

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project

Jules Feinberg

Interviewed by Kris Katrosh

January 28, 2009

El Dorado, Arkansas

Objective

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The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

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**Kris Katrosh interviewed Jules Feinberg on January 28, 2009,
in El Dorado, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Kris Katrosh: Okay, we're gonna start with—uh—the verbal business now. If you would, please state and spell your name for us.

Jules Feinberg: I'm—uh—J. R.—Julius Feinberg, spelled *F* as in Frank—*E-I-N-B-E-R-G*.

KK: Right. And—uh—first name's Jules?

JF: Julius is my name, but I am known as Jules.

KK: And your middle name?

JF: Reiner.

KK: How do you spell that?

JF: *R-E-I-N-E-R*.

KK: Okay, and that's a family name?

JF: Yes, that's my mother's maiden name.

KK: Oh, good. Yeah.

Trey Marley: Can we—can we stop just one second? Um . . .

KK: All right.

[Tape stopped]

[00:00:44] KK: Okay, so when were you born?

JF: I was born on December 25 in 1921.

KK: Right on Christmas Day.

JF: Well, that's what they tell me. [KK *Laughs*] And it was kinda interesting, 'cause my parents were married on Christmas Day, but it was a year previous.

KK: Wow. Your parents had some timing, didn't they?

JF: Right.

[00:01:11] KK: [*Laughs*] And where were you born?

JF: In a—a community called Kerhonkson in upper New York State. It's in Ulster County about a hundred miles north of New York City. And it's at the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains. It's called—the mountains there are called the Shawanga Mountains, and don't ask me to spell that. [KK *laughs*] But—uh—this—uh—community is in a—in a valley, a interesting community in that—uh—at one time it was called Middle Port because it was on the canal.

KK: Hmm.

JF: I don't know if you know your history, but at one time canals were quite popular in that part of the country, and this canal later was replaced by the railroad that used the same [*tapping sound*] right of way.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JF: And—uh—my grandfather, Isaac Reiner, operated a bakery.

KK: Is it Isaac Reiner?

JF: Isaac Reiner . . .

KK: Uh-huh.

JF: . . . operated a bakery in Kerhonkson, and I was born in that building upstairs over the bakery.

[00:02:43] KK: It was very common in those days for shop owners to have their residences above their shops, wasn't it?

JF: Right. That's correct.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JF: And that—uh—bakery was there for many years. It's not there any longer because the community basically has been abandoned. Actually it's moved. There's a creek that runs through the town called the Rondout Creek, which emptied into the Hudson River at Kingston, New York, which is the county seat. And—uh . . .

[00:03:31] KK: So the town kinda moved over—kinda dissolved and moved over.

JF: Well, it crossed a creek because—uh—a new highway was . . .

KK: Oh.

JF: . . . put through—a state highway—and the bank moved over there, and eventually everything moved there pretty much, and the—the site where the bakery was has been leveled and—uh—

as have—uh—most of the buildings have disappeared . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JF: . . . from the original site of Kerhonkson.

[00:04:06] KK: So what were your parents' names?

JF: My father's name was Abraham, better known as Abe. And—uh—my mother—name was Rebecca.

KK: What was her maiden name?

JF: Reiner.

KK: Oh, okay. Gotcha, of course. You told me that.

JF: Now my father had an interesting history in that he [*tapping sound*] left what was czarist Russia in 1912 and came to the United States to avoid being drafted into the czarist army, who, in those days—the way I understand it, they'd conscript—conscripted the Jewish youths for lifetime service in the army.

KK: Wow.

JF: And he left his sis—his oldest sister, [*tapping sound*] Jenny—my Aunt Jenny—had preceded him to the United States, and she kinda was the head of the family because his father had died when he was young. She—she managed to bring him to the country—to this country, and—uh—no sooner did he get here—avoiding the Russian Army, he was drafted into the American army. [*KK laughs*] This was in 1912. And the reason I know the

date so well is I have a copy of his original ship's ticket, and it was issued by the North German Lloyd. He left from Bremen, Germany, and this ticket tells his age. He was eighteen years old at the time. His place of birth, which was given as Beltz—*B-E-L*—excuse me—*B-E-L-T-Z*, now pronounced or called Bălți in Bessarabia, which is a state now a part of a independent country called Moldova or Maldova, which was one of the USSR republics. And when they disbanded the USSR, this area became an independent country. Uh—most interesting about this is that—uh—after World War I, Bessarabia became part of Romania. It's one of those border s—provinces that they keep swappin' back and forth, like Alsace-Lorraine. Anyway—uh—it was part of Romania until the end of uh—World War II, and then it became part of Russia again. [*KK laughs*] And then, of course, when the USSR broke up, it became this in—independent country.

[00:07:55] I—uh—I was over there [*scratching sound*] this past October. I was interested tryin' to find some of my roots and—uh—I did some research or tried to research that part of the world, and unfortunately all the information I gathered was erroneous. It was wrong. I tried to call Washington, DC, where they had a—an office—a—an embassy or consulate—whatever they wanted to call it. But in talkin' to 'em on the telephone,

they could hardly speak English.

KK: Mh-hmm.

[00:08:42] JF: And I tried to get some typical tourist brochures, and—and none of those, they said, were available. And—uh—truth of the matter was, the information I got indicated that if I made this trip I would have a problem finding—uh—places to stay or to eat. So I bought—uh—about twenty dollars worth of dry cereals and carried 'em with me and ended up givin' 'em all away, of course. [KK laughs] Uh—the situation was entirely different in that—uh—we—my wife and I—we flew from Atlanta to Vienna, ten and a half hours nonstop, which I don't recommend anybody to do that. It's too long to stay under pressure. And anyway, you can't sleep because they keep comin' around to give you water to drink because you get dehydrated otherwise, bein' under that pressure—uh—flyin' in the atmo—in the sub—uh—stratosphere, I guess. So—uh—when we got to Vienna, w—we broke up our trip—spent—uh—a day in Vienna and got to visit the Schönbrunn Palace, among other things—which—uh—was the headquarters for the—the family that ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

KK: Hmm.

JF: The Habsburgs.

KK: I'll bet that was somethin'.

[00:10:52] JF: And then [chair squeaks] we caught a—a flight on Tyrolean Air into Chişinău, the capital of Moldova, which—uh—in itself was a famous place or an infamous place because about 1905 there was a—a pogrom there orchestrated by the—the czar of Russia or his—some of his people in which, if you're not familiar with the word pogrom, it's a—where they killed a bunch of Jews in riots. Anyway we got there to Chişinău with no problem. The airplane we flew from Vienna was a Canadian jet, which was the same air—type airplane that we flew from Monroe, Louisiana, to Atlanta. And—uh—they had a—a new airport in Chişinău, and through some arrangements I had made with a travel agency in Little Rock, I had a—a—we had reservation for a hotel there in Chişinău. Unfortunately it had changed its name, and there was some confusion about findin' the hotel, but we did find the taxi that took us to the hotel, which was called the Leogrand. And this hotel was grand. It seemed to me to—uh—have been a copy of the MGA Grand—MGM . . .

KK: Wow.

JF: . . . Grand from Las Vegas in that it had the casinos in connection with it, and it was very ornate and, of course, were

very, very expensive, but it was well worth it in that they—uh—furnished the meals with the room as they do with so many European hotels. And the meals were sumptuous. They had for breakfast one of my favorite foods, which is smoked salmon . . .

KK: Hmm.

JF: . . . called lox.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JF: And in this country it's about three dollars a pound. Most of the time it's sold by the—in ounces—ounces—packages. And—uh—that was on the buffet at the breakfast. And they had two—two breakfasts. One at four-thirty in the mornin' and the other at seven-thirty.

KK: Wow.

JF: And there was plenty to eat.

[00:14:33] KK: So did you learn any—anything of—I mean, it was good to see the area.

JF: Yeah, I was very much impressed. Uh—it was nothin' like what I had expected in that it was much more modern, and—uh—right across the street from the hotel was a enclosed shoppin' mall, which—uh—caught my eye. They had a—it was several stories high, and they had an elevator—uh—that was actually on the outside of the buildin' made out of—uh—glass. And—uh—inside

the building w—of course, we went shoppin' over there. They had anything you might desire. Uh—I ended up buyin' a—a copy of a—a CD. I guess it was made in—in Italy. I'm not sure where it was made. But it was by Pavarotti—and brought that back with me. And—uh—now I had to get to Belz—or Bălți—which is about sixty-five miles further north, and—uh—I found out that I could take a bus there, and it left regularly every day. It turned out to be a—a van, and I had to st—stand up all the way 'cause it's—it just—uh—was quite primitive as far as buses are concerned. But it was real interesting in that I got to see the country real well. I was standin' right near the—the window and—uh—one thing I noticed, that there were no fences. And this area is, I think, part of the—the steppe—the plain—and you could see for miles. And no fences, and this highway was about six lanes. It was a—a modern highway, and there would be animals on both sides of the highway, but apparently they knew enough not to get into the [*KK laughs*] highway even though—though there were no fences. So I didn't see any roadkill, but then I saw horses right there on the sides of the road ea—munchin' the grass. And—uh—in the distance I could see—uh—vineyards on hillside. According to something I read one time—uh—the wine manufactured in this area was a favorite of Joseph

Stalin. [00:18:11] Finally we got to Bălți. Now—uh—I didn't have any reservations. I knew nothing about Bălți. No—no contacts there, no names, nothin'. So I had a so-called bus or [*tapping sound*] van—whatever you would wanna call it—stop at the first hotel and—uh—we got dumped out there on the side of the road with our luggage and—and couldn't—course, and we didn't speak—we could not speak the language, which—uh—the standard language was Russian and, course, many people there could speak German because—uh—this area had been invaded during World War II—I guess that's the reason—and occupied by the Germans. So—uh—I was able to get by with—uh—what little German that I knew . . .

