

**Transcript of Interview with Dr. Daniel Schwartz
Homestead Hebrew Congregation Oral History Project
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TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

Daniel Schwartz: I'm Dr. Dan Schwartz. I was born in Glenwood, on January 4, 1906. So that makes me eighty-seven years old. Going on a hundred.

Anne Sheckter Powell: Is that how you feel? So you were born in Glenwood which is nearby but isn't really Homestead.

DS: Yeah. When I was an infant we moved to Homestead.

AP: Oh so you...

DS: Because our whole family was in Homestead.

AP: So that's why your parents came to Homestead.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Because the rest of your family was already there.

DS: My father and mother started a business in Glenwood. They started a grocery store on Second Avenue there, and I was born above the store there.

AP: Glenwood is like close to Hazelwood, is that right?

DS: Yeah, yeah it runs right in, it's just over the bridge there.

AP: So did they keep the store in Hazelwood when they moved to Homestead?

DS: Yeah my father kept the store. They had a grocery store first, then he went into the wholesale liquor business, and he stayed in the wholesale liquor business 'til prohibition came in in 1919. We had a peculiar thing happen after about six months after he went out of business. We lived, at that time we lived on Ninth Avenue in Homestead. Two big fellas came to the front door, and at that time in the liquor business, if you were a wholesaler, you didn't, you bought a barrel of whiskey, but it was kept in the government warehouse and you had a certificate, and when you wanted your barrel of whiskey you presented the certificate and the government gave you your barrel of whiskey.

AP: Oh so they kept it until you, until you needed it.

DS: That's right. So when prohibition came in my father had thirty thousand dollars of whiskey in the government warehouse, so you can imagine how much that was in 1919. So these two guys came to the front door and my father and mother immediately spotted them as bootleggers, and they came in and they wanted to buy my father's certificates. So my father said to them, "You, we have prohibition now, you can't get them out." So they says, "Oh you just sell us the certificates, we'll take care of that." So he says, "(unclear) no, I don't want to have anything to do with you fellas." And they went out. Several months later he got a letter from the government, liquor control, the government saying somebody went into the government warehouse and drained out the whiskey from the barrels and substituted water. In other words these people who run the warehouse got paid off.

AP: So your father, when prohibition came in, did he lose all the money that he had with the government, with those certificates?

DS: Yeah, he lost that because, he wouldn't have been able to do anything with it anyhow, you know because prohibition was on. But before that he had gone into the real estate business. So for the rest of the time he was in the real estate business.

AP: Was the real estate business in Homestead?

DS: No, mostly in Pittsburgh, and the Hazelwood-Glenwood area, we had most of our real estate there.

AP: And when he had the wholesale liquor, was it also in that Hazelwood-Glenwood area?

DS: Yes.

AP: So he only, he always had his business someplace other...

DS: Yeah, always in the Glenwood-Hazelwood area.

AP: Was there more of a Jewish community in Homestead than there was in Glenwood-Hazelwood?

DS: Oh yeah. There were very people there. When I was a boy we had over a hundred Jewish families in Homestead. And the, you know, the membership in the shul was, as I say, over a hundred families. So there were probably around five hundred Jewish people lived in the Homestead area.

AP: So obviously it was even attracting people like your parents who didn't really have a job or business there, who came because it was a thriving community.

DS: Yeah. Most Jewish people were in business in Homestead. Dixon Street was where they were centered. That's, the mill is there now. In fact, I think I told you the other day,

my grandfather, that was my mother's father, had a store there. And before they had a bridge from Homestead over to Brown's Hill, he used to have somebody row him across the river then get in a carriage and drive downtown in the carriage to buy things for his store. That would take him all day.

AP: What kind of store did he have?

DS: What?

AP: What kind of store did he have?

DS: He had a clothing store on Dixon Street.

AP: A clothing store.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Did they also use the river to go downtown?

DS: Yeah.

AP: So there was like a boating traffic that was going down there.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Now do you remember this yourself?

DS: No I don't! They told, no that was, no I don't remember that.

AP: Were your grandparents immigrants?

DS: Oh yeah, sure.

AP: Where did they come from?

DS: They were all Hungarians.

AP: It was a large Hungarian community?

DS: Oh yeah. And in the shul there was always friction between the Hungarian Jews and the Litvak Jews.

AP: Oh, there were.

DS: Oh sure. Oh yeah.

AP: Was that because the Hungarians didn't...

DS: The Hungarians considered themselves above the Litvaks and the Russians.

AP: And the Hungarians didn't speak Yiddish generally.

DS: Oh sure they did.

AP: Oh did they?

DS: Oh yeah. But they spoke Hungarian too.

AP: A lot.

DS: Oh yeah. My parents could speak Slavish and Hungarian and Polish. And one of my mother's brothers was a physician in Homestead, Dr. Moss, and he spoke several languages because at that time you know they always had a lot of Europeans in, and he spoke all these different languages.

AP: So people who wanted to get along in that community would go...

DS: Yeah. And when we, when we lived on Ninth Avenue when I was a kid my mother always employed a live-in maid, they would get these girls that came over from Europe and couldn't speak English, and they were glad to work for us because my mother could speak their language. Now we had my father, and five boys, so that was six of us, and that maid used to iron, we'd change shirts every day, and that girl used to wash and iron forty-two shirts every week. That's part of the laundry.

AP: Oh my God. So you're one of five boys.

DS: Yeah. I'm the only one left now.

AP: Were you the youngest?

DS: No, I was the second one. My oldest brother was eighty-nine, he just died in February of cancer. In fact, cancer runs in my family. My father had cancer, he died at fifty-two. And my mother had cancer, but she didn't die of that, she died of a heart attack. Then three of my brothers had cancer. There's only one other brother and myself, are the only two out of seven of us who didn't have cancer.

AP: Interesting.

DS: Yeah. It runs in my family.

AP: So there were no girls in your family.

DS: Yes. The oldest one was a girl. She was the first born, and she died when I was an infant. She was four years old, she had scarlet fever and then her kidneys failed from that. So after she died my mother kept trying to have another girl, but she never succeeded. So she gave up after five boys.

AP: I was going to say, she certainly ended up with a good-size family with all this trying.

DS: Yes. In those days all our families were large families.

AP: And then you had aunts and uncles also in Homestead?

DS: Oh yeah. My mother had one brother who was a physician, one who was a dentist and another one, and two others who were businessmen, and she had one sister.

AP: Were they all in Homestead?

DS: Yes, they were all here. And then my mother's sister moved to Sunbury with her family, but they were recently in Homestead, too.

AP: That's a small town, too.

DS: Oh yeah.

AP: So your, you had uncles other, who were born in the 1800s who became professional...

