewish. But—

NL:

Well, we—how are the services different?

RW:

Sure. Or what differences do you see?

NL:

I think the only difference—basic difference is that they believe in Jesus and God. We just go straight to God. The Jewish people just go straight to God. That's the only real basic difference. Otherwise, the rest of the service is quite the same, really. Not that much difference.

RW:

Interesting.

NL:

And in fact, when Marci and I were courting, I got real sick and people from Southcrest Baptist Church came to my hospital to pray for me, so.

M:

Almost every day.

NL:

Yeah, almost every day. That's how wonderful the people are from there. Different religion, still—it was—and we—and at the time, Marci and I weren't even married. We were just courting. That's the kind of people they have at Southcrest Baptist. Wonderful, wonderful people.

RW:

Well, in Lubbock, have you felt like—because there aren't a lot of—aren't a lot of Jews here. So have you ever felt like—oh—

NL:

Any prejudice?

RW:

That you stood out? Prejudice, I guess?

NL:

Sometimes, once in a while. Nothing really serious. I think—and most of the time, they made remarks without even realizing it. I don't think it was deliberate. Because, like, one of the people of her church called me a heathen and I laughed.

M:

Oh, but that was in joke.

NL:

No, it wasn't in joke.

M:

Oh, yes it was. Well, I've called you a heathen sometimes and it's totally in joke.

NL:

Well you could call me anything you want. [RW laughs]

M:

Well, she definitely was joking.

NL:

Oh no. She wasn't joking. I think she was serious.

M:

Yeah, she was.

NL:

But I know she didn't mean a thing. No, very seldom.

RW:

Sure. So all of a sudden, I'm going to jump way back to New York, when you were growing up. So I guess, were you—was it in a large Jewish area?

NL:

I was from—oh yeah. They had—sure, they had definitely Jewish areas. And I came from a highly orthodox family. We were so orthodox that you couldn't even light the—turn on a switch to light the lights.

RW:

Oh, from Friday nights on? Wow.

NL:

We'd call a Gentile boy to come and put the lights on for us.

RW:

Really?

NL:

Oh yeah. And we were highly religious. We observed—you couldn't eat dairy foods—mixed dairy foods—with meat foods. You had separate dish—

M:

And Nat still does not eat dairy with meat. He's missing out on a lot.

RW:

Yeah, yeah.

NL:

Oh yeah. We were highly—we're supposed to pray three times a day, which we usually did. In fact, before I went to school, I used to have to put on _____ [0:40:31].

RW:

Really?

NL:

Oh yeah. And wear a robe under your clothes. A religious robe and all that stuff.

RW:

When you went to school?

NL:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

RW:

Now, did you go to just a regular school that everyone was going to? Or was it—

NL:

Oh yeah. We went to regular school. Then, after school, we'd go to Hebrew school.

RW:

Oh okay.

M:

Can I jump in here just for a second?

NL:

Sure.

RW:

Go ahead.

M:

Last—after the High Holidays last year, we went on a six week trip, driving trip, and so I drove to Brooklyn, over all the bridges, and they're about this big, and we found his first home. He remembers it as—it was a row house—he remembers it as being two stories and a basement, but if we had the right address, it's three stories and a basement. And then, we found his public school. In fact, I have pictures. And his next home, there was a grocery store in the bottom and then they lived upstairs and that has been done away with for—something else has been built there.

NL:

And the street had a trolley car.

RW:

Oh really?

NL:

Oh yeah, oh yeah.

M:

It's gone, it's gone.

RW:

Sure.

M:

But there is an above the ground train track that comes right over the property. Makes a little turn right there. So we had quite an experience finding where he—where his roots were.

RW:

Well, and so you lived in that house and you said you moved. Was it still in Brooklyn, where you moved?

M:

Uh-hm.

RW:

Why did you move? Do you remember?

M:

Well, my dad bought the property and so we moved from a rental property to a home.