KK: Hmm.

JF: . . . which is akin to Yiddish in that—uh—Yiddish is a—is a so-called "mongrel tongue" in that—uh—it—uh—the Jews picked up words wherever they wandered.

KK: Mh-hmm.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:19:58] JF: Well they had apparently spent a good bit of their time in German-speakin' areas like—well, my mother was originally from—she always said she was from Austria and, 'course, they speak German in Austria. And my grandmother

[Myra Feinberg Sellers edit: Feigalea "Fanny" Reiner], whose— was fluent in Yiddish was from one of the Austrian provinces, I subsequently found out, 'cause Austria—the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 'course, was a—covered a large area. And the way I remember my grandparents, they were kinda proud of the fact that they were from Austria, and although later I found out from one of my cousins that my grandfather left from a place called Herzegovina, which just happened to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. And he didn't wanna leave. [00:21:22] He was a cantankerous—as long as I knew him. And the story goes, according to this cousin of mine, that they had to get him drunk to get him outta the country [*KK laughs*] to get him to emigrate, 'cause he didn't wanna go. And I can believe that because—well, I always remember him—he always was cantankerous—hard to get along with and always cussin'—was unhappy. Well anyway, I didn't find any roots in Moldova or in Bălți. I was fortunate—real fortunate—in encountering a—an interpreter. Actually I'm still confused about the situation in Bălți. I feel that—although it was an independent country—I feel that the influence of Russia was still there in that I felt like I was being watched. This interpreter that was recommended to me by the people that were runnin' the hotel was a lady teacher at

the state school there in Bălți, and I felt like she was part of the apparatus that was watchin'. I don't know why I say this, but I just feel that these people were suspicious of a American, which might be a—just a—my idea. But she introduced me to Simon Weinstein, who was a local Jew, but also I felt like he was a part of this apparatus, that he had some kind of official position. And he acted as my guide and interpreter and we—it turned out that we got to Bălți on Friday, and subsequently we went to the Jewish services and got to meet the local rabbi and the Jews that were there in Bălți. 'Course, I was anxious—try to find out somethin' about my father and his father's family, but I had no luck in that respect. In fact we went to the—to visit a local cemetery—Jewish cemetery—to see if there was any signs of Feinbergs, but there were none. And so I've come to the conclusion that my father was not born there, but that he just passed through Bălți, and I don't know where he started out. His father, my grandfather, according to my father, was a trader in sheepskins, and I feel that that trade caused him to move around quite a bit, and that's how come they were in Bălți, and he left from Bălți. But like I say, there was no trace of the family there and, 'course, it's not a very big place. I would guess that it's probably the size of Calion, you know. And

maybe have a couple thousand people there. It may have been, at one time, larger. I just don't know. 'Course, this part of the world has been overrun by armies so many times. There's not much original left there.

[00:27:09] KK: Mh-hmm. So your father emigrated to the US and then was drafted into the army and went over to Europe to fight on the American side.

JF: No, he never did get to go back over.

KK: Oh, okay.

JF: No, he . . .

KK: He was in the army, though.

JF: . . . well, he was in the army, but he was in the Army Air Corps.

KK: Ah. Okay.

JF: And it—and at that time it was the original—it was part of the Signal Corps. It was the original Air Force, and I've got an album of his—it's now in the museum—part of it. I loaned it to the museum in Greenville, Mississippi, and they made copies, and the photographs are there. I still have the album. He spent all the—almost all his time in the service in Florida in the training in this air force. They built this camp there—this airfield. It's called—it was called Carlstrom Field. It's near Arcadia, Florida. It's no longer there, of course. It was abandoned after the war—

World War I—and never reactivated. And that's actually where he learned a trade 'cause they had to do a lotta building—carpentry and subsequently he made his living as a carpenter and contractor . . .

KK: Oh.

JF: . . . for part of his life.

[00:29:25] KK: Well, that makes sense. So after World War I, after he was discharged from the army, he came back to New York? You guys were still in New York at that time or . . .

KK: Well, that's right. He—that's where he was drafted from, was New York City where he was apparently stayin' with his sister, Jenny, who—he moved back there and worked in New York City. And I really don't know how come he ended up in Kerhonkson and married my mother, although there was some family relationships—distant relationships with the Reiners. But he—I feel that he went there to work. To help run the bakery or somethin' like that. And subsequently he married and bought a place and stayed in Kerhonkson the rest of his life.

[00:30:50] KK: So let's see, you were born in [19]21, and was—that was up there in New York State?

JF: Right.

KK: And then did you go to school in New York State?

JF: Yes, sir, I went to—I actually started my—I started school in New York City, in Brooklyn, and apparently my father moved the family from Kerhonkson to New York. This was during the Depression, you know, and it was hard to find work. And he had this trade. He specialized in metal ceilings.

KK: Oh, yeah.

JF: And that's what he worked in when he was in New York City and Brooklyn and so forth. And I started goin' to elementary school there in Brooklyn. And then he always wanted to be a farmer. And he had this place that he and his brother-in-law had bought with a mortgage, of course, right outside of Kerhonkson, and he went back to it. But he found it very difficult to make a livin' there, and so he had to go back to New York City to work. But that happened several times to him. He'd try to make it in Kerhonkson, he couldn't—he'd end up back in the city.

But . . .

[00:32:35] KK: Did the family move back and forth with him?

JF: Yes. Yeah.

KK: And so you went to school some there and some in New York City.

JF: Right. But I graduated from the high school in Kerhonkson.

Went to elementary school and the high school. In fact, I have a

certificate from the eighth grade in Kerhonkson, which is—was an elementary school. And then I graduated from the high school, went off to college. But that was my home for a good bit of my life. I finally—when I got through with college—'course, I was drafted before I could get finished with my engineering school, and I spent forty months in the Army. And then I went back and finished school. And during the—durin' my army service, I got a pilot's license in 1941 when I first started a-goin' to school at university—Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. They had a program called the civilian pilot training program in which the federal government subsidized the training of college students, learnin'—teachin' 'em how to fly. And so I was able to afford it. And I got my license in [19]41, and then I got drafted, and it didn't do me a bit of good. I tried to get into the air force, and I couldn't pass the physical. They discovered that I was green/white colorblind.

KK: Oh, I see.

[00:35:06] JF: Back at that time, the physical requirements were very stringent, and they were very picky. So I got drafted into the regular army, and I got shipped around, and finally I took the exam for the air force, which was a separate organization, and they accepted me and sent me—this is hard to understand.

I don't know what happened, but they accepted me and sent me to an assignment center and gave me another physical and washed me out. It was the now the—apparently the first guy that tested me was as colorblind as I was [*KK laughs*] 'cause he passed me. And then when they sent me to this center, well, that was the end of the air force as far as I was concerned. I was not gonna be a cadet. So anyway, I got reassigned, and I got sent to Sioux Falls, South Dakota to a radio school where I was gonna be a radio operator. And that didn't work either. So while I was in Sioux Falls, I—my mother got a telegram back in Kerhonkson from the Navy, who wanted me because I had this license. [*KK laughs*] And course, you'd have to have the experience of being in the army as I was at the time. I went—and when I got the telegram, of course, [*unclear word*] had lost a lotta time in that my mother held it until she mailed it to me and so forth. Anyway I carried it down to the master sergeant at the headquarters and said, "I'd like to get outta this outfit and join the navy. They're gonna make me an officer." I was gonna get a commission as an ensign immediately. So he says, "No problem at all. We'll take care of it." And it was, like, forty months later they discharged me from the army. [*KK laughs*]

But I had no complaints. Actually I got reassigned, and when I

got reassigned, they sent me to the University of Minnesota, where they had a program goin' on—because I had several years of engineering training they we—they got—gathered up all these people and decided that they were gonna train 'em, so they could get their degrees. And that's how come I got sent up there. [*Thumping sound*] And I was in the only class that graduated under that program.

KK: Yeah, I'm gonna ask you to put your cane down just so we don't hear the—there you go—'cause we're kinda hearin' that.

JF: Okay.

KK: So you're the only one that graduated. Why is that?

JF: Well, the way I explain it is that they decided that they needed the bodies. They needed those soldiers at the Battle of the Bulge more than they did there at the University of Minnesota, so they cancelled the program and dispersed 'em—reassigned 'em all.

[00:39:48] KK: So did you go over to Europe?

JF: No. See [*laughs*], as luck would have it, a group of us were sent to California, and we were sent to California because they were equippin' these ships—these repair ships. And I was assigned to the repair ship *Duluth*. And we stayed there in California and— at Oakland until we got all our equipment on board, and then we

left and went to the Philippine Islands. They had, I think, seven of those ships and they went out to various place—parts of the Pacific.

KK: Now, what year was that?

JF: Well, it was in the [19]40s, but I couldn't tell you exactly the date. I . . .

KK: The war was still goin' on though, right?

JF: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yeah. Yeah. So we . . .

[00:41:02] KK: What kinda things did this re—what kind of work did this repair ship do?