DS: Oh yeah. Sure my uncle who was a physician told me he didn't even finish high school, and he went to medical school for two years and he came out and he got his license to start a practice, that's how they did, because he graduated in 1905. In those days they didn't have the medical training they have now. In fact, he said one of his classmates went up to the dean and says, "Doctor, I don't think I know enough to go out and practice." He says, "Well take another six months." You know there was no such thing as a post-doctorate training of any kind. But those doctors were good. They learned.

AP: Well they probably were very bright people.

DS: Oh sure.

AP: ---

DS: Oh yeah they did everything.

AP: They probably saw more than what our doctors see now.

DS: Sure.

AP: So you went to school in Homestead in the early part of the century.

DS: Well, I graduated high school in 1923, Homestead High School. And I went to college at Penn State.

AP: You went away to school.

DS: Oh yes. And I had, my older brother went to Penn State, too. Then after I graduated Penn State, it was very difficult for a Jewish boy to get into medical school at Pitt, they had a quota, and I think they only took five or six every year, and you had to know somebody to get in. So I went to medical school in Edinburgh, Scotland. I got my medical education there. And they have a more practical method of medical education there.

AP: How did you come upon Scotland?

DS: Well, I had some friends that went there, too. Yes, when I was there, there were oh, a hundred and fifty American students in Edinburgh.

AP: Were most of them Jewish?

DS: Yes.

AP: So generally speaking, what Jewish...

DS: Students couldn't get in here, they went abroad.

AP: They sort of knew.

DS: Yeah, and some of them went to London too.

AP: That's interesting in a way it seems like those medical schools didn't discriminate against Jews as much.

DS: No, no, no. And in those days we had quite a few blacks in the school in Edinburgh, too, you know that came from the British colonies. Now in those days no black could ever get into an American medical school. And they also had a very high percentage of women going to medical school there.

AP: Really?

DS: Yeah and this was way, this was in the twenties and thirties.

AP: That's very interesting.

DS: So I would say about thirty percent of our students were girls.

AP: So they had women, they had Jews, they had blacks.

DS: Yeah, there was absolutely no discrimination. And we got a very fine education there too, because in our second year we went to work in a hospital. In my third year there I was learning how to give anesthetics in the operating room.

AP: So you had a lot more of a practical experience than you would have had.

DS: Sure. In my maternity work, they had a maternity hospital there, and in two weeks I delivered twenty-five babies under supervision, of course. So by the time I came home and I was an intern I also learned how to give anesthetics, so I could do, so when I went to intern in Sewickley Hospital, they were surprised at how much I could do. More than the other interns who were American graduates.

AP: How did you happen to go to Sewickley?

DS: Well, there, too, it was difficult for a Jewish student to get an internship in a Pittsburgh hospital. And a friend of mine got me into Sewickley. It's a good hospital.

AP: It didn't have probably any Jewish staff or patients.

DS: Oh yes. We had some Jewish doctors on the staff from Ambridge.

AP: Oh you did.

DS: Oh yeah.

AP: I see so that sort of image of Sewickley is an old, is that --- in terms of...

DS: No, no. The, of course, Ambridge is right next to Sewickley and quite a few doctors worked in Ambridge, too, that were on staff.

AP: And that would be a different population altogether.

DS: Yeah. Yeah, their population was similar to Homestead's.

AP: Now when you were growing up in Homestead, actually to go back to, there were black people living in Homestead then, too.

DS: Not a lot. No, not a lot. They came in mostly after, after the war.

AP: Oh so most of the black population is ---.

DS: See that, down below, Sixth Avenue and down below that, that was all white, and then before World War II, they tore down a lot of homes to build a U.S. Steel building for the war effort. And that's when blacks started to come into Homestead.

AP: Oh I see. Was that true all along the valley, Braddock and Rankin and....

DS: Yeah. You can ride along the street in Braddock and nine out of the ten people you see walking on the street are black on Braddock Avenue.

AP: In those days, were all those little boroughs...

DS: Braddock was like Homestead in those, yeah. Yeah.

AP: So, let's see, you went to cheder, I guess.

DS: Oh yeah, I started, we all, we lived right in back of the shul, we lived on Ninth Avenue, the shul's on Tenth Avenue, and we all had to start in cheder six o'clock and we went there every day after school. Now most of the boys after their bar mitzvah, they quit. But my mother made us go longer. My older brother and I went to cheder until we were fifteen. We were very disgusted.

AP: You didn't like it?

DS: No, everybody else quit.

AP: You were the oldest people there. Well you must have been very knowledgeable though.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Yeah? Did you also go to Sunday school?

DS: Oh, yes we had Sunday school too.

AP: So you went what, four days a week to Hebrew school?

DS: No, six days. We even had it on Saturday morning after shul.

AP: Oh.

DS: And on Sundays we had Sunday school.

AP: So now, did they have regular teachers for cheder or was it the rabbi?

DS: Well that rabbi usually taught and then later on they had a teacher there too. But usually it was the rabbi who taught the cheder.

AP: Did you also learn any of those other languages, the middle-European languages?

DS: No, I never learned, yes I could speak German. Because we had a woman who worked in our house who was born in Germany and she was with us for five years when I was a youngster and she taught me German. Of course you know German's a lot like Jewish to a certain extent. Then she and her daughter went back to Germany, this was before World War I, and we never heard from her again. But my father and mother, they could speak Slavish and Hungarian and Russian, and even some Polish.

AP: But you didn't pick up any of them. None of your brothers did.

DS: No, no we didn't.

AP: I guess we'll go back. Do you remember the rabbis from your early days?

DS: Yes. First rabbi I remember was Rabbi Widom, I think I told you his son was an architect, became an architect.

AP: You said he designed your house.

DS: Yeah. Excellent architect. But he did mostly commercial work. And Rabbi Widom was with us for years and years, then finally they made a change for some reason or other. And also at that time the rabbi was a schochet too. In other words he killed the chickens on Fridays, and I used to hate, I used to take these live chickens down to his house and to his backyard, and he would, it made me sick to watch him cut the throats of these chickens.

AP: These are the chickens for your family.

DS: Yeah. Yeah you bought your chickens live and you had the schochet kill them. And this was before butcher shops sold chicken, kosher chickens.

AP: So the butcher shops just sold beef and lamb.

DS: Yeah that's right, kosher, they didn't sell chicken.

AP: So you had to go to...

DS: You had to buy chickens from a chicken store.

AP: Where did you go, did you buy the chicken?

DS: Well my mother bought the chickens, yeah there were chicken stores in Homestead, yeah.

AP: Right in Homestead.

DS: Yeah, oh sure.

AP: And then your job was to take these squawking chickens...

DS: Well we had their legs tied. It was only two chickens at a time.

AP: That's enough.

DS: Yeah, he used to get fifteen cents for killing a chicken.

AP: Fifteen cents. But everybody was there I take it, with their chicken.

DS: Oh yeah.

AP: So you had to wait your turn with the chickens until he killed it.

DS: Yeah.

AP: And you watched him do it?