M:

They also had a house in the Berkshire Mountains and we finally found that one day, but we couldn't—nothing but [crosstalk, 0:42:28]

NL:

We found the town, but we couldn't find the farm we were—that my dad had. We'd go up to the farm and stay there in the summer. When school was out.

RW:

Yeah. Was it a lot better than the city? I guess it was probably a lot cooler—cleaner.

NL:

Oh yeah. It was wonderful. It was in the mountains. It was terrific.

M:

Beautiful area.

NL:

And we had a little stream about—oh, about a half a mile from the house. We'd go down to the stream and fish, and swim, and all that. It was real nice. But we never could find it. Did we?

M:

Nat's very—I would still be there looking for it myself. I would've gone to the county seat and found out exactly where it was. But he's very impatient so we didn't find it.

RW:

Well it's there somewhere.

M:

Yeah, it's there somewhere.

RW:

Now we've got it on tape, so if distant relatives and something—they can come find it.

NL:

I'll tell you what Marci and I did, you wouldn't believe it. We drove to Alaska.

RW:

To Alaska?

NL:

We drove five hundred miles each way.

M:

Five thousand.

NL:

Five thousand miles?

RW:

Where to?

M:

Well, Nat said—

NL:

We went to Anchorage.

M:

We had a big birthday party for his ninetieth birthday. And he just mentioned to me, he said, “You know, there’s one thing I’d like to do before I’m gone, is I’d like to go back to Alaska.” So I thought, well shoot.

NL:

That’s where I served an awful lot.

RW:

Find a bearing, yeah.

M:

There’s no reason why we can’t go, you know? We have all the time in the world, so. He wanted, especially, to see Fairbanks because he left an old girlfriend up there, so. [RW laughs] She wasn’t there. [Laughter]

RW:

She wasn’t there anymore? Yeah.

M:

But then had been out there on a cruise ship and we had seen a couple of little towns that I’d like to see more of, you know, so we took our time and we drove out there.

RW:

Wow. Well, now, I’m—this always happens. I’ve got so many questions I think of. So I guess when you were going to school in New York, was it pretty common for there to be Jewish children there? I mean, I figured.

NL:

Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah. And even with—I’d say a third of the class were Jewish kids. They still observe Christmas, and serve Christmas candy, and had Christmas celebration.

M:

And we have a Christmas tree and we have a Hanukkah bush. We have a Menorah. When I was in Israel a few years ago, I brought back a Menorah.

RW:

Did y'all both go to Israel?

M:

He had been with his first wife and so no, it was just me.

NL:

I've been to Israel, yeah.

RW:

Sure.

NL:

When she goes to Israel, usually, she looks for those Christian antique places. Places where Christ was born and all that. And of course, I go to the Jewish area.

RW:

Sure. Well, so that brings up sort of an issue that I always have to ask about. Obviously, you were serving in the war, so you would've heard the stories about what was going on in Europe at the time with the Holocaust.

NL:

Oh, sure. Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

RW:

Do you remember what you heard about that? Or how you felt?

NL:

Well I felt terrible. Of course, for a long time, we didn't even know about it. Nobody even knew about it. It was kept pretty quiet. But then, when it broke out actually what was going on, it was shocking. And I'll tell you what, there were plenty of sympathizers for the Nazi—Nazi theory, here in the United States.

M:

I thought you told me that your mom and dad—that's how they got to America?

NL:

No, no. No, no.

M:

It was during the—

NL:

It was before that.

RW:

That was '30. I remember when this stuff—'33, probably, through '45.

NL:

Yeah, yeah. In the thirties, yeah. Late thirties, yeah.

RW:

Did you have—did you have family back there that y'all were related? Parents? Brothers and sisters? Or anything?

NL:

Probably—no, not brothers and sisters—but we probably may have had grandpas and other relatives we didn't even know about.

RW:

That you never knew about.

NL:

No, I didn't know anything about them.

RW:

So basically, all you did, if I understand, you just heard about it and, of course, got upset.