JF: Well, we were—the truth of the matter is that the United States Army had more ships, more bottoms, than the navy because—and the reason being—you know, we were out in the Pacific, and we had a lot of islands that we were tryin' to take, and we had a vast area and had to supply it, so we had tugs and barges—no warships, of course. And these repair ships—had seven of these repair ships stationed in the Pacific. And the one that I was on—we were sent to Tacloban and Leyte in the Philippine Islands, and we anchored there between the island of Leyte and Samar in what they call the Straits of Balangiga. And our mission was to take care of all these vessels that the army was operatin' and that—they had what we called F-boats, which were—had single

hatches—inter-island freighters—diesel-engine-driven and, well, maybe two hundred—two hundred and fifty foot long. Had a buncha those. And also we were responsible for any damaged vessels that came into the area. We were supposed to fix 'em up, so they could get back to the states or get back to Hawaii where they'd get dry-docked. Liberty ships and victory ships and things like that. Most of the work was on these smaller vessels. I was assigned to the diesel repair shop and actually was a specialist on injection systems for diesel engines, so I had been sent to school in San Francisco run by the American Bosch Company, who manufactured these injectors and injection pumps. And while we were at Oakland, I was sent this school—take a course. So they assigned me to that shop on the ship. And I stayed on the ship until I got sick and sent to the hospital there in Leyte and then transferred to a hospital ship and sent back to the United States. I was—that's how I got home, otherwise I might still be in the army. [*Laughter*]

[00:44:42] KK: So what kinda illness did you have?

JF: Pardon?

KK: How did—what kinda illness did you have?

JF: Well, I got an infection in my right foot.

KK: Oh.

JF: And I still have a fat ankle. And this infection was supposedly was due to some kind of bug that was in the water there in the Philippines. It's called filariasis, and the leg swelled up and ran a high temperature and—really sick. So—and they had no cure for it, so they just sent me to the states and tried various things in the hospital in the United States, but nothin' would do any good. And finally, they gave up and discharged me with a disability.

[00:45:53] KK: So how'd you get it fixed?

JF: Pardon?

KK: How did you get that fixed?

JF: Never fixed it. Never did. In fact when I was back in civilian life—back in Boston tryin' to finish up my education, I was stayin' in a boardin' house, and I woke up in a Veterans Administration hospital. And the lady—my landlady had called them to come and get me 'cause I had started runnin' this temperature and was outta my head, y'know. And I spent several weeks there in the VA hospital in Boston, and it was an experience I'll never forget. I was layin' there in a ward one day, and this Dr. John Homans came around with students—interns followin' him, you know. And this man was eat up with arthritis. His hands were crippled, but he was still teachin'. This was at—they—he was a teacher and instructed Harvard University

Medical School, and he got interested in my situation. And he told me—he knew I was a student. He said, "When you get discharged here, come see me anytime." He had an office on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. He says, "It won't cost you anything, and we'll follow up on this." So I've got this letter he wrote in my file to this day, and that letter, I think, is dated about 1946. And it says, in effect, that the situation I got, there's no cure for it. And he's tryin' to tell these other doctors, who might sometimes have an opportunity to work on me, not to mess with it 'cause there's nothin' you can do about it. And anyway, he was real interesting in that later on I found out that his family had been doctors all the way back to the Revolutionary War.

KK: Wow.

[00:48:46] JF: All those generations. And he got—he was recognized by the medical profession. Some disease is named after him—"Homanitis" [KK *laughs*], whatever that is. But I've lived with it, and it's a—it's one of those things. Y'know, there's a lots of things like that all over the world.

KK: Right.

JF: You know. [*Tapping sounds*]

[00:49:37] KK: So if I can, let me just lay that cane down 'cause it

just keeps makin' a little bit of noise there, and I'm probably makin' the sound man a little crazy. So discharged from the army because of your medical condition. You're in Boston. So how did you get down to Arkansas?

JF: Oh, well, I went on and got my degree and graduated. The school I went to, Northeastern University, is—well, it's called the poor man's MIT [*KK laughs*] in that it's a school that operates under the cooperative system of education where you go to school ten weeks, and then you go to work ten weeks so you can make tuition, see? Well, when I graduated—'cause during my training I worked in a foundry where we made—cast brass and bronze valves—a company called the Walworth Company there in south Boston. And what I did was I actually charged the furnaces with ingots, just manual labor. But you're exposed to industry. You get to see what's goin' on, you know. You do learn. I never have regretted it. But when I graduated there were a lotta other GI's graduatin'. Y'know, this was 1947, and it was very difficult to find a job as an engineer. I wasn't successful. So while I had—I was goin' to school in Boston, I found time to go down to the Coast Guard headquarters and take the test—see if I could get a license as a merchant marine officer. Well, I had enough experience on the repair ship that

they let me take the test, and with my engineering background I got the license. [00:52:20] So when I graduated from the university and couldn't get a job onshore, I went to sea. I went to New York and went down the waterfront lookin' for a job, and I found one. This was a kind of an interesting experience and I s—I actually had a job on a ship going to Africa, and it was with the American South African Line. And the ship was an F-boat—a surplus F-boat, and they were gonna tow some LCTs across the Atlantic. We were goin' to, I believe, Uganda is where they were goin'. And the idea was—the way they explained it to me—that once they got there, these LCTs would go up the river and feed the port. They'd pick up whatever they had up the river. Well, I spent a night or two on this F-boat there. This was at what's now—what was Fort Hamilton there, and I just didn't like the crew. The rest of the members of the crew. I wasn't—I just didn't like 'em at all. I thought I'd fallen into a nest of Nazis. So I never made a trip. [00:54:28] Instead, I went down to the hiring hall, and I got a berth on the *General E. B. Alexander*, which was a big ship—transport—that was goin' to Germany, and that—subsequently I found out that this F-boat never made it. They got lost crossin' the North Atlantic. And the whole—the boat and the tow—there was no—they didn't find anything. They

just disappeared, and I thought about it, and I figured what happened, y'know, was kinda rough in the wintertime. This was in the fall and the winter, and the seas get dangerous. And here they out there with that F-boat with a tow, and the tow pulled 'em down. That's what happened, I expect. Anyway I made two trips to Germany on the *Alexander*. And it was a wonderful experience for me in that I saved some money, y'know, bein' on that ship. Whatever I made, there wasn't—it was hard to spend it. And I didn't gamble or lose it. [KK laughs] So in the—I'd just finished college, and I was broke, so when I got—finally got back from the second trip, I had a—enough money where I could do what I wanted. And . . .

KK: Did you repair the diesel engine?

JF: No, this ship was a steamship.

[00:56:36] KK: What was your job?

JF: Well I—it was a very menial job. I was a third assistant and this ship—it was real interesting—it was a—it was called—it was the *E. B. Alexander*. That is what it was sailing under. But it had originally been the *Amerika* with a *K-A* instead of a *C-A*, and it was originally a German ship that was captured in the American port in World War I. It was—old ship—steamship—had what they call a quadruple-expansion steam engine—two of 'em. And

these engines were massive—they were just—to give you an idea, this low-pressure cylinder—the top of the cylinder was the size of this room.

KK: Wow.

[00:57:36] JF: And the crankcase and the engine was all open, and the engine room was a mist of oil all the time. If you—when you went on watch and got off watch, your clothes would be soakin' with oil. And you asked me what did I do? Well, at one time I was an oiler and that was a person that went around with a can and squirted oil into these cups that dripped down onto the various parts of the engine—this is steam engine. 'Course, it's a hot room, y'know. Anyway . . .

KK: And real loud, right? It was very loud.

JF: Pardon?

KK: It was very loud, wasn't it?

[00:58:28] JF: Well, it made some noise [*KK laughs*], but it wasn't real loud. 'Course it just up and down, y'know. It was that type of engine. Had four cylinders. A thousand horsepower each engine, y'know, with its open crankcase—slow turnin'. It'd take us thirty days to make a round trip across the Atlantic from New York to Bremerhaven, Germany. Thirty days. You couldn't—wide open, you couldn't do ten knots. [*KK Laughs*] But it was

a—y'know, bein' a—at one time it was a luxury ship, y'know, and so the staterooms had wood paneling. It was a kind of a—if you didn't mind how slow it was, it was a good trip. And general—think of his name in a minute—who was the chief of staff took it to Germany—picked it for the trip when he went on an inspection tour. And he was a—I got to meet him on that—I guess it was his second trip.

TM: We need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[01:00:25] KK: All right, so you were a oiler on the *Amerika*, which became the *Alexander*.

JF: The *E. B. Alexander*.

KK: And you did a couple trips in that.

JF: Right.

KK: And we still haven't even gotten to Arkansas yet, have we?

JF: No. No.

[01:00:37] KK: How did you—what came next?

JF: Well, let's see. What came after that—after I got off the *Alexander*? [Background voices]

KK: When you got off the *Alexander*, how old were you?

JF: How old was I?

KK: Mh-hmm.

JF: Well . . .

KK: Let's say it woulda been, what [19]48 or so or [19]47, [19]48?

JF: Yeah, that's right.

KK: Okay, and you were born in [19]21.

JF: Right.

KK: So you're about twenty-seven. You're in your mid-twenties.

JF: Yeah, that's right.

[01:01:02] KK: You're back in the United States. Are you in Boston still after that?

JF: No, no. [*KK clicks writing pen*] That's when I—y'know, I had this money I'd saved and nothin' to do. And I'm lookin' for somethin' to do, tryin' to get a job, and it was still tough—hard to find somethin'. So—'course, I had a home I could always go to, and my father was in business, and I could always work for him. But I had made up my mind that—and he was basically in the trucking business, and I had two brothers younger than me. I was the oldest. I figured that if he needed any help, they could help him. And so I just—I had an old car that I'd bought—a used car. [01:02:04] And I threw all my stuff in the car and went to New Orleans. Never had been there, but somehow or other it interested me, and I thought, "Well, that's a place to start." And I had a chance to see the country, to drive down and

look it over. And I had an uncle in New York who was interested in a place in Brunswick, Georgia, that he wanted me to look at as I went down, so I remember that. I did—I stopped in Brunswick and spent time. And anyway, I finally got to New Orleans. [*Clears throat*] Excuse me. I got to New Orleans, and I remember it very well. I got there on a Thursday, and it was a pourin' down rain as it can rain in New Orleans and in that part of Louisiana like nowhere else. [*KK laughs*] Just comin' down in buckets. Anyway I found a place to stay in a boardin' house with a bunch of students that—all the rest in the house were students goin' to Tulane. And I got there on Thursday, and I had a job—I could've gone to work Friday actually, but I didn't go to work until Monday. [01:03:53] And that job was a hundred miles away at Morgan City, Louisiana, where I went to work for a company called Kerr-McGee. Kerr-McGee oil industries. Senator Robert Kerr was the head of that company, and Dean McGee was the other side of it. And Dean McGee had been the chief geologist for Frank Phillips—Phillips Petroleum. 'Course, Senator Kerr had been influential in getting the leases on the capitol grounds in Oklahoma City—the story goes anyway. He was a real politician. Anyway I went to work to work for them—a man named Bill Baxter interviewed me.