DS: Yeah. As I say it was gruesome.

AP: And then who plucked the feathers?

DS: My mother did. Or she had the maid do them, the housework, yeah she had to pluck the chickens at home.

AP: Were they Sabbath observant, your family?

DS: Oh yeah. My mother, we were very strict. Nothing doing from sundown on Friday 'til Saturday night.

AP: Oh I see.

DS: My mother did all, for the weekend, she did all the cooking on Friday afternoon. Yeah we were very Orthodox, in fact the whole shul was Orthodox then. We had two sets of dishes, and on Passover we brought down the Passover dishes from the attic and had to haul the other ones out. Yeah, my parents were very strict.

AP: Do you, were, do you think most of the families were as Sabbath observant as your parents?

DS: Oh yes I think most of them were.

AP: So everybody lived near the shul, close enough that they could walk.

DS: Yeah we were all within walking distance of the shul, sure.

AP: Just the same, your parents sent you away to college.

DS: Why not?

AP: Well it was unusual in those days wasn't it?

DS: No, no quite a few of the boys went away to college. Of course a lot of them went to Pitt, but we went to Penn State. Penn State was a land grant school and we had no tuition.

AP: No tuition?

DS: No, all we paid, all I paid was fifty dollars a semester, what they called an incidental fee, and at that time we had no tuition, and all we, and then I paid laboratory fees. So at that time, when I went to Penn State in the twenties, I graduate Penn State in 1927, it cost me seven hundred and fifty dollars a year to go to school there.

AP: That was for your room and board.

DS: Everything. Sure, I lived in a fraternity house, they didn't have any dormitories to speak of because sixty percent of the students there, lived, belonged to fraternities. We had sixty fraternities then. And my board and room at the fraternity house was ten dollars a week, for three meals a day.

AP: Was it a Jewish fraternity?

DS: Yes.

AP: Was it kosher?

DS: No, but we had four Jewish fraternities there.

AP: Was that the first time that you had eaten non-kosher?

DS: Oh no.

AP: (unclear)

DS: That's right, that's right.

AP: What was it like to be a Jewish child going to school in Homestead?

DS: Well we had quite a few Jewish students in all the classes. For instance, in my graduating class in Homestead High School we had sixty students, and ten or fifteen of them were Jewish.

AP: Oh really? So that was a reasonable percent at that time.

DS: Oh yeah.

AP: What about a social life? I assume that you did not date non-Jewish girls, at least while you were in high school.

DS: I didn't date girls, period. We had five boys at our house, we hated girls.

AP: Did you have non-Jewish friends?

DS: Yes. In fact when I started in practice some of them became patients of mine.

AP: So you went back and opened your practice in Homestead.

DS: Yeah. I started on Eighth Avenue. I originally started a general practice and then after I'd been practicing for five years, I went away to do post-graduate work in eye, ears, nose and throat because my uncle was a physician that did eye, ears, nose, and throat, and I was supposed to come back and take over his office. But while I was away he got sick and he retired, but I came back and I started on Eighth Avenue.

AP: Where did you go away, when you went away for the post-graduate study?

DS: I went to Dallas, I was in Parkland hospital, and then I took a course at Washington University in St. Louis.

AP: Now was it easier to do the post-graduate work as a Jew than...

DS: It didn't make any difference.

AP: So at that, was that because things had changed at that time?

DS: Yeah.

AP: So just in terms of years between, more of these things had opened up.

DS: Yeah. Post-graduate schools were different.

AP: All you had to do was hang on that long.

DS: Yeah.

AP: So, actually I'm sort of jumping around because you've got so many stories to tell that it's really interesting. But in the course of growing up then, you're saying that your sense of being in a general public school as a Jew was, didn't...

DS: No it didn't matter in Homestead at all.

AP: And the relationship between the Jews and the non-Jews in Homestead...

DS: It was pretty good, yeah. Yes we, when I was a boy we all had Boy Scout troops, in our shul we had seventy-five boys in a Boy Scout troop and seventy-five girls in a Girl Scout troop. And of course there were about fifteen troops in the Homestead area.

AP: So that's a lot.

DS: Yeah, and they had competitions, athletic competitions and so on.

AP: You had a Jewish scout leader?

DS: Oh yes. Sure.

AP: Somebody from the congregation who volunteered to do it?

DS: Yeah. Yeah we had a scout leader and assistant scout leader and so on.

AP: Was your bar mitzvah or your brothers' bar mitzvahs like bar mitzvahs like we know them today?

DS: Well, I think we were more strict. We didn't have the big fancy parties they have now. In fact, when I was bar mitzvahed then I had a party on Sunday, and I was mad because my mother invited girls to the party. I didn't want any girls there, it was supposed to be strictly a stag party for boys only.

AP: This was just for the kids, this was not for all the adults and everything.

DS: Yeah. And then there were several boys about my age who bar mitzvahed at about the same time, we went to the different parties on Sunday. And some of them had girls at their parties too, which I didn't approve of.

AP: ---

DS: Well as I say, we had five boys and we hated girls.

AP: You knew what you agreed on, and that was what you agreed on.

DS: In fact, when our female cousins used to visit us, we would make life miserable for them.

AP: Did they live in the area, those female cousins?

DS: Some of them did. And then later on of course we got older, like we had cousins from, would visit from Sunbury and so on.

AP: When you went to college all together, I assume there were not, was it unusual for a student to go on to college, I mean were you the exception in the...

DS: No it was rare. It wasn't common for...

AP: What about even in the Jewish community, was it...

DS: Well there were quite a few that went. I would say the percentage among the Jewish students was higher than the Gentiles. Most of them, after they graduated high school, they would get a job working down in the mill among the Gentiles.

AP: Did you know of any Jewish people who worked in the mill?

DS: Not very many. Not very many. They didn't, they were all usually went into businesses you know, or professions.

AP: Even going into the professions I guess was less in those days, from what you were saying, it was pretty tough to do, to find yourself a school.

DS: No I would say among Jewish boys there were quite a few of them who went into professions, became attorneys and physicians.

AP: Do you remember the First World War?

DS: Oh sure.

AP: Yeah.

DS: Sure, I was in, well First World War was 1918, I was twelve years old. And we were knitting squares for, to make blankets for the Red Cross.

AP: In school.

DS: Yes. And my mother taught me how to knit. And we were knitting squares and they put the squares together to make a blanket for the Red Cross. And I learned to knit, in fact I even knitted a sweater.

AP: Well there you are, you were an advanced student.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Was the, were there, do you remember if were there people from the Jewish community who went to that war?

DS: Oh sure. Oh yes. In fact in our shul we have, there were two plaques in there, one for the veterans from the First World War and one for the veterans from the Second World War. I think those plaques were moved over to the Beth Shalom.

AP: Yeah. That's where all the plaques went.