NL:

Yeah. Oh, certainly.

RW:

But it wasn't a big part of your life.

NL:

Yeah.

RW:

Well did people—you said that some people sympathized with it. Did people that you served with agree with that?

NL:

No, no, no.

RW:

But you ran into that?

NL:

Just some people—yeah—people we heard about.

RW:

Um-hm. Well, as far as, then, you know, shortly after that, people started working on founding the Jewish state of Israel. Did you contribute money to that? Or keep up with that? Or what do you remember about it?

NL:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Well, we even were told about Israel when we went to Hebrew school. I remember when I was a kid—I'll tell you why I remembered because they had a parade and we'd parade for Israel. Even when we were kids, we would go back to Israel. Of course, I never wanted to go back.

RW:

Sure, but that was a—so that was a dream, I guess, the people had?

NL:

Oh yeah. Years and years ago, yeah.

RW:

So how—when did y'all go over there? You and your first wife?

NL:

Well, we went there—I'd say in the seventies, yeah.

RW:

What do you remember about it? Anything—anything special?

NL:

Well, I was really amazed of the progress they had done in Israel. The beautiful homes they were building and the industry they were building. We were quite impressed, yes. Very impressed.

RW:

She's got several of these pictures that she's shuffling. I keep looking over.

NL:

Yeah, she's trying to find one of my—probably, where I used to go to school.

M:

If they were in order, it wouldn't be a problem, but as you see, they're not.

RW:

Well, that's—my job is putting those in order and sometimes, you just have to stop. [Laughs]

NL:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

RW:

Well—those are sort of the questions I had thought about, but have—in all this talking, have we stirred anything else up that you think you ought to share?

NL:

Oh, the only thing that really makes me wonder is why we have to have police guard over the temple when we have services.

M:

We have two policemen at Southcrest every Sunday morning.

NL:

But you don't see a police car there.

M:

Yes, you do. Yes, you do.

NL:

You do? Well I didn't notice it.

M:

Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

RW:

So how long has that been going on?

NL:

Quite a while.

M:

Ever since I've been going and that's been ten—

NL:

Yeah. Well since they built the temple—new temple—yeah.

M:

It's just for—

NL:

Safety's sake. Well, in other cities in the United States, there have been shootings and bombings of Jewish temples.

RW:

I just—I didn't know that that the police were—oh, we got a bunch of pictures now, photos. That that was going on. No one else had told me that. So I guess, so it is—

M:

Oh yeah.

RW:

People feel like it's just for safety just in case?

M:

He doesn't come in. He just sits in his car.

RW:

Sure.

M:

But I'm sure he's keeping close check on, "Are you members? Or are you just people dropping

in?" I've never seen him outside the car, so—but now, at my church, they come—they patrol the halls. And it's so bad that at my church, you have to—there's a buzzer at the doors. They keep the doors locked. You know, when the school kids—well, they keep the buzz—they keep the doors locked at all times, unless there's Sunday morning services. And you have to push a buzzer, and they look at you, and if they know you, they're going to let you in.

RW:

Why is that a problem there, do you think?

M:

Well, I don't know. Things are getting bad. So for the security of the people that work there and security of the children going to the school.

NL:

Well, there've been break-ins in different churches, sure.

M:

Oh, yes. Um-hm.

RW:

That's—I just didn't know that.

M:

Now, this is the school. It's called Public School 184.

RW:

One-eighty-four. Has it been there—

M:

And it's still—it was there when Nat started school, probably in 1925.

RW:

And it's still going strong then, right there. Wow.

M:

Um-hm.

RW:

I mean, it's kept up pretty well. As I assume, that's his old—

M:

This is the house. This is the house. Black people live there now. We just wanted to take pictures, but a black man was walking down the street and so I said, "Hi." Said, "We're not intruders. My husband lived here as a little boy." And so he said, "Well, I know that man." So he opened the gate and there's a basement down here. So he knocked on the door, and this man came to the door, and he looked like he was in pajamas. He invited us in, but I thought, Well, if he's in pajamas, I don't think I want to go in. And we just said, "No, no, no." We just told him why were there and so forth.