[01:04:57] And one thing I haven't told you—I was an instructor in diesel engines and electricity at Newark Diesel Institute, Newark, New Jersey, for—right after I got off the ship. I got this job as an instructor, and I did that for a year or so. And got tired of it, and that's when I went to New Orleans. Well, this fellow, Bill Baxter, who was the drilling superintendent for the company—in charge of the drilling department—he was lookin' for a mechanic for—take care of their diesel engines. And they had a lots of engines, you can imagine, on these drillin' rigs. So I never will forget the interview. Of course, he was an unusual person, and I always admired him. He asked me—he says, "If you can explain to me where I can understand—tell me what makes a diesel engine run—you got the job." Well, hell, I'd been an instructor, so I oughta be able to do that, you would think. And I got the job and, 'course, he—I remember him sayin', "Well, Feinberg, you—why do you want this job anyway, y'know? I know you're Jewish, and you won't stay here very long. Your relatives will get you and put you in business someplace." [KK laughs] They always had that idea, you know.

[01:07:06] KK: It's kind of a stereotype, isn't it?

JF: Yeah. [KK laughs] "Put you in a clothing store or somethin' like that." So I said to him—I said, "Well, Mr. Baxter, I'll stay with

you as long as you need me and want me." So I did. He gave me that job, and I worked for them offshore takin' care of their equipment for about four years. And what finally what happened was that the federal government and the state of Louisiana got in a big lawsuit about who owned the rights to that offshore property. And when they had this lawsuit, they shut everything down, and I had nothing to do. And that's when I left. And I always wanted to be in the business I ended up in, which was—sell machinery. So by this time I'd gotten married. And my wife and I were livin' there in Morgan City, and my wife is from Connecticut, and here we are in amongst all these Cajuns. [*KK laughs*] And I'm workin'. I'm leavin' on Monday mornin' and goin' out to the rigs and comin' back on Friday, y'know, and she was there by herself durin' the week amongst all the Cajuns, y'know, who were great. They really were. They took her in. I guess because she had this accent [*KK laughs*], they just thought it was interesting, y'know, 'cause they had a worse accent. [*Laughter*] Anyway after this—when this lawsuit started, and they shut the things down, I thought, "It's—this is an opportunity for me to get outta here and go into the business I wanna be in." And so I don't remember how it happened, but I had interviewed with a man who at one time had been a vice-

president of Fairbanks Morse, which was a big name in the industry at the time, and he more or less promised me a job in Houston. [01:09:52] So we packed up and moved to Houston, and my wife is now pregnant. And when I got to Houston—this guy's name was Murphy, I remember that. Anyway it turned out that he didn't have a job for me. [KK laughs] He didn't have as much stroke as he thought he had, and so I'm now in Houston with a pregnant wife and no job. And in those days, no air-conditioning in Houston. It was miserable. [KK laughs] It was summertime. But I found a job with an outfit called the Southern Engine & Pump Company. And as far as the engine was concerned, they had no diesel engines. Their business was gas engines [KK laughs] and pumps—basically pumps. And I knew nothing about pumps. Very little. Anyway they sat me in a training program, and the man that taught me wasn't even a high school graduate, but he did know pumps, and I learned a lot from him. And I stayed there in Houston, and after three months they transferred me to Dallas, where they had a branch. And, boy, I came to Dallas, and I hit the ground runnin', y'know.

[01:11:43] KK: It was—so you and your pregnant wife moved to Dallas.

JF: Right. In fact my son was born in Dallas, and we moved to

Dallas and, y'know, I have really been blessed. I've been lucky. We rented a place there from a man and his wife. His name was Cash—was—and he was a World War I veteran, and they owned this liquor store and rented us a garage apartment behind his house, and it was close to where I was gonna be workin' on a street called Harry Hines Boulevard, there in Dallas. And they really treated us great. Took us in, y'know. And Mr. Cash immediately started on me. He said, "What do you, working in that kind of business?" He says, "I'll put you in a liquor store right up this highway here." See, he had the first liquor store in Dallas comin' from Oklahoma, and Oklahoma was dry. And they used to come down—the bootleggers from Oklahoma would come down there and load it out by the case, you know. And he was gonna set me up a little further north, closer to the line. And he just kept on. "Feinberg, all my Jewish friends are in the liquor business. [*Laughter*] And you need to be in the liquor business," you know. Oh, God. Was really a great person, and his wife, who was from Arkansas—from Fouke. Oh, anyway, I—we stayed there at Dallas. I—like I say, I hit the ground runnin'. I was real ambitious—young and ambitious. And the fellow that was the manager there in Dallas of the company thought—got the idea that they'd sent me to Dallas to take his job. Some

reason or other. And anyway, that's the only time in my life I got fired. Subsequently I got a letter from the vice president back in Houston who had hired me sayin' that it didn't work out, and he wanted my resignation. So that was the end of that. Now here I am with a newborn baby about three months old in Dallas and no job. 'Course, I could always go in the liquor business, [*KK laughs*] y'know. [*Laughter*] But that was not my ambition. My ambition was the machinery business. And when I was with Southern Engine & Pump Company, that was where I wanted to be. And I did do a fair job for 'em. Excuse me. I actually sold some engines for them and did some other things. But—so I'm—now without a job, and I gotta do somethin', so I—part of my territory that I was responsible for was southern Oklahoma around Broken Bow and over that way—Idabel. [01:16:03] So I drifted over to Shreveport on one of my business trips and stopped in at a place that—run by an outfit called Ingersoll Corporation—see if they might need some help. And I hit it at the right time. The company had just changed hands—ownership. George Ingersoll had passed away, and his widow had been tryin' to run the business. And she'd hired a fellow named ?Jimmy Hogg?, who was a super salesman, and he was in charge. He was the president. And he hired me—he

says, "We got this territory up here in south Arkansas, and we need somebody to go up there and take care of it." So we made a deal. I was goin' to get a subsistence allowance that amounted to—I forget how much money it was, but they were gonna pay me that much and then fifty percent of—a commission. Fifty percent of some percentage that they—in other words, were gonna be partners in effect. And I—said, "You just go on up there and take over that area." So I'd never been there before and drove up and looked around Texarkana. I was impressed with Texarkana. In fact, I thought seriously of settlin' there, but then I decided on El Dorado because it was in the middle, east and west, and still close to north Louisiana. So we moved to El Dorado.

[01:18:13] KK: So this would be you and your wife and your son, right?

JF: Right. It was . . .

KK: What's your wife's name now?

JF: Johanna. He was . . .

KK: Uh-huh. What was her ma . . .

JF: He was three months old.

KK: What was her maiden name?

JF: Pelizzari.

KK: So, Johanna Pelizzari.

JF: Right. My wife's family were from Italy, both of . . .

KK: Oh.

JF: His—her mother and father were immigrants and . . .

KK: And . . .

JF: . . . they settled there in Connecticut. In southern—well, I guess it's—well, on the coast. Clinton, Connecticut.

[01:18:50] KK: And where did you meet her?

JF: I met her in Boston at the university.

KK: Ah.

[01:18:54] JF: Now she didn't go to the same school that I did. She was in Boston studyin' art. She and her younger sister [Perina] went to art school there. And we had a landlord who—we—I was rentin'—I, and who subsequently became a—I guess, a brother-in-law—a fellow named [MFS edit: Hernani] Monte, who was of Portuguese extraction. We had rented an apartment from a fellow whose name was Hagop Chopurian. Armenian. And the—we were livin' in the part of Boston that was the wrong side of the tracks, [*laughter*] y'know. It—but it was cheap, y'know, and in fact it was—our apartment was right close to the tracks there, and in those days they had steam engines runnin' through the city. And we had to seal the windows to keep the cinders from

comin' and driftin' into the house. [*KK laughs*] But Hagop Chopurian—bless him. He said, "Just call me Jack," is what he'd say. He says to me, "I know some nice girls who are rentin' a place from me near here, and I want you to meet 'em." And that's how I come I met my wife. And he told me—he says, "And when you get married, I'm gonna buy the license—the three-dollar license." I never collected the three dollars. [*Laughter*] Anyway, that's how I met my wife. And Monte, my roommate, ended up marrying her sister—her younger sister [*MFS edit: Perina Savina Pelizzari*]. So we were, I guess, related by marriage.

[01:21:24] KK: And so then what is—what was—what's your son's name?

JF: David.

KK: Okay.

JF: Yeah.

KK: So David was born in Dallas.

JF: Right.

KK: Then you moved to El Dorado . . .

JF: Right.

KK: . . . to take over this territory.

JF: Right. Mh-hmm.

[01:21:39] KK: And so you had to kinda start from scratch.

JF: Well [*laughs*] . . .

KK: But—I mean, you knew a lot about engines . . .

JF: Well . . .

KK: . . . and stuff but . . .

[01:25:43] JF: . . . yeah, but you couldn't make a livin' on engines.