DS: Oh yes there were quite a few (tape cuts out)

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

DS: (tape cuts in) Polish and Russian then. There were very few Germans around.

AP: So that sense of where German people's loyalties were

DS: No, we didn't have any of that around here, not during World War I.

AP: Yeah. I'll jump ahead since we're talking about wars. During the second world war, do you have any memories of in the shul or in the Jewish community of what was happening to the Jewish community in Europe?

DS: Not very much. We didn't know much what was going on there. That all came out after World War II, we didn't know much of what was going on. Of course I was away from home. I went into the Air Force while I was finishing my residency in Dallas in 19, I went in in 1942, into the Air Force. I went down to San Antonio, so I was in the service from 194-, August 1942 'til the end of the war. So I was in about four years.

AP: Where were you stationed?

DS: Well I was in San Antonio in the Air Force, and we moved to, we went to Australia, and we went in a roundabout way. We were on a troop train, we went up to Canada, the troop train went up to Canada from San Antonio and across there, and then down to New York State. And then we got on a boat at Staten Island, and then we went down the coast and through the Panama Canal and we went in a flotilla, you know a group of ships, and then on the other side of the canal, we were escorted by destroyers, we had about I think there were four passenger ships carrying personnel to Australia. So we were at sea about a month and we landed in Brisbane, and then we moved up to northern Australia and I was at an airbase there.

AP: Now I take it you were there as a doctor.

DS: Oh yes. Yes.

AP: And were you treating the people who were injured in that...

DS: No, no see I was in what was called rear echelon of the Air Force, our personnel repaired planes and tested them and put them together, they weren't in combat. In other words we were in Australia when there was no combat going there at all. So I had nothing to do with the wounded. We had, we had five doctors to take care of five thousand healthy men, and all we had was sick call. I only worked two or three hours a day, in Australia.

AP: --- in the war.

DS: Yeah. And then, and then we moved up to the Philippines on D-Day plus 30, and they picked, the man who picked out our campsite for us flew over there before the invasion and he picked out a campsite, it was a rice paddy, it was dry. And when we moved into that rice paddy it started to rain and we were in pup tents, and I woke up and we were on a little island with water all around us.

AP: And why did they move you to the Philippines?

DS: Because that's where the war was moving.

AP: You were taking care of different people.

DS: No I was still taking just care of my own men, yeah. And if anybody got sick I sent them to the hospital, I didn't even have to treat them for any hospitalization. And so we were in the Philippines for a year until the war was over.

AP: And you came back to Homestead.

DS: Mhm.

AP: Now when you lived in Homestead all those years growing up, I'm assuming from what you said, even though your father had a business in the city, that most of the rest of your life was really spent in Homestead.

DS: Yeah, I've always been in this area.

AP: But you didn't like, when you were, when your family was doing their general shopping and things like that, was most of that done in Homestead?

DS: No. Later on we used to do our shopping on Squirrel Hill, on Murray Avenue.

AP: Did you, for other kinds of Jewish, there, was all your Jewish life lived in Homestead though?

DS: Yeah.

AP: I mean there were not other kinds of activities or anything that you needed to go into the...

DS: No, that's right. We very seldom went into Pittsburgh for anything. As I say we used to do most of our, after World War II we used to do most of our shopping on Murray Avenue.

AP: Now, let's see when the war was over, were you married?

DS: No.

AP: Okay so you two weren't married, so you came back to Homestead, and you were living with your family?

DS: No, my mother had died while I was in Australia, so when I came back to our old house on Ninth Avenue, there was just myself and two of my brothers. Three of my brothers.

AP: And your father?

DS: My father had died when we was only fifty-two, he died the week I, in 1927. So...

AP: How did your mother manage then? I take it she had relatively grown sons who chipped in?

DS: Yeah, we were all college age. But my father left us well-provided. That used to gripe me because he made enough, he came to this country when he was eighteen years old with forty dollars in his pocket. And he got married and he raised five sons who all went to college. And yet I have had to sweat just to send two kids to college.

AP: That's right, it's really harder to work your way up these days.

DS: Oh sure.

AP: Or maintain your...

DS: Well the finances were different. As I say, when I went to Penn State it cost me eight hundred and fifty dollars a year. Look what it costs now to go to college.

AP: Exactly. Certainly different circumstances. When you came back both of your parents had died and there were still a few brothers who were at home.

DS: Well my oldest brother was married and lived in McKeesport. And then Jerry was a bachelor and Leo was a bachelor, and then my brother Henry had gone to, my youngest brother, he had gone to medical school in Edinburgh, too, and during World War II he was stuck there, so he worked in a hospital there during World War II, and he came home after the war. And he got married here.

AP: So even though you had been all over the place, Australia and the Philippines...

DS: Yeah.

AP: You actually thought Homestead as your home.

DS: Oh yeah I always came back here.

AP: And set up your practice.

DS: That's right.

AP: Now did you set up and ear, nose, and throat practice?

DS: Yeah, after World War II I did ear, nose, and throat.

AP: Did you have, obviously you had Jewish and non-Jewish patients.

DS: I had mostly non-Jewish patients. Because by that time a lot of the Jewish people had moved away from Homestead.

AP: Oh they were starting to leave after the war.

DS: Yeah, oh yeah.

AP: To Squirrel Hill?

DS: Mostly. We had members that paid dues, who had moved as far away as to California.

AP: Oh they still maintained their dues?

DS: The reason is that their relatives were born, were buried in the Homestead Cemetery. And they wanted them to be taken care of.

AP: And membership in the shul was the way that you...

DS: Well they didn't have to. See they would just, the cemetery committee ran as a separate entity and they would conduct themselves, with the committee, with the cemetery committee.

AP: So partly they did it for some ties and connections..

DS: Yeah, that's right. Sure they still had ties here.

AP: I saw a thing somewhere, and maybe you don't really remember that because I don't know how long that was, and it said they would vote on whether they would accept people for membership and make sure they were people in good standing in the community. Are you familiar with that at all? I mean did they ever turn anybody down?

DS: Not that I know of, not that I know of. Of course as the years went by, the membership went down. When the shul closed up, I think we only had about thirty-five people who were still paying dues.

AP: But you remember going, I assume it was really crowded when you were a boy.

DS: Oh yeah. Sure. My father bought, when they started the new shul on Tenth Avenue, that's 1913, my father bought a bench there for us, for all of us. And of course being Orthodox, women sat up in the balcony, and he had two or three seats up in the balcony. Yeah I still remember, he paid five hundred and seventy dollars for that bench.

AP: That was a lot of money.

DS: Yeah. But then he, most of the people, they just rented seats every day, every year like they do now. But a lot of people, like my father, bought permanent seats.

AP: Oh I see. So once you did that, that was your seat all the time.

DS: That's right.

AP: Oh and then you didn't have to buy seats again after you did that.

DS: Yeah that's right.

AP: I see, okay.

DS: That was permanent, that was our bench.