RW:

Did y'all—where did—what floor did y'all live on in that building?

NL:

First floor.

RW:

First floor?

NL:

Yeah, first floor. Here's a replica of my plane.

M:

Well, let's dust it while we've got it down.

RW:

[laughs] Since he's got it down here.

NL:

This piece was broke off. There's another piece supposed to be in the den there.

RW:

So a B-25?

NL:

B-25.

RW:

And then you said you were the radioman?

NL:

Radioman, yeah.

RW:

But you also had to gun?

NL:

Yeah. I managed the two guns—double guns, here, at the turret.

RW:

Up on the top of the plane there?

NL:

Yeah, yeah. And then, I—my radio was right over the wing, right here.

RW:

Well, do you remember—did you ever happen to open fire?

NL:

Well, of course.

RW:

I mean, so there were flights—fighters? That'd come in?

NL:

Yeah. Yeah, well we dropped bombs and we'd start machine gunning at—oh, anything we could see moving over there.

RW:

Sure.

NL:

Oh yeah.

RW:

Now, you mentioned that the radio, you had to do Morse code to communicate back.

NL:

Yes, yes.

RW:

But did—with—from plane to plane, the pilots used short radio?

NL:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah. Just regular short radio.

RW:

That's what I figured.

NL:

And usually, when you get in the enemy area, you don't use radios anyway. You got to shut all radios off, yeah, so they don't pick you up on the radar.

M:

Move it over here and I'll give it a little dust job.

RW:

And you said—what was your rank again?

NL:

Master Sergeant.

RW:

Master Sergeant?

NL:

That's as high as you can go in the enlistment.

RW:

Did you—do you know how many runs you went on? Just twenty?

NL:

Oh, we were on patrol almost every time we could fly. Every time the weather permitted, oh yeah. Of course, we were carrying the bombs to drop on the submarines and the enemy ships. Oh yeah. See, under here ____ [0:53:31]. Under here is where the—the little doors here, they open up to drop bombs.

RW:

Oh, the Bombay?

NL:

Yeah. Bombay door, yeah. I better—

M:

Is this piece not over there somewhere?

NL:

Yeah. It's over there somewhere.

M:

We need to put it—

NL:

It fell off. I've got to glue it back on.

M:

I wonder how that fell off.

NL:

Oh, that—when we had the birthday—

M:

Oh.

NL:

Remember when we gave to ____ [0:53:58]? They tried to a cake of an airplane [RW laughs] and it happened—it fell off. She broke it off.

M:

I didn't know that.

NL:

Yeah.

M:

Well, see, it's on the top shelf so it does not get dusted very often.

RW:

Sure, sure.

NL:

You think we covered about everything now?

RW:

Well those are the questions that I had. Was there anything else you could think of? You'll think of fifteen things after I walk out the door.

NL:

Oh yeah. Basically.

M:

Even though his wife was—she did convert to Judaism and they raised their children in the Jewish temple. His son was bar mitzvahed. The girls were not.

NL:

Those days, they didn't—girls didn't get—weren't bar mitzvahed at all.

RW:

Did they do anything? Like a confirmation?

NL:

Yes, they had confirmation.

RW:

Confirmation?

M:

The girls did? The girls?

NL:

No, just the boys. No, not the girls. Just the boys.

RW:

Just the boys? Okay.

NL:

Yeah, just the males.

M:

That's what I thought.

RW:

Because I talked with Sandi Lehman the other day and she—I think her children were able to, or somebody. But yeah. Before that, I think she said the same thing.

NL:

Well, I hope we've given you enough information to help you.

RW:

Oh yeah. Yeah, this is—I mean, we've gotten to talk for a good hour or more and that's good. And you know, if you think of other things—I'll go ahead and turn this off. Now, the one other thing—

NL:

You said you're going to give me your card.