I found that out quickly. And Ingersoll was basically an engine company. They were the distributors for a engine company called LeRoi, which is now outta business. And they didn't make diesel engines, they made gas engines—natural gas and butane. But after a short while in El Dorado, I realized that it was gonna be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make a living sellin' engines. And so I started in—they already had some connections with the pump companies, and I just expanded that, so eventually we did more pump business than engine business. Now this engine business is kinda difficult to explain, but in Shreveport their main business was sellin' engines for drillin' rigs and things like that—gas compressors. But in El Dorado it's not like Shreveport, you know. In Shreveport there was a company that manufactured drillin' rigs, among other things. And there was a lot of oil-drillin' companies there at the time. These are pretty big engines, and it didn't take many sales there to make a

livin'. But that wasn't true in El Dorado. And we also sold engines for cotton gins, but there weren't very many cotton gins around El Dorado, and here I am, a Yankee [KK *laughs*] tryin' to sell cotton-gin engines, talkin' to these farmers. You know, I had a uphill go there, but I did sell a few cotton-gin engines. I was fortunate that way, but the—anyway we struggled along, and in 1957 we started Pumps & Power Company. We just got off on it on our own.

[01:24:26] KK: You and who else? Who were your partners?

JF: My partners were my family.

KK: Ah.

JF: And the bank. I was very lucky.

KK: So your new brother-in-law was involved in this or . . .

JF: Oh, no, no.

KK: Just your family from New York or . . .

JF: No.

KK: Just your wife.

JF: My wife and my son.

KK: Ah.

[01:24:46] JF: And I was fortunate in that—in the bank—in those days, there was a bank in El Dorado called Exchange Bank and Trust. And the president the Exchange was Louis Hurley. And

he was a big help to me. He took an interest, apparently, in what we were tryin' to do and tried to help us, and he did. I never will forget him. Later on he became the president of the American Bankers Association, from El Dorado. That was somethin'.

KK: Very impressive man.

JF: Yeah, he was. Never will forget him.

[01:25:38] KK: So he took a chance on you.

JF: Yes, he did. Definitely.

KK: [*Unclear words*].

JF: For about somethin' like fifteen hundred dollars at one time but much more later on. We—after we got established, we borrowed money from him all the time. He was our partner in effect.

And . . .

[01:26:00] KK: And so you were sellin' pumps and engines on your own now?

JF: Yes, and . . .

KK: Okay.

JF: . . . machinery.

KK: Machinery of . . .

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . different kinds.

JF: Different kinds. That's right, but with the accent on pumps because—well . . .

KK: You mean—when you say pumps, are you talkin' about, like, water irrigation pumps?

JF: Well, yes, they're irrigation pumps. 'Course, most of the time when people would ask me that question, they'd say oil pumps, y'know, because we were in El Dorado. But the truth of the matter was our business was municipal business. Water and sewer. And—'cause we would sell—I've sold irrigation pumps—many irrigation pumps, but that's not the main part of the business. And then in—let's see, we started this thing in [19]57. About [19]67, I believe it was, I developed a compact pump station, which we call a Pump-R-Pak. And we've been buildin' 'em ever since. The first one we built was for Fordyce, Arkansas, for the sewer system at Fordyce. And we'd come onto some—a new concept, see? A different approach to this problem. And carried on that approach and developed this package because I discovered that it was just as easy to sell a package for six or seven thousand dollars as it was to sell a pump for six or seven hundred dollars.

[01:27:54] KK: Oh, so you turn-keyed the whole pump station in a small unit.

JF: Yeah, in a package.

KK: Okay. Okay.

[01:28:02] JF: That's right. And it made it real easy for the installer—the contractor—and it just was more efficient. So—and we're still buildin' those and expanded it to build—regionally we're just buildin' the sewer-pump stations, buildin' the water-pump stations, and building different concepts of valve assemblies and so on and so forth. And that's really the key to that business because as far as competition is concerned, the only competition we have is way off, like in Ohio, and there's a freight problem and an expense, so we can be competitive. And then, of course, the big thing in this business is service after the sale, and we emphasize that—parts and service. My son, who runs the business now, spends seven days a week—just always on the go. 'Course, we've expanded the territory. You know, it started out—when Ingersoll sent me to El Dorado it was south Arkansas and north Louisiana. But Pumps & Power Company covers seven states. Plus we've built units for overseas. The last one that I built, I think, went down to Lake Maracaibo, if I remember correctly, in South America for a—y'know, my memory isn't as great as it used to be.

KK: Oh, I think you've done a good job today.

JF: Phew.

KK: So far you've . . .

JF: Well [*laughs*]. . .

KK: . . . done great.

[01:30:29] JF: Y'know, I—this job I'm tryin' to remember was for a water-booster station—a small water-pump station—and this engineer [MFS edit: Carl Gales] that I knew was from Oklahoma and, y'know, we generated an association—this friendship when he was in Oklahoma workin' over there for the smaller communities. And one day my wife and I were on the airplane makin' a trip someplace, and he happened to be on the plane. We got reacquainted. I hadn't seen him in a long time, and we got to talkin' to him. "What are you doin'?" And he started tellin' me. He was workin' for a company, and I said Lake Maracaibo, but that's not correct. [MFS edit: It was Trinidad.] I'll think of it after a while where he was located. But they were buildin' a plant to liquefy natural gas, so they could ship it in ships overseas to United States particularly. And this is a massive undertaking to build that type of a plant.

[01:31:51] KK: It's a big plant, and there's a lotta engineering involved, right?

JF: Oh, yeah, it's very complicated. And he was—he had a part of

that, and he was stationed overseas at the plant site, and we got to visit, and he says, "I might need a pump station one of these days. Can ya furnish it?" I says, "I think so," you know. So he says, "Well, send me one of your catalogs." So I did. And lo and behold, once—later, y'know, I got this inquiry from him for this particular pump station, and how are we gonna get it down there to him wherever he is? [*Claps hands*] And it turned out that was easy. All we had to do was take it to Houston and turn it over to somebody there and they take care of it the rest of the way. So anyway—I wish I could remember the name of that place where he was buildin' that—it musta been in Africa.

[01:33:03] KK: Oh, it was not in South America?

JF: No. They had lots of natural gas at this particular place, and they couldn't get rid of it—couldn't sell it 'cause there was no pipeline long enough to get it to a market. So they'd liquefy it and get it to the market. And then also we built a pump station for the Holiday Inn Company in—which was headquartered at one time in Memphis. But this site where they were buildin' this Holiday Inn was in, like, Jamaica or someplace like that—The Bahamas down there. And we built the pump station and they took care of gettin' it to the site. But most of everything was within a three hundred and fifty mile radius of El Dorado. And

the way we handled that is I acted as a sales manager. And we had agents—resale agents—in these various centers, like Nashville, Tennessee; Oklahoma City; New Orleans; Baton Rouge. And we had these guys in these places that sold these packages or sold our stuff on a commissioned basis. 'Cause they also had other accounts, you know, but ours was basically their main account. We tried to make it that way anyway. And my job was to go around and keep these guys busy. [KK *laughs*] Make sure they were doin' the—what they were supposed to do. The main thing involved is—the way this business—you know, I love to talk about this business after all [*laughs*—only fifty years at it, see? [KK *laughs*] The key to it is the consulting engineers. In all these major cities almost without exception, there'll be a group of engineers that do the design work for these other communities and also for the city of Nashville, as an example. And they control this business because they write the specifications. And it's our job to go out and see to it that they write our specifications—describe our product, so we can sell it easier. 'Cause we can still sell against the competition, y'know, but it's harder. If you get written in, that makes it easy—easier. So bein' a licensed engineer myself, I have an entrée to go in to see these people, and they'll usually

listen. Some of 'em won't listen. They got their own ideas, and you have trouble convincin' 'em, but it's been a real interesting life and—real interesting—and I've enjoyed it.

[01:36:48] KK: Well, we're next gonna wanna talk about, I think, the Jewish community in El Dorado and in south Arkansas, and this is a real opportunity for us to get some firsthand account of that.

JF: Well, I'll tell you what little I know about it 'cause, you know, I'm a late-comer to the scene. 'Cause the Jewish presence has been in Arkansas—it's been here a long time. In fact, it's unfortunate, but the Felsenthal brothers, who are all gone now, could tell you more about it than anybody 'cause, y'know, they were in Camden, and Camden was at what they call the headwaters of the Ouachita River. Actually this is as far as steamboats could go, and so, y'know, this area—this part of the country was developed when that was the main mode of transportation, and we were blessed with rivers—quite a few. Well, one of the oldest Jewish communities in Arkansas was in Camden, and unfortunately it's, as the story is the same all throughout the South, it's dwindled. In fact the temple no longer exists. The building is still there, but I think it's been turned into a residence, and all the artifacts have pretty well been scattered. In fact, I think the El Dorado congregation got one of their

Torahs when they finally disbanded. But—so the El Dorado Jewish congregation is relatively new in comparison to some of the others. Like the one in Little Rock's much older and Fort Smith is old and just—Pine Bluff is old. But El Dorado—I think it owes its existence as far as the Jewish community is concerned was the boom—the oil boom. That brought merchants to El Dorado—Jewish merchants. And it's a interesting thing, but many of 'em left El Dorado and went to Shreveport, as an example, when the boom hit Shreveport and went to other places where—in other words, they followed the boom.

KK: East Texas and . . .

[01:39:51] JF: Right. Yeah. Snyder and so forth. But—now I'm sorry Janet isn't here—Janet Stuart 'cause Joe Stuart, her husband, was the president of the local congregation for many years, and she has the records. But . . .

KK: Well, we'll come back through here . . .

JF: Good.

KK: . . . and we'll get her another time.

JF: Well, she—the reason she isn't here today is she isn't feelin' well, and I can understand that 'cause—anyway she told me yesterday that the records are in the attic, and she can't get to the attic.

KK: Oh, we need to help her with that.