AP: Well obviously your father was comfortable after he was able to do that.

DS: Well yeah.

AP: Do you have any sense of whether there were any differences between people who were, who were as well, you know who were comfortable versus the ones who were eking out a living?

DS: Oh no. I don't think there were very many Jewish people in Homestead who were eking out a living, I think most of them made a nice living. As I say most of them were in business one way or another.

AP: Although I guess there must have been some people, there were widows and...

DS: Yeah, but they got along.

AP: So that was, on the whole your sense of it was that it was a, it was a community that was doing...

DS: Moderately well off, yeah.

AP: So you didn't really see huge differences between some people and others.

DS: As I say, the main difference is between the Hungarians and the Litvaks.

AP: Did they really fight over...

DS: Oh they used to argue all the time.

AP: Did they have different ideas about how the shul should be organized?

DS: No. I don't know, they used to sort of, it was, it wasn't serious you know. It wasn't serious.

AP: You know you always sort of hear these differences of various European groups.

DS: Oh yeah, yeah.

AP: But you don't think of it as a Hungarian shul?

DS: No. There were some shuls that were strictly Hungarian in the Pittsburgh area, I don't know, no we weren't considered. Because as far as the population, I think there were just as many of one kind as there were the other. But I'll tell you a funny thing happened, there was a Schwartz family in Homestead who were Russians.

AP: Who were not your relatives.

DS: No, they weren't related to us. And my mother had several cousins, women cousins, one of them a beautiful girl, her name was Rose Kline, and she got engaged to one of these Schwartz fellows who were Russian see. So his brother came in to the Russian father and says, "Guess what." And the father says, "What?" "Benny is gonna marry a Hungarian." And his father was furious, because he thought he meant a Hungarian Gentile, but it was a Hungarian Jewish girl.

AP: So he gave him a...

DS: Well he thought it was alright. But this brother tried to make a big thing out of it because the girl he was gonna marry was a Hungarian Jewish girl and not a Russian Jewish girl.

AP: Oh I'm sure there must have been, once you got to these American communities a lot of marriage between them.

DS: Oh sure, of course that was an extreme case.

AP: I guess that certainly tells you something about the way they used to feel.

DS: Yeah.

AP: What was your practice like?

DS: What do you mean?

AP: Well let's see, you said you had mostly steel workers who came?

DS: Yeah.

AP: Did it change over the years, did you see that people came for different kinds of things, that their attitudes towards medicine were different as time went by?

DS: No. I'll tell you, I think it, I treated my patients differently than most doctors do today. For instance, in the thirties when I started my practice, this man came in and he wanted to sell me malpractice insurance. And I said, "Well what do I need that for?" He says, "Well in case somebody sues you." I said, "Nobody's going to sue me." And I was right. In fifty-two years of practice, no patient ever threatened to sue me. Why? Because I talk to the patients and they consider me their friend. And nobody ever thought of suing me. Now it's very common for doctors to get sued at the drop of a hat.

AP: Did they call you for things, did your patients call you for things other than what was your specialty.

DS: Well, not very often. It would usually be, a stranger might. But my own patients knew what I was doing, they wouldn't.

AP: They would ask your advice about if they had...

DS: Well I would refer them to some other doctor who did that kind of work.

AP: Did you practice at Homestead Hospital?

DS: Yes.

AP: Was it a good hospital?

DS: Yes. Now before World War II, when I was in general practice I couldn't get on the staff there, they were a little bit anti-Semitic. In fact, my uncle, who did eye, ear, nose and throat in Homestead, he had his own hospital with his office because he couldn't get on the staff at Homestead Hospital.

AP: So he had like a little hospital...

DS: Of his own, yeah, with his office. He had an operating room and four bed ward.

AP: Huh. Where was that?

DS: On Eighth Avenue. He owned a building there on Eighth Avenue in Munhall.

AP: Now your practice was also on Eighth Avenue.

DS: Originally, then I moved up to Ninth Avenue, then I moved up to Eighteenth Avenue near Homestead Hospital.

AP: So then you moved close.

DS: Yeah. So after World War II I had no trouble getting on the staff at Homestead Hospital. They changed.

AP: Did Jewish people use that hospital, in general?

DS: Oh yeah, mhm. Oh sure.

AP: I was just trying to figure out whether they, the Jewish community in that Homestead area stayed within the Homestead area even for services.

DS: Sure. I remember when the new hospital, Homestead Hospital building was built in 1924, and they were having a campaign, and every day they would have a luncheon meeting and each group of women from different churches would serve the lunch. And there was one day the Jewish women served lunch there.

AP: Now did you marry somebody from that area?

DS: No, my wife lived on Squirrel Hill.

AP: Oh.

DS: See by the time I came out of the army I was thirty-nine years old and I started to date Grace, we, I met her on a blind date and I took her out to Bill Greene's, do you know where Bill Greene's was?

AP: On Route 51?

DS: Yeah it was out there. I think at that time it cost, I think I spent five dollars that night, big night. Drinks in those days were thirty-five, fifty cents. Yeah,, that was the first date. The finally we decided to get married. And my wife was much younger than me, she was only twenty-six when I got married. And her mother was bragging to her girlfriends, she says, "My daughter is marrying a doctor, he's old but he's rich." Actually I wasn't rich. Yeah, I was fourteen years older than my wife. But it used to irk her because people used to think we were about the same age.

AP: Oh I see, you look young now. You look relatively, if you looked similar when you were younger. But she came to live in Homestead?

DS: Yeah, oh yeah, that was another funny thing. She wasn't very knowledgeable about Orthodox stuff, because she was sort of a half-orphan because her father had died when she was quite young. He was an attorney and he also wrote for the Pittsburgh newspaper. And he went visit relatives in, I think, Philadelphia and he fell down a flight of stairs and died of a fractured skull. Well anyhow, so when she came and she joined the Sisterhood in the congregation she didn't know much about things, well, anyhow before that, when we were driving down to Florida for our honeymoon I would tell her watch for the shammes, she says what do you mean, I says for the policemen. So, in case, I didn't want to get caught speeding. So when she went to work with the women in shul, one woman says to my wife, we didn't have a phone in the shul then, and we lived right in back of it. One woman says go to the, and call the shammes, and she meant the shammes from the shul, see? And she went and called the Homestead police station. But she knew about Jewish things.

AP: So she actually lived less than you know an Orthodox ---

DS: Oh sure, she didn't know much about it.

AP: Did you get married in the Homestead shul?

DS: No, there we had trouble too. We went to see Rabbi Shapira, I think he was the Poale Zedeck and he wasn't too, I could tell from his attitude that he wasn't too enthusiastic about it because we didn't belong to this congregation. My wife's maiden name was Zoney (?), I think it was shortened from something else. But people used to, so he says, "Your name is Zoney, are you an Italian?" She says, "Oh no, I'm Jewish." And but anyhow he sort of gave us the cold shoulder, so finally we got the Homestead rabbi to marry us in his home, in Munhall.