RW:

Yeah, I've got it right here.

NL:

Oh okay. Good. I'll put it in my file.

RW:

And the one thing that—that I forgot to ask a while ago. So it was about getting in trouble for feeding the homeless, apparently—or notorious? I don't know. That's what Jane Weiner said. "Notorious for feeding the homeless." She was goofing around. But so how did this—how did y'all get started with this?

M:

Okay. When we were in Alaska, we were in terrible trouble one day. We were out of gas. We did not know where we were. It was dark. We knew we were close to water. We couldn't pull off to the side of the road because half the time—the water's right there. So, anyway, I was praying, Nat was praying. I mean, we were in terrible trouble. And God just saw us through it. It's a long story. But anyway, I had heard from a friend of mine. She said—at Christmastime, I had a lot of extra food, so I took my extra food down to the Civic Center and there's homeless people down there and I fed them. I thought—I'm like, By God, that's what I want to do. But I told the Lord, I said, "I don't want this to be real simple. I want it to be something that I am really giving to the homeless people. Well, we started out with eight people. So that was funding games. I mean, I had special desserts and things that they'd never had.

RW:

Do you remember what year that was, about?

M:

September of—this is '12. It was September, nine.

RW:

September '9?

M:

Um-hm. And so, we continued. Never had any trouble with anybody, except one man walked up one day and he said, "Y'all are causing a lot of trash down here." And I said, "No, we're not." I said, "Here's these plastic sacks. We pick up all the trash." And he said, "Well, look at these cigarette butts." I said, "My people didn't do this." I said, "But if it'll make you happy, I'll bring a broom and I'll sweep it next week." "Oh, no, no, no, no." That's the only trouble that we ever had with the city until—we knew that they were closing down over by the Civic Center, so we thought, Well, we'll just find a different park. I mean, a park should be sufficient. And we found this park, Overton Park, at 14th and Avenue T, and it has a gazebo, and it has some picnic tables, and it's nice. And so we started feeding over there and one day, two men from the city walked in and they said, "Who's in charge here? What organization do you represent?" And I said, "Well, we don't." I said, "I started this and so I guess I'm in charge." And he said, "Where's your city permit?" I said, "I don't have a city permit." And so some of the homeless ran over to Carpenter Church, and got Bryan over there to call the *Avalanche Journal*, and calls the news stations. And I mean, here they were. And they were accusing us that we might poison the homeless. You know, just all these sort of things. And so it just got into—the homeless, they got a little bit unruly and I wasn't too happy. And so we went ahead and fed them, and the news media was still there when we got through feeding them. And so, that afternoon, I had two lawyers call me and I said, "Oh, I don't need represent—" Todd Klein called me and he said, "We would like for you to meet with city council members on a following Thursday." And I said, "Yes, I'll be there." Nat didn't want any part of it because he thinks that whatever the city says, they're in the right and I should abide by them.

RW:

Was he out there helping you with it, though? Giving those things out?

M:

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. He's always helped me. I mean, we have pots this big, we have roasters. I cooked every bit of the food here in my kitchen, and had been doing it for a long time. And so, I got—the phone never quit ringing with people that wanted to take over the cooking for me. The financial burden was mine. A couple of churches called and offered their kitchen for me to cook