JF: Yeah. Well, I told her—she has a daughter here who might be—might help her, and I'm sure I can get my son if Janie—if her daughter can't find time or her grandson or somebody in her family can't find time to get in the attic, maybe he can or his son.

[01:41:19] KK: Well, you know, we wanna make sure those get preserved.

JF: That's right.

KK: Because that's priceless information.

JF: Right. Well, he's got—you know, I almost got all that stuff before he passed away. He used to keep it in desk drawer, and I can just see him motioning to that desk drawer one day—he says, "All the records are in there, and you're gonna have 'em one of these days." But it didn't happen.

KK: Yeah.

JF: I've got some, but there's nothin' compared to what he had because—well, I gotta tell you, that plaque that I copied and you've got a copy of it now—these are the—basically they're founding members of the congregation when the building was built, but the congregation is much older than the building.

KK: Sure.

[01:42:24] JF: 'Cause they used to meet in a building downtown that was the office building for the gas company—ARKLA—the Arkansas Louisiana Gas Company. Now, you know, I didn't move to El Dorado till [19]51, and I'm a newcomer, really, and—'cause people like Ben Miller moved here durin' the boom in the [19]30s, see, or maybe before that. Actually Joe Stuart was here when I moved here. He already had established his typewriter business and, 'course, he was—he moved here from Memphis, so he was part of the southern Jewish community already when he was in Memphis. Now I guess you know about this organization that we have. It's in Jackson, Mississippi. It's called the Institute of the—of Southern—Southern Jewish—somethin' like that. I got some correspondence from them. I can give you the name and the address and all that. But basically what they're tryin' to do is preserve the history of the Jews in the South. And they're talkin'—when they say the South, they go all the way over to the Carolinas, see—and Alabama—and they have a circuit rabbi who happens to be a lady rabbi, which is—you know, to somebody like me it's unusual 'cause I was born and raised where all the rabbis had beards. Y'know. So anyway, this lady's name is Batsheva Appel, and she's been here in El Dorado several times. And what they're

tryin' to do—and I'm sure they could be a help to you because they've got archives, you know. They've been gatherin' material for years. There's a fellow whose name is Macy Hart—he's in Jackson, Mississippi.

[01:45:18] KK: Well, this is good information because people who hear this interview and read the transcript will then have that link . . .

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . to know that they need to go there to get some more of that information.

JF: Oh, yeah.

[01:45:29] KK: That'd be great. Now where was the—or where is the temple? I know it's not being used as a temple now, but where is the temple located here in El Dorado?

JF: Well, you're wrong about that. It is in use.

KK: Hmm, okay.

[00:45:40] JF: It's on Camp Street, which is—they've got a place here called the old city park, and Camp Street runs along one side of it.

KK: Okay.

JF: And Camp Street runs off of College Avenue, so it's—College Avenue is a main east/west thoroughfare—no, north/south

thoroughfare, and what's so interesting about—what is real interesting anyway is the temple in El Dorado—and Joe Stuart is the one who made all these arrangements originally—is shared with the Mennonite community. The fact of the matter is they use it much more than we do, and it's been a wonderful arrangement.

KK: Well, good.

JF: Be—and it's the only one in the United States like it, that I understand, except for one in Brookline, Massachusetts. But anyway, these people have taken real good care of the building, and there's nothing that deteriorates faster than an unoccupied building. But they've improved the heating and cooling system, and I can't begin to tell you the improvements that they've made on the building. And they use it, and they keep—take good care of it. The leader is a fellow named Mervin Mast, who used to be the administrator of the Hudson Nursing Home, which is owned by the county here. And he's available. I talked to him yesterday. If you need to talk to him, we can get in touch with him.

[01:47:46] KK: That—we may wanna do that the next time we come down because that's a whole other perspective.

JF: Yeah. That's really different . . .

KK: Yeah.

JF: . . . I think. The . . .

KK: Well, that's fantastic.

JF: It is. Well, in my travels, y'know, through the South, I made it a kind of a point to touch base with these various Jewish communities where I was when I had the time. And I could tell you a little bit about 'em, but that's not what you're interested in. You're tryin' to find out about El Dorado.

KK: Well, if it's in Arkansas we're interested.

JF: Well, [*laughs*] most of 'em aren't in Arkansas. They're in Mississippi—well, the unusual ones anyway. And like I say, this is through the Jewish—southern institute of Jewish information [*telephone rings*]. They got all that stuff. They can tell you details.

[01:48:52] KK: Mh-hmm. Well, did you ever—you said you—when you first got here and started tryin' to sell engines and pumps to these farmers, you kinda indicated that there was a little resistance to you simply because you were from the North.

JF: A Yankee.

KK: Was the Yankee thing bigger than the Jewish thing?

JF: Well . . .

KK: They probably didn't even know you were Jewish . . .

JF: . . . well . . .

KK: . . . a lotta times.

JF: Well, y'know, that's a tough question to try to answer. Y'know, one of the things that I've always been proud of is the way I was accepted wherever I went. In fact it's amazing, but some of the places I've been, no Jew has ever been before.

KK: Really?

JF: Right. I'm sure of that.

KK: Some towns and . . .

[01:49:51] JF: Right. And I always remember—now this is Louann, Arkansas, not very far away from here—and the—it just so happened that the mayor and his daughter in Louann one time when I was workin' up there with them on a water well, they were what I call avid Baptists or—y'know, they're real interested in talkin' to me about Judaism 'cause they had no knowledge of it, see? And unfortunately, I'm not that smart about about Judaism, y'know. I'm not really that well educated, so I might've given 'em some misinformation. I'm sorry if I did, but that's the extreme, y'know. But other than that, most of the time they didn't pay any attention and the—just the—if anything, you're just a Yankee, y'know.

[01:51:02] KK: Yeah [*laughs*], the accent.

JF: Yeah, that's all there was to that. They picked that up right away, y'know. "Where are you from?" Y'know.

KK: Yeah.

JF: "Where are you from?"

KK: I can hear a little bit of that northeastern . . .

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . Boston . . .

JF: [*Unclear words*].

KK: . . . Connecticut, New York kinda sound.

JF: Can you imagine after fifty years? [*KK laughs*] I can't get rid of it.

KK: [*Laughs*] No, I'm sure you can't.

JF: No.

KK: And don't need to now, but I mean . . .

JF: I . . .

KK: . . . I just think that's interesting.

JF: . . . I would just tell 'em, "I'm just a latter-day carpetbagger. That's all." [*KK laughs*] And that's true.

[01:51:32] KK: So you didn't run into a lotta Jewish prejudice, I guess because people really didn't even know what it even meant to be Jewish.

JF: Yeah, or what—well, y'know, there's a—in the—in that famous

play, *South Pacific*, they got a song in there. "You got to be taught to hate", y'know. And these people just never were taught

KK: Well, you know, if you don't have a very big Jewish community, then you don't have any—you probably don't have any prejudice 'cause you don't have a s—you know, you don't have anybody who's already against you.

JF: Well, it's all economic, they way I see it, y'know. And usually where they have a large congregation or somethin' like that, there's gonna be some conflict business-wise. And it's just natural to blame the group for actions of the individuals, y'know. And I'll tell you this—I'll admit that some of the Jews are pretty sharp businesspeople. Very sharp and, y'know, I attribute it to the fact that for centuries they were not allowed to own land. And the only way they could make a livin' was trading. They could take the Rothschilds, who are bankers worldwide—y'know, how did that all begin? And some of these other famous families. Well, one of the most famous ones is that Canadian bootlegger, [KK laughs] [MFS edit: Samuel] Bronfman.

KK: Oh, yeah, that's right.

JF: I guess he couldn't make a livin' any other way. [KK laughs] He went to bootleggin' and the—now he's a—really respected,

y'know . . .

KK: Oh, yeah.

JF: . . . member of the government and everything else. But it's economic. That's what I say anyway. They're tryin' to make a livin'.

[01:54:02] KK: So you've had a pretty good time in Arkansas.

JF: I think so.

KK: Y'know, you were successful. You had . . .

JF: Oh, well . . .

KK: . . . your family here. Your son's taken over the business.

JF: Yeah, I'm satisfied. I'm pleased. That's why I'm here.

That's why I haven't moved.

KK: Yeah, 'cause you've moved around quite a bit. You had some other opportunities. It's just kinda interesting how it worked out.

[01:54:24] JF: Oh, yeah. Well, you know, I've spent a lotta time in Central America. I say a lotta time. I used to go down there every year between Christmas and New Year's, at least, and sometimes more than once a year. But—and—I'm talkin' about a place called Costa Rica. Well, there's a Jewish community there, and I'm familiar with 'em. I'm acquainted with 'em. What's so strange or so interesting about it is that Jewish

community—the people that I knew in Costa Rica—now live in Miami.

KK: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[01:55:11] JF: This is the best place in the world to be for anybody—Jews, Muslims, [*KK laughs*] blacks, whites, pinks—whatever you are. And everybody wants to come to United States. Now this bunch that I'm talkin' about in Costa Rica—they started out in Russia and went to Argentina. This is during the Holocaust. And they went to Argentina 'cause they couldn't get anywheres else. So many of 'em went to Cuba . . .

KK: Right.

JF: . . . just to get close to United States, see? Gettin'—move in that direction. This is where they wanted to be and eventually they got here—some of 'em. And some of 'em are still in Singapore and in Havana and other places like that. They never made it to the United States. I'm just fortunate that my family made it here.

KK: Yeah, before you were even born you were—so that . . .

JF: Well, that's true.

KK: So you were born an American citizen. That made it easier . . .

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . I guess.

JF: Yeah.

KK: I feel fortunate as well. My family were basically, you know, dirt farmers in either Czechoslovakia or Austria-Hungary before they moved over here and so, you know, I could've been in the same boat.