AP: Which rabbi was that?

DS: Rabbi Weiss.

AP: Oh that was Rabbi Weiss.

DS: He was a very nice person.

AP: Was he the, does he stand out in your memory as among the nicest men?

DS: Oh yeah he was a nice person.

AP: So you started off by getting married in Homestead.

DS: That's right.

AP: How did your wife feel about being in an Orthodox synagogue?

DS: Oh she didn't mind it. She didn't mind it, no.

AP: If you were raised in an Orthodox family, were you an Orthodox boy, I mean did you lay tefillin and that?

DS: Oh yeah, when I was a kid I used to lay tefillin. I forgot how now, but I used to know. And you know what used to irk me? I forgot which holiday it is, do you know what kaporos is?

AP: Of course, it's before Yom Kippur.

DS: Yeah that used to irk me. Shake that chicken above your head!

AP: Did you actually do that?

DS: Yeah!

AP: With a chicken?

DS: Oh yeah. My mother insisted on it.

AP: Because some people then substituted money.

DS: Yeah you could do that, too.

AP: So you did that at home, did you do that in shul?

DS: No, we did that at home.

AP: So you take a live, was it a live chicken?

DS: It had to be a live chicken, that's right.

AP: And you held it...

DS: Above your head while you said the prayer, that's right.

AP: You swung it around.

DS: That's right.

AP: And everybody was doing that.

DS: I don't know whether everybody was, but we did it at our house. We did it at our house for a while.

AP: Was it each person? Each of you held a chicken?

DS: We all used the same chicken.

AP: I was going to say that must have been quite a cacophony of chickens.

DS: That's right.

AP: Then what happened to the chickens?

DS: I don't remember. I suppose my mother sent it down to the schochet to be killed.

AP: So by the time you went away to college you were not, you were no longer, you weren't laying tefillin.

DS: Yeah I quit that. Yeah, I only did that until I was bar mitzvahed, that sort of thing.

AP: What about Sabbath observance, because you said both of your parents...

DS: We were strict on Saturday.

AP: When you were in high school were you observant still about Saturdays?

DS: Not as much, we did to a certain extent. Yeah, we used to go to shul Saturday morning, particularly because we lived right next to the shul.

AP: But I mean there wasn't, was there, I guess what I'm asking you is, was there any conflict between your behavior as you were growing up and your parents.

DS: Oh no, there wasn't anything like that. No, we used to, now as we grew older, as I said my father was, we had two cars right after World War I, we had two cars.

AP: After World War I?

DS: Yeah. After World War I my father bought a Peerless sedan, seven passenger sedan, because my mother said everybody has to have a seat, see so there was seven seats. He paid forty-six hundred dollars for that car in 1919, that was like the Cadillac is today see, there was no Cadillac then. And it had Morocco leather upholstery and the reason he bought this Peerless is because my mother's sister who lived in Sunbury, her husband had bought a Peerless, and my father wasn't gonna let him beat him out see. My uncle paid thirty-nine hundred for his, but my father paid forty-six hundred for this Peerless. Then later on we traded them in, this was after my father died, and we had two cars, we had a small car and a larger car so when my brother Al, and my brother Jerry, who was an attorney, and I, when we were dating, there was always a fight at night who would get which car, and we all wanted to smaller car because it as cozier see. So while the three of us were arguing about who should take which car, my youngest brother Henry who was just sixteen, he grabbed the keys and took off in the car for himself. And then he'd take this girl up to the circle in Schenley Park.

AP: I see, over into the city he was going.

DS: Yeah.

AP: What was the smaller car?

DS: What? It was a Chevy.

AP: Oh so it wasn't exactly a tiny car.

DS: No, no it was, actually it was a three-seater, there was two seats, then there was sort of a little jump seat next to the...

AP: Oh I see so it wasn't that big really.

DS: Yeah.

AP: So, let's see, when you were married where did you live in Homestead?

DS: We lived, for a while, in our old home on Ninth Avenue. In my, well, during World War II my mother had divided the house into two apartments, downstairs and upstairs. And my wife and I lived upstairs, and we rented the downstairs, and we lived down there for about four years until I built this house here. And we moved in here in 1952.

AP: Oh so you came directly here from that house.

DS: Yeah.

AP: And you had children then?

DS: Not right away. The funny thing is...

AP: You took your time.

DS: The funny thing is, I made a mistake. We took all precautions not to have any children for about four years, then when my wife tried to get pregnant, she had trouble getting pregnant, see. And she finally did. And she had to go to the gynecologist for treatments and so on. And actually we shouldn't have taken precautions because after all I was forty years old when I got married. That's right looking back on it.

AP: So how many children did you have?

DS: I have two, I have a Barbara who's in her forties, and I have a son Bobby who lives in O'Hara Township, and he's a jewelry salesman.

AP: Now you raised the children here.

DS: Oh yeah. They all went to Munhall schools.

AP: How was that in terms of, well I guess let me ask you...

DS: There aren't many Jewish people in the Munhall schools.

AP: There weren't.

DS: There never were. But that didn't make any difference.

AP: So you didn't find that a problem.

DS: No, no. Barbara was really a star student. She got all the honors when she was a senior that she could. And at that time, Penn State and Jefferson medical college had a combined course of five years for college and medicine and she was admitted to that and she turned it down. I could have kicked her butt.

AP: She turned it down.

DS: Yeah, she wanted to go four years to college and then four years to medicine.

AP: Oh my goodness.

DS: She wanted to do it that way. So she went to Washington University.

AP: In St. Louis?

DS: Yes. So while she was there, she took as her secondary, she took drama, and the drama teacher talked her out of dropping pre-med and going into drama.

AP: That's unusual.

DS: Which was a mistake because then later after she graduated she went to Pitt and got her master's degree in drama, but she never got into drama because things were tough in drama, you know it's tough to get anywhere. In fact while she was going to Pitt, one of the professors there was, two of the professors (tape cuts out)

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

AP: Going back to the public schools. How was it for them being Jewish students in the schools?

DS: No, there wasn't any discrimination, I don't think no.

AP: What about their social life, did you have rules about whether they would, did either one of them want to start dating while they were in high school?

DS: I don't remember. No, I don't think Barbara did much dating. And Bobby had his boyfriends.

AP: Were they Jewish, or at that point...

DS: Yeah, no most of their friends were Gentiles. Because as I say at that time there weren't many Jewish students in the Munhall schools.

AP: Now what about the religious education?

DS: Well Bobby went to cheder and he got training and he was bar mitzvahed in our shul. And Barbara was bas mitzvahed there too.

AP: Now I take it that changed.

DS: Yeah because at that time they had a Sunday school, too, you know.

AP: Now were girls, were girls in your Hebrew school class when you were a little boy?