in, but it's too much trouble. I've already bought the food, I've brought it home, I've froze it. To take it out, and take it to somebody else to cook, and then repackage it, and take it down there, it's too much trouble. So Alex Scarborough called me and I've known Alex since—my daughter and—they went to school together. And he said, "I'm going to have a church-wide—not a church-wide—a park-wide potluck." So in the meantime, I had met with city council and I felt very intimidated because there was Todd Klein there and there was—Hernandez was there and then the city attorney was there and I felt a little intimidated. So by the time that was over—I stood my ground. I said, "I'm not quitting. There's just—these people need my food. They're very hungry. They don't get a Sunday night meal. They don't get a Monday morning meal. And by Monday, at noon, they're very hungry." And so two lawyers had called me, offering their services pro bono. And so, I said, "Yes, you can go with me to the next." Well, Todd Klein, as much as I like him, he completely fold up his briefcase. He did not feel like that he wanted to discuss this in front of the lawyers. And he said, "Marci, could we dismiss the lawyers and you and I work this out on our own?" And I said, "No." I said, "I'm not comfortable with that. Not as far as it's gone." So he offered me the option of going with the Bridge of Lubbock to provide the food, cook it in their kitchen—their sanitary kitchen, authorized kitchen. And at first, I said no. I said, "I will buy the food from Sam's. It will be premade. It will not come out of my kitchen." And that rocked on for a couple of weeks, but then, I decided that—I went and talked with the Bridge of Lubbock. And by the way, I do have help from my Sunday school class members. They come and help me serve. They do not—they did not help me cook. Well, anyway, where was I? So we put up a sign. It had to have a sign saying that, "This food has been cooked in an unauthorized kitchen, so you're eating it at your own free will." Then, I decided Nat and I are getting a lot older, and so we decided that—

RW:

This is for youths with the horn? I'm sorry. [Laughs]

NL:

Usually when we say prayers over the Torah, we always we wear a ____ [1:02:34].

RW:

____? [1:02:36]

NL:

____ [1:02:37].

M:

So we decided that I do give them a donation every month and they cook the food. It's not the same food. It's—not the food that I cooked. I'll just put it that way. At one time, I fed seventy-eight people.

RW:

But you're still able to do it?

M:

We do it every week. Every Monday.

RW:

Every week?

M:

Every Monday.

RW:

That's what I thought.

M:

Every Monday, um-hm.

RW:

So has the—the heat sort of died down on it?

M:

Oh yeah. They've never bothered us again. I mean, I think they bit into something they wished that they had never—

RW:

It doesn't make a lot of sense to fight that—a good thing, I guess.

M:

No, no. These people eat out of the trashcan. But I think that, you know, maybe God led us to have this come in our way to be able to slow down. The Bridge, sometimes, does not cook a meal after a holiday. And of course, I feed on Monday, so that's the problem. So Nat and I did prepare a meal, and Nat has broke two bones in his left arm, so we were both carrying a pot of wieners and some of the hot water spilt out on my hand. Of course, I hollered and dropped the pot. Of course, there went the wienies. And so right then was our decision that no matter what, we cannot try it anymore. We just absolutely cannot do it from my home. So we completely depend on the Bridge of Lubbock. The food is adequate. It's—well, I better hush. I better not say anything.

RW:

Well, I mean, some food's better than nothing. I mean, it seems like a good cause and it's an interesting story.

M:

It's—it's—it fills the belly. And we also—I can ask for jeans and each one of them can give you their size, you know? And I can pretty much—people in my Sunday school class have donated brand new jeans from Sam's. And one guy, I had—has long legs—I had to go to Gebo's to get him some thirty dollar jeans, which I wasn't anticipating. But anyway, we have—I take clothes from everybody that gives me clothes. I've got a suitcase out there right now to take next Monday. And you know, God has just really provided for us. He just—and you know, God has made us healthy enough that we can still continue to do this and that's—because we're not young spring chickens. [RW laughs] For sure.

NL:

Talk for yourself.

M:

Well. [Laughter] The doctor told me this morning I need a knee replacement, so, you know—I'm hoping—

NL:

Told me I need a hip replacement, but I'm not going to get one.

M:

Well, you know, as long as they make things to keep you out of pain, we'll be okay.

RW:

Um-hm. Well thanks for sharing that part of it, too. Actually, thanks for letting me into your house to do this in the first place. Y'all didn't have to.

M:

Nat's been looking forward to this. He really has.

RW:

Go ahead and—

End of Recording