JF: Yeah. Yeah, that's interesting. It was all economic.

[01:56:54] KK: Yeah. Well, what else would you like to tell us today?

JF: Well, gee, I just got so many words in me. [KK laughs] Y'know, I'm a great talker. I love to talk.

KK: Well, we did a pretty good job of gettin' through chronologically—getting through your life and talking about your time here in Arkansas. Now is your son married?

JF: Yes.

KK: Did he marry someone from Arkansas or from somewhere else?

JF: No, his wife is from El Dorado. And her name was—her maiden name was Wright, and her father [MFS edit: Robert Wright] was a travelin' salesman for the Lion Oil Company.

KK: Uh-huh. What's her first name?

JF: Jane.

KK: Jane Wright was her original—okay.

[01:57:38] JF: Yeah, that's right. Now that's another story, see?

You know, with prosperity, the Jews prosper—it seems like—I don't know how to describe it, but they don't marry Jews. Now my wife was born a Catholic. But I can kinda—there's no way to justify marrying out of the faith, really, but I can say—tell you that she taught Hebrew school here in El Dorado. I'm real proud of that. But not many people know this, but I was not a youngster when I got married. In fact I got married in—by a justice of the peace in Connecticut, and I never will forget what he said. 'Course, I had to get a waiver in order to get married. That's another story. I was workin' for Kerr-McGee, and we moved a drillin' rig to a place off of Gulfport, Mississippi, a place called Chandeleur Island. And this drillin' had been built in New Orleans. It was on a barge. And Alexander Shipyard built it in New Orleans. And I was assigned to ride with it as they brought it over. And it was a bad time of the year. They were having hurricanes and so forth. But anyway, we got safely to Chandeleur Island and at the same time that we're movin', so is the derrick barge that's gonna lift this platform off and set it in the water. Well, we all got over there okay, and it was early in the mornin' when we got there. I got on the boat and went to Gulfport. I didn't—my job was over. All I was supposed to do was make sure they got there—just keep in touch, you know, by

radio—let 'em know what's goin' on. Well, when I got to Gulfport I found out that they broke a sling and dropped the platform and bent it. So they had to take it all the way back to New Orleans to get it fixed. My boss, Bill Baxter, says to me—he says, "Feinberg, now's a good time for you to take a vacation 'cause we can't do anything." And I wasn't supposed to take my vacation until June, and this was April. And I was gonna get married in June. So there I was in Gulfport. I called up my wife—my future wife—and says, "We're gonna get married [*KK laughs*] 'cause I got my vacation now." So I went—got a guy to drive me to New Orleans in my ol' car, and he dumped me off at the airport. And I remember havin' trouble gettin' a ticket because all my identification had a different location. [*KK laughs*] But finally, they found a—enough information even though somethin' was out of date, and they sold me a ticket. And I flew up. And my father met me and loaned me his car, and I got to Connecticut, where I had an uncle [*MFS edit: Hy Reiner*] livin' who was the dean of the University of Connecticut at Storrs, Connecticut. And I knew he knew people there, so I asked him to help me get married. He was about my age. He wasn't—he was just a little bit older than me, this uncle of mine.

KK: Now how old were you then?

JF: Thirty-nine.

KK: Thirty-nine. Okay, so you did get married a little late.

JF: Yeah. So anyway—either that or twenty-nine. I don't know.

[*Laughter*] It was a long time ago. [*KK laughs*] Anyway . . .

TM: Actually can we break right here and change tapes?

KK: Yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[02:02:43] KK: What year was that? You remember what year you got married?

JF: About 1950.

KK: About 1950, and you [*sound of tapes being put into cases*] were born in [19]21, so . . .

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . you were—yeah, you were twenty-nine, right? That right? Twenty-nine.

JF: Twenty-nine.

KK: Twenty-nine.

JF: Yeah.

[02:02:59] KK: And that's older than a lotta people in those days. A lotta people got married when they were eighteen or twenty or twenty-two.

JF: That's right. I was a old-timer by then. I was desperate. [*KK*

laughs] Anyway this uncle of mine—that's another story—but his name was Hyman. Hyman Reiner. And I called him up and told him what I had to do or was tryin' to do and asked him to help me. And he knew this justice of the peace, so he made the arrangements. And, see, in those days you had to wait, like, three days or three weeks, and that—take all kinds of tests before you could get married—y'know, blood tests and whatever.

KK: Right, right.

JF: So they waived all that. Got 'em to waive all that, see? 'Cause I didn't have time to mess around. I was gonna get married now.

[02:03:59] KK: You were twenty-nine years old. It was 1950, and so you got away with a little bit there—a little bit of the rules.

JF: Yeah. Well, and because I had political connections, see? So what I started to tell you is this justice of the peace is when we showed up there, y'know, it was kind of unusual for him because here I was from Louisiana and so forth and so on. He says, "Well, you look like you're old enough to know what you're doin'." Well, I guess he did know that he—I guess he was a good judge 'cause fifty years later I'm still married.

KK: There you go. It was meant to be.

JF: Yeah. That's the best thing I ever did, bar none.

KK: I know the feelin'. I've been married fifteen years, and I'd—I

would agree completely with you.

JF: Yeah. Well, you really don't know—I say you really don't know most of the things that I've been through, and my wife has stuck with me.

KK: Hmm. Well, I know you know, you had all those job changes and those moves and she . . .

JF: Well, that was . . .

KK: . . . she put up with all that.

[02:05:19] JF: That was nothin'. In [19]63, I had an aircraft accident, and they gave me up for dead.

KK: Oh, really? What happened?

JF: Well, I zigged instead of zagged, I guess. [*KK laughs*] Somethin' like that. But . . .

KK: You—now were you flyin' the plane? Were . . .

JF: Yes.

KK: . . . oh, you were flying a small plane yourself?

JF: Yeah.

KK: . . . uh-huh. So you . . .

JF: I was on my way to New Orleans. Took off on three three sixty-three.

KK: Yeah. Where did you take off from, from El Dorado?

JF: El Dorado.

KK: Mh-hmm, and you were goin' to New Orleans.

[02:05:54] JF: Goin' to New Orleans, and it was foggy. I had no business takin' off. Anyway I spent three months in the hospital . . .

KK: Wow.

JF: . . . here in El Dorado.

KK: So you crashed in El Dorado . . .

JF: [*Unclear words*].

KK: . . . on take-off?

[02:06:15] JF: No, I was already on the way to New Orleans, and I changed my mind.

KK: Ah.

JF: I decided I'd better go back. I turned around and tried to get back to where I started because the weather was a—I couldn't see, y'know. It was foggy. I had no business flyin' in the first place. So anyway, I lost my nerve and hit a bunch of trees—close to the airport, but I wasn't close enough. And a fellow found me out there. Name was Taylor. Lawrence Taylor [MFS edit: Vernon Taylor]. Excuse me. He was eatin' breakfast, and he heard the plane and, y'know, he didn't like the way things sounded, y'know. And so he—this is him tellin' the story—he went out and looked around, y'know, and then he went back and

finished his breakfast. But he couldn't stay there. And he got out and looked for me, and he found me. 'Course, and then they came and got me and took me to the hospital and—but I had lost a lotta blood, and the only reason I lived was because I didn't smoke. You know, I was in pretty good physical condition when it happened. But what saved me—they brought me in on a gurney and set me down there in the hospital and just decided, I guess, "That's it, y'know? He's not gonna make it." But this—I call him a corpsman—he was a doctor's helper—he was black fellow by the name of Hall. He started packin' me in hot water bags and he just kept—'cause I was in shock, y'know. And that saved my life. And then I had a doctor here by the name of Joe B. Wharton, who had never seen anything like this before. But he—it didn't bother him any. He got right on it—got to work on it. And he used to—'course, I got to be pretty friendly with him after three months in the hospital, y'know. [*KK laughs*] He was a big joker. And there's a—the nursing school at Magnolia's named after him, the Wharton school at the university there. But he—I kept on after him. I wanted to get outta that hospital bad 'cause I had a convention of the B'nai B'rith, which is a Jewish fraternity in Pine Bluff, and they'd just elected me state president [*KK laughs*], see, and here I am layin' in a hospital. I

kept on after him. So he says to me one day—he says, "See this nose?" He says—see, that nose isn't mine. He built that for me. He says, "Feinberg, you show up there amongst all them Jews with that Irish nose, and they're gonna run you outta the organization." [KK laughs] But anyway, me and my wife was runnin' the business 'cause this was in [19]63, and we started in [19]57, and it wasn't very old. And bless her, she and some friends of mine kept it goin'.

[02:10:14] KK: Now how old was your son at that time?

JF: Well . . .

KK: Let's see, what year was he born?

JF: He was [laughs]—he wasn't very old. He was born in [19]54 [MFS edit: 1951].

KK: Right. So he was only ten years old maybe.

[02:10:25] JF: Yeah. He helped her. But I had a fellow helpin' me whose name was E. C. Fore. *F-O-R-E*. And this was a real character. He was related to the governor, McKeithen, of Louisiana. That was his cousin. He—that's where he was from, down there around Columbia, Louisiana. I found this out later. And then when we—he was helpin' me, and he told my wife, "Don't worry about me. Whether you pay me or not, I'm stayin'."

KK: Oh.

JF: I mean, how could you miss . . .

KK: Yeah. That's incredible.

JF: . . . when you have those kind of friends? He's since passed on.
Poor fellow, he had the all-timer's, and it got pretty bad.

KK: Well, you have been very fortunate. You've had really good
friends and family . . .

JF: Luck.

KK: . . . lean on and luck.

JF: Luck, too.

KK: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JF: And lots of it.

[02:11:35] KK: Did you keep flyin' after that?

JF: Yes. [*KK laughs*] Yeah.

KK: Didn't fly in the fog anymore though, huh?

JF: I hope not. [*KK laughs*] I don't think so. I took some chances,
but that's my nature. But I had several planes after that. In
fact, when I crashed that airplane I had another one—a spare.
[*Laughs*] And soon as I was able, I was out flyin' it. And it was
a—it, by the way, is now in the Smithsonian Institute in
Washington.

[02:12:17] KK: Why is that?

JF: Well, that's because it's a rare bird. It's a J-3 Piper Cub, and what happened was that it ended up belongin' to some people in Houston, and they completely refurbished it. And then they donated it to the Smithsonian. Well, I got a call one day from a good friend of mine, Carroll Blewster, who's another flier, and he says, "Did you know your airplane was in the Smithsonian?" And I—"No, I know nothin' about it." So he's a buff at the computer, and he ran off all these pages, givin' the history of that airplane, and I've got a copy of that in my desk drawer. And that airplane—I got rid of it—I sold it to some people in Mississippi that were gonna use it to hunt ducks. And then they sold it, y'know, and the records on airplanes are kept very accurately. And you can tell all about an airplane. It's in the book.

KK: Yeah, all the maintenance and who owned it and . . .

[02:13:56] JF: Everything. Yeah. So—but I—the reason I sold it is because it didn't have an electric starter. You had to prop it off. And also it was real slow. If you hit a good headwind you wouldn't go anywheres. [KK laughs] Sixty-five horsepower, y'know. So I got a hundred-and-fifty horsepower—well, the next airplane I got is the one I crashed, and that was a—what they called a Super Cruiser, the original Cub was a two-place—tandem, one in the front and one in the back. And this Super

Cruiser was one in the front and two in the back. And it had electric starter and a much larger engine—much faster. *[Footsteps can be heard]*. But I ruined that airplane quickly. I didn't keep it *[KK laughs]* very long. Man, I tore it up. The only thing that was salvageable from that airplane after that crash was the engine. A guy in Monroe wanted the engine and the radio. And some people in someplace or another wanted that radio. And the only thing I got is the propeller—bent-up propeller.

KK: *[Laughs]* You still have it?

JF: Yep.

KK: There you go.

JF: I look at it every once in a while and think of what I fool I was.

[Laughter]

KK: Well, yeah, I know what you mean. We're lucky sometimes.

[02:15:32] JF: Yeah, I sure was. But the luckiest part of it all is the fact that I married my wife because just think about it. Here I am, in the hospital tore up bad, got two *[MFS edit: three]* kids and no income. And she coulda picked up and gone back to her mother and father—they were still livin'—but she didn't.

[02:16:02] KK: So you had two kids by then? When did you have your second kid?

JF: Well, two [MFS edit: three] years after the first one.

KK: Right. And who is your second child?

JF: My second child is my daughter, Dorothy, who now lives in Wyoming.

KK: Is she married?

JF: Yes. She has two children, and one of 'em is a—her son is a freshman at Montana State. And she is an amazing person. She is. She had juvenile diabetes.

KK: Oh.

JF: Discovered when she was sixteen [MFS edit: fifteen]. And her doctor was Dr. Elder, the one that became the surgeon general.

KK: Yeah, Joycelyn. Uh-huh.

JF: And . . .

KK: We've interviewed her.

JF: Did you?

KK: Oh, yeah.

JF: Isn't she somethin'?

KK: She is. [*Laughs*] She is. She's a very strong, smart woman.

JF: Yeah. Unusual.

KK: Mh-hmm.

[02:17:11] JF: It—well just a coincidence, but my wife took my daughter to Little Rock for treatment, y'know, when she

discovered that she was a diabetic. And it just so happened Dr. Elder got the case, and she was practicing in Little Rock, I guess, at the medical center. And they said she'd never have any children. Now she's got this son and a daughter who's in junior high now.

KK: Well, good for her.

[02:17:48] JF: Yeah, and she always wanted to go to Montana [KK *laughs*] for some reason or other, and that—the name sounded good to her, you know. And there she is within shoutin' distance now, y'know, to where they live in Wyoming is just about sixty-five miles south of Yellowstone, which is in Montana. They're just south of Jackson Hole.

KK: Oh, yeah. Beautiful country.

JF: Yeah, they live in Star Valley, and her husband—it's another story—Bob is a gold-mining geologist. He wants you to understand it's gold-mining geologist. He's not just an ordinary geologist, see?

KK: Ah.

JF: And he was teachin' at Monticello when he met her. And they cancelled the geology program at Monticello, and he coulda stayed there and taught mathematics or somethin' else, but he's a geologist.

KK: Right.

[02:18:55] JF: So they got married, and he packed up. He had a trailer—one of those aluminum trailers—and they moved to Durango, Colorado. He had during the summertime carried his students up in that part of the country, and he'd lived up there. In fact, he's a—also had gone to the University of Wyoming. He has a degree from University of Wyoming also. He did that while he was workin' up there in the oil industry, of all things, see? [KK laughs] But he don't want anything to do with petroleum. He's a gold-mining geologist, but—so they moved to Durango, and he got a job in a mine up there. And this mine was one of these old mines, and it was in the side of a mountain, see? And they could only mine during the summer 'cause in the winter you couldn't get in and out. He'd tell this story how they got up there one spring and dug into where the bulldozer was, so they could plow out, y'know, and got into the mine, and it was full of water. On top of the mountain was a lake, and during the winter the lake had decided to change positions, and it was now in the mine. [KK laughs] And then every two years they'd move. He stayed there in Durango for about two years, and they—then they were in suburb of Denver. He was workin' a—in the main office of this mining company in Denver, and it belonged to a

Canadian company [MFS edit: Amax]. So many of those gold-mining companies do belong to Canadian companies. And so he ended up—after that they—I think after that they moved to Sparks, Nevada, which is just outside of Reno. And they had a mine there out there in the desert.

KK: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

[02:21:23] JF: And I got to visit out there at that mine. They used to have problems in that this is a—who would ever hear or expect this—they used to have problems with ducks that was on the fly-way and, y'know, the—in these—this is an open-pit mine. They're just tearin' off the top of a mountain, see, and they had these pits that they treated the ore with, I guess, and they had chemicals in it, and they had to put nets over these ponds to keep the ducks away, otherwise it'd kill the ducks, y'know. They'd be in bad trouble with the environmentalists. And what I remember about that place out there—right near the mine there was a thermal well, and they were usin' the steam off the well to generate electricity.

KK: Wow.

JF: They had a generating station there, and they took me down there and introduced me. It turns out that this equipment—made in Israel—special equipment on this thermal well. That, I

remember.

[02:22:59] KK: Mh-hmm. You didn't sell 'em a pump?

JF: I didn't [*KK laughs*] sell 'em anything, not down there. That was really somethin' special. That—those guys out there in the middle of nowhere were makin' this electricity and sendin' it—well, there wasn't no—there was plenty of places they could send it to right nearby. I'm tryin' to think of the name of that town—there was a town near the mine and near this well that originally was set up as a watering station for the railroad, you know, that went across through there. It's nothin' but desert, you know, and they had a—we got to spend some time there when we went down to visit.

[02:24:01] KK: So did you have any other children? Just those two?

JF: I have another—a daughter, who lives in Memphis—is my youngest.

KK: What's her name?

JF: Myra. She's a—different than the other two—much different. She was married for seven years and split, and she's been a divorcée now for about seven years, I guess. And she just got back recently—she spent a year in Kuwait . . .

KK: Wow.

JF: . . . under a contract. She was a—she's an a—her profession is

event coordinator, whatever that means. And she has her own business, and the latest thing that she was in charge of this Memphis in May.

KK: Mh-hmm. Big, big thing.

[02:24:58] JF: In Memphis. But it's a seasonal thing. It comes and goes and for—before she went to Kuwait, she had real good connections out in California. And anytime Hollywood would send somebody this way, they'd call her to make the arrangements to help—like when they made that movie, the *Memphis Belle* . . .

KK: Mh-hmm, yeah.

JF: . . . well, she was in charge of the personnel. Y'know, makin' arrangements for them, and she got to meet all the actors and the original members of the crew that showed up, you know.

KK: Sure.

JF: All those celebrities. And she used to go down to Daytona whenever they had the races down there and spend a month down there takin' care of things for all their VIPs. Oh, the—'course, when she went to Kuwait, she lost all those connections, y'know, and had to start all over again. And that's what she's doin' now. But she's tough.

KK: No doubt.

JF: She really is tough.

[02:26:26] KK: You have anything else you wanna tell us about bein' in Arkansas?

JF: Just a wonderful place to be. Can't—I can't say enough good about it.

KK: Do you consider yourself an Arkansan?

JF: Oh, yes, definitely. I spent most of my life here.

KK: Well, tell you what, look right in the camera for me and tell the camera your name, your age and where you live and say, "I am an Arkansan."

JF: Okay. That's easy. [*Laughs*] I am J. R.—Julius Reiner Feinberg, and I will be eighty-eight December 25. I was born in 1921.

KK: And where do you live?

JF: I live at 1208 West Elm in El Dorado, Arkansas. And it's great to be an Arkansan.

KK: Fantastic.

TM: I'm tryin' to . . .

JF: Especially now.

[Tape stopped]

[02:27:42] KK: Let's do that one more time.

TM: His name and "I'm an Arkansan."

KK: Yeah, just say—just tell us your name, and you're from El

Dorado, and "I am an Arkansan." Right here.

JF: I'm J. R.—Julius Reiner Feinberg, 1208 West Elm Street in El Dorado, Arkansas. And I'm proud to be an Arkansan. An Arkie.

KK: [*Laughs*] Great. Thank you so much. Wonderful. Great job.

JF: Hmm, I don't know about that but . . .

KK: Oh, no. You were good.

[02:28:26 End of Interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]