DS: Yeah, we had some girls. Yeah we had some girls in our cheder.

AP: But were they bas mitzvahed?

DS: No, not at that time. No they weren't.

AP: At that time they were not. That's sort of not traditionally Orthodox, is it?

DS: No.

AP: So I take it that's one of the accommodations.

DS: They made to bas mitzvah girls.

AP: Would you say that was true at all that this Orthodox synagogue had to make more accommodations to the population than an Orthodox synagogue in the city might have to?

DS: No, most of them were against making any changes. For instance there was a congregation in Pleasant Hills, a Jewish congregation, they were I think conservative, and they wanted to unite and come into the Homestead shul and change to conservative. But the fellas in Homestead turned them down because they didn't want to change from Orthodox, which I think was a mistake.

AP: This was whenever the Second World War was over?

DS: Oh yeah, this was in recent years. This was when our membership was going down.

AP: But the sense was that the people who were here still...

DS: Still wanted to stay Orthodox.

AP: Do you think you lost, aside from the fact you lost a whole other congregation to align with, do you think this shul lost other members because of that?

DS: No, we lost members because they moved away or died, that's why we lost members.

AP: So it was just a natural decline.

DS: For instance, right in Homestead proper, there is only one family left there, a couple doors away from the shul, Jessie Ruben is her name, do you know who she is?

AP: Yes, I do.

DS: She's the only Jewish woman in the whole of Homestead. Now here in Homestead Park there are, let's see one, two, about four families. That's all that's left around here.

AP: Were there a lot who moved up to Homestead Park after this was developed.

DS: No not a lot more than there are now. It's the Jacobs family and Hiedovitzes over here and Helen Kline and what's her name, Palkowitz, do you know Dr. Palkowitz, he's married to a Weinberger girl.

AP: Judy?

DS: No, no, he's a, he's a veterinarian.

AP: Lillian?

DS: What?

AP: Is that Lillian Palkovitz?

DS: No. Rose probably...

AP: I'll talk to her.

DS: She's a Weinberger girl. Yeah, they live here in Homestead Park.

AP: But on the whole there isn't just that much that's left here. Now when did you retire from your practice?

DS: I retired in 1986. Seven years ago. When I became eighty, I decided it was time to quit.

AP: You thought it was time to quit. I take it then you saw the decline of the area, aside from Jewish community, just in terms of your own practice.

DS: Oh yeah. That's why the Homestead Hospital built the new hospital out in Jefferson borough.

AP: Because there isn't a population.

DS: Yeah, the drawing was going down and staff members of Homestead Hospital were getting old and retiring.

AP: And so young people were not coming to be on the staff of this hospital, just because there isn't a patient base here I guess.

DS: Yeah that's right.

AP: Does Homestead, what was the area that the Homestead Hospital served, I guess Braddock had its own hospital.

DS: Yeah Braddock had its own. Well it served Homestead, Munhall, West Mifflin, and Lincoln Place. So they had a pretty good draw.

AP: And did it also serve the Glen Hazel projects or does that go to Braddock.

DS: Most of them went, Glen Hazel they mostly went into Pittsburgh, we didn't get much from there.

AP: So did you notice that your patients were getting poorer and older?

DS: No, no.

AP: No?

DS: No well I was always getting new ones you know.

AP: Oh so even towards the end you were still getting new...

DS: Well I cut down on my practice as I say, I quit when I was eighty, so when I got into my sixties I cut down on my practice and one thing I quit doing, I quit doing any surgery. And when you stop doing surgery, then your practice automatically goes down, like the last few years of my practice I was only working fifteen to twenty hours a week in the office. And I should have quit earlier because I was just working to make expenses.

AP: So you were taking it in and paying out.

DS: Well, when you get to be in your seventies you know you sort of slow down. Like when I was seventy-eight this fellow came into my office, he was forty years old and he had been coming in to see me since he was seven. And he said to me, "When are you going to retire, you must be in your eighties." I says, "No, not quite, but I'm going to retire soon."

AP: So your patients always just dealt with you as the doctor, not as the Jewish doctor.

DS: No that had nothing to do with it. As I say, ninety percent of my patients weren't Jewish.

AP: Were there many Jewish professionals who stayed and kept their practices of various kinds in Homestead?

DS: Yeah, there were quite a few. And there's quite a few on the Jefferson Hospital staff too.

AP: Of younger men.

DS: Yeah. But it was a funny thing, when I first started at the Homestead Hospital after World War II there was always friction between the Catholic and Protestant doctors, but there was no friction between the Christian doctors and the Jewish doctors, in fact the Catholic doctors favored the Jewish doctors over the Protestants.

AP: That's interesting.

DS: Yeah.

AP: Do you have any idea why that is?

DS: Well you know, matter of religion with the Catholics and the Protestants.

AP: And they it very seriously.

DS: Some of them did, some of them did. Yeah I don't say they all did, but some of them did.

AP: A lot of this, I guess the middle-European population was Catholic, was it not?

DS: That's right, that's right. Various types of Catholic.

AP: But probably more so than there was a Protestant population.

DS: Yeah, we have a large Catholic population in this area.

AP: So your kids all, they grew up here completely, what about their social lives and the services that they needed. Did they have groups to belong to, social groups and whatever in the shul as they were growing up?

DS: It wasn't that much by the time they were growing up.

AP: So did you, did they go to the city more than you did when you were growing up.

DS: No, not that much I don't think.

AP: Anybody take things like music lessons, dancing lessons?

DS: Oh yeah. My daughter, my wife used to start dragging my daughter to dancing school when she was six years old.

AP: Was that here?

DS: Yeah, there was a family here called the Evans family, and they had a dancing school down on Tenth Avenue. From six years old, she was dragging her down there every week to dancing school.

AP: So any of those kinds of things that you needed were here.

DS: Oh yeah, sure.

AP: And the same thing when you were a boy.

DS: Yeah. We didn't have dancing school.

AP: Did any of you take music lessons?

DS: Oh yeah. I did. My oldest brother Al and I took piano lessons.

AP: Was that here also?

DS: Yeah in Homestead. We had this Ruth Grossman, she was a nice gal, and she used to come and give us a lesson once a week, cost a dollar and a half.

AP: At your house.

DS: Yeah we had a grand piano. And then my brother Jerry took violin lessons and he was lousy on that, too. And I forgot how many years I took piano lessons, and the day after I took my last piano lesson I quit and I never touched a piano after that.

AP: What happened?

DS: I really didn't like it. In fact I was supposed to practice an hour every day, and I had an alarm clock there, and I would push the hand ahead to cut it down from an hour to forty-five minutes.

AP: So you went to Hebrew school and then you practiced piano.

DS: Yeah.

AP: And was this Ruth Grossman related to that I. Grossman, the man who was the secretary of the shul for a long time?

DS: Yeah. Yeah that was her uncle.

AP: So this community sort of supported each other with different kinds of jobs and businesses and whatever.

DS: Yeah. Ruth used to get me mad, she used to tell my mother, "If Dan was only ten years older I'd marry him in a minute." Because she was only in her early twenties then.

AP: And you didn't want to marry her.

DS: No, that's right. To me she was an old lady.

AP: Of course! And it didn't sound like you were wild about girls at that time anyway.

DS: No that's true.

AP: But in the end ---

DS: Yeah I never went out on a date until I went away to college.

AP: Did you go out with Jewish girls when you went out on dates, when you did, when you started?

DS: Yes, there were a few Jewish co-eds at Penn State that I went out with.

AP: What about when you were in Scotland?

DS: Well there were no Jewish girls there.

AP: Oh. So there was really no noticeable Jewish population.

DS: No it was very small Jewish population there. No we only went out with Gentile girls there.

AP: When the black people started coming to Homestead, or Homestead area I should say, after the war, did you notice any kinds of discernable or substantial prejudices against them?

DS: Not particularly, no. Now practically all of Homestead now is practically all black, you know.

AP: Mhm.

DS: But I never noticed it that much. It was a gradual thing.

AP: So on the whole as you remember the community, it was a fairly tolerant community.

DS: Oh sure.

AP: With a lot of groups interacting within themselves.

DS: That's right, that's right.

AP: Any other sort of reminiscences or thoughts that come to your mind that I couldn't think of asking?

DS: No. Not that I know of.

AP: Nothing like that great story about the bridge --- the whole bridge.

DS: Yeah the original Homestead bridge was about a half a mile up the river. And as I say it came over on the other side of that hill where the Home is, and then you had to come up that road to get in onto Brownsville Road. It was an old wooden rickety bridge. And that's why they had to build a new one.

AP: Do you know when they replaced it?

DS: It was, offhand I couldn't say exactly.

AP: And you said that when you were a boy you came up here to Homestead Park, there was still an amusement park.

DS: Oh yeah, when I was in elementary school we used to get on a street car right at Ninth Avenue, we used to ride out here for a nickel, a lot of picnics. They had a merry-go-round stuff like, they didn't have as much as Kennywood but they had amusements, yeah.

AP: It's sort of amazing that there were amusement parks all over the place. And so it was after the wars that they developed Homestead Park as a place for people to live.

DS: Yeah. I think it was even before World War II. See U.S. Steel owns a lot of this land out here.

AP: Out here?

DS: Yeah. Excuse me.

AP: I guess I was just going to ask if you have anything you would think to sort of characterize what your fondest or maybe your unfondest memories were growing up in Homestead and life in the Jewish community here.

DS: Well I really didn't have any, I really don't fondest memories of growing up. Of course we didn't know any other type of life. My fondest memory is going on my honeymoon.

AP: Well that's nice.

DS: Yeah. We...

AP: Where did you go?

DS: We went to Florida.

AP: Oh that's right.

DS: A funny thing, this uncle of mine who was a doctor, he had retired, he was living down there and a month before I was getting married and I called him up and I said, "I'm coming down there on my honeymoon" and I have him the date and I says, "Get me a room in a hotel." That (phone rings and tape cuts out) I told my uncle to get me a room in a hotel. So we drove down there, took us two and half days, and we got down there and I say to my uncle, "Well where's our room?" He says, "I didn't get you any yet." I says, "Why not?" He says, "They wanted too much money, they wanted twenty-five dollars a day!" I says, "I didn't care how much it cost. I'm on my honeymoon." So we drove around looking, and at that time they didn't have as many hotels as they do now. And I finally got a room in a hotel and they says you can have it for two days. So when I came out my uncle said to me, "Well how much is the room?" I said, "Twenty-six dollars and I can only have it for two days." He says, "Oh you're not gonna pay twenty-six dollars." I says, "Look, we've been driving around for hours, I want a place to stay." So we stay there two days and then we got a room in a hotel over in Miami. So we had to drive over to Miami Beach every day and it was so crowded and it was in January, end of January that when we came into the hotel at night people were sleeping on the sofas and chairs because they couldn't get a room, that's how crowded it was. Yeah, my uncle's really something, he wouldn't let me spend twenty-five dollars.

AP: You had to spend twenty-six instead. But on the whole your wife was happy living in Homestead all those years?

DS: Yeah, oh yeah.

AP: And you've had a, obviously a long association. What will happen now that the shul has, were you going to the shul until it closed?

DS: What?

AP: Were you...

DS: Yeah we used to have services every Sunday morning, although in order to get a minion we'd have some fellows who come over from Squirrel Hill who weren't members. But we had services every Sunday morning for until they quit.

AP: Did your daughter feel at all connected to the shul since she's grown up?

DS: No, not that much.

AP: So will you associate with Beth Shalom or something now?

DS: I wouldn't go to Beth Shalom if I got the membership for nothing. You know what irks me? They got all those artifacts from our shul which are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and paid nothing for it. Then on top of that, they made Bob Katz arrange to pay to move the ark over there, there's one fellow who wanted twenty-three hundred dollars, but he got somebody to move the ark over for four hundred.

AP: It cost that much to do?

DS: Yeah. Well you gotta tear the whole thing down, take it apart. Oh yeah. And then one of their members had the chutzpah to send me a letter asking for a donation for Beth Shalom. I wouldn't, their dues are outrageous you know. They want, somebody told me, they want about eight hundred dollars a year for dues. A cousin of mine who's a widow girl, lives on Squirrel Hill, she wanted to become a member, they wanted five hundred dollars a year from her. She couldn't afford that.

AP: Even for a woman.

DS: Yeah.

AP: So that's a real loss. You lose a little shul and you don't have a real place for the people who link it together.

DS: So their thing is they've got this room that they're fixing up as another room with, they call it the Homestead Room.

AP: The Homestead Room.

DS: Yeah, something like that.

AP: Do you recall this shul, the Rodef Shalom?

DS: Yes, it is the Rodef Shalom.

AP: Do you ever refer to it that way or did everybody just call it the Homestead...

DS: Oh no, we used to refer to it as the Rodef Shalom.

AP: Oh you did.

DS: Oh sure. It was always the Rodef Shalom.

AP: Some of these shuls, the people never knew the names of, they only ever knew where it was. Many of the Hungarian, Russian...

DS: I think we were the Rodef Shalom before the temple was Rodef Shalom.

AP: So yeah, well I mean how many names are there. So well anyway thank you very much for your time.

DS: Yeah. I enjoyed talking to you.

AP: I'm glad you did.

DS: Tell me something, you have a hyphenated name.

AP: Yes.

(tape cuts out)

AP: This has been Anne Sheckter Powell, interviewing Dr. Daniel Schwartz in his home in Homestead Park for the oral history project of the Homestead Hebrew congregation sponsored by the Western Pennsylvanian Jewish Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The date is July 1993.

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE