

**Transcript of Interview with Nancy G. Rubenstein  
Small Town Jewish History Project  
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**Rauh Jewish Archives  
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Transcription:

**Eric Lidji:** Today is September 11, 2015. This is the Small Town Jewish History Project. I'm Eric Lidji and I'm talking to Nancy Rubenstein. Rubenstein?

**Nancy Rubenstein:** Right, that's correct.

**EL:** And we are in the Library and Archives at the Heinz History Center. We're going to be talking about Duquesne.

**NR:** Right.

**EL:** So we have a lot to cover, so I think we should start with your family getting here. Let's start with your father's side. How did your father get to Duquesne?

**NR:** My father got to Duquesne because his uncle owned moving picture theaters, I think two of them, in Duquesne. And my father graduated from Pitt and immediately went to work for his uncle managing his theaters.

**EL:** Your father's name was?

**NR:** Joseph Gellman.

**EL:** And your uncle?

**NR:** Morris Roth.

**EL:** Okay. Your father grew up in the Hill District, is that right?

**NR:** He did, I think on, I think, at first on Dinwiddie Street and then, I think, on Center Avenue maybe. Then they moved to Phillips Avenue.

**EL:** In Squirrel Hill?

**NR:** In Squirrel Hill.

**EL:** And you said your father took advantage of all the organizations in the Hill District?

**NR:** Yes, very much so. He always spoke glowingly of the time he spent at the IKS.

**EL:** And also the summer camps and...?

**NR:** Yes. He went to what he called Camp Kartoffel, because they served potatoes at every meal. And I think it was, it's sort of near I think, near where Deer Creek, the day camp, later was located.

EL: Did he tell you stories about IKS?

NR: Um, a little bit. I think he, my father loved to read, and I think he was introduced to books...

EL: At IKS?

NR: And the IKS, and the athletics, but he had, really had very fond memories of it.

EL: Were his parents immigrants?

NR: Yes, yes they came from originally a shtetl called Podkamen my father used to call it Port Cummings. And my father's father, and my grandmother was Clara Roth, my great grandfather was Samuel Gellman, they went to England first. And my dad was born in London. And they came to this country when he was three years old. And he had an older sister, my Aunt Sadie, who would have been seven years old when they came.

EL: Okay. And so he makes it to Duquesne.

NR: No. No, no. He made it to Pittsburgh.

EL: Right, but then through your uncle he makes it to Duquesne.

NR: Oh, through my uncle, yes. Yeah.

EL: So the uncle then would have been your mother's brother.

NR: No, it would have been my father's mother's brother.

EL: I mean your grandmother's brother.

NR: Right, who told us a story of how he came to Pittsburgh, which was incredible. He had been mar mitzvahed, and he would have been drafted into the army. And right after his bar mitzvah, his parents walked him to the border, he walk to Hamburg, Germany, where he missed the boat to the United States and the women from HIAS put him up until the next boat left. Then he got off the boat in New York, he was met by HIAS. He spoke no English, he had nothing but a note pinned on him. They took him, and they put him on a train to Pittsburgh. He got off the train in the middle of the night and he said at that time, every night, somebody from the Jewish community sat up in the railroad station because every train brought in somebody. This would have been I would say 1908, 1909, maybe. And they put him on a trolley, streetcar, and they told the streetcar driver where to drop him off. The note said "Clare Roth Gellman, Dinwiddie Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania." And he was thirteen. And he came to tell us that story, we were debating whether our eight-year-old son was old enough to go away to camp for two months.

EL: Different standards.

NR: Different standards.

EL: How did he get in the movie business?

NR: I wish I knew the beginning of that, I don't. I don't. My father's father was in the wholesale paper business. And I don't know how my Uncle Morris got into the movie business.

EL: What was the paper company?

NR: I don't know the name of that either. I might have a picture.

EL: Were they here in Pittsburgh?

NR: Yeah, they were here in Pittsburgh.

EL: So let's go to your mother's side. How did they get to Western Pennsylvania?

NR: My grandmother came with her parents in, I would think they came to this country in the 1880s, first settled for a very short while in Scranton. My grandmother I know was three years old. She would tell me about her recollections of the trip. And then they came to Duquesne, and I was always told that they came here because my grand-, my great-grandfather was able to get a job on the railroad. And I think it was as a laborer.

EL: That's really interesting. That would have been very, it seems, I haven't heard a lot of Jews in the railroading business.

NR: Business, yeah. That was, you know, when I was born he was gone and my great-grandmother, who I'm named for, had already died.

EL: And so it brought him to Duquesne and it kept him in Duquesne.

NR: Duquesne, yeah.

EL: He worked for the railroad while he was there.

NR: There, right. And my grandmother's, this was my uncle, my grandmother's oldest brother, whom I remember, my uncle, Henry Brown, was a mailman all his life. Delivered mail.

EL: In Duquesne?

NR: Mhm. Delivered mail in Duquesne. Then my grandmother and her husband had a grocery store.

EL: Did it have a name?

NR: I don't know. That I don't know.

EL: Was it before your time?

NR: Oh yeah. Oh, long before my time.

EL: Okay.

NR: When my mother was a child.

EL: Oh, okay.

NR: And I'm going back, well my mother was born in 1902, 1902, so I'm going back.

EL: So just so I understand, we're talking about your maternal grandmother and grandfather.

NR: Right.

EL: And their names were?

NR: My grandmother was Bertha Brown Klee, and my grandfather was Emanuel Klee.

EL: Okay.

NR: And he was originally from Carnegie. How he met my grandmother in Duquesne, I don't know.

EL: And that's where this article comes in.

NR: That's where that, yes.

EL: So what's the story on this article? Just so we have it on the record.

NR: It's really sad. My great grandfather Klee had a grocery store in Carnegie, and he had a large family, they're all listed on here. And if you read the article, I think somebody came into work, who worked for him, early in the morning like five o'clock in the morning and saw flames and smelled smoke and awoke the family. And all the children got out, and it shows, well, Emanuel Klee, oh no that was his father, Samuel Klee, but the children were like seventeen and ten and four and twenty and fourteen and eight. But my grandfather was not there at the time because he was already married and living in Duquesne, but in this fire my great-grandmother perished. She was carrying the youngest baby in her arms, and she mistook, in the smoke, a closet door for the stairway door.

EL: Oh no.

NR: And walked into closet and they perished from smoke. I think she was an infant. And this article that I have was on the front page of the Pittsburgh paper.

EL: One of the Pittsburgh papers.

NR: Papers, yeah.

EL: So, so your grandfather and grandmother come to Duquesne. These are the Klees or the Browns?

NR: Well, the Browns had always lived in Duquesne, from the time they came from, well Europe, Scranton for a short while, then Duquesne.

EL: How many Browns were there? Of that generation.

NR: To my, well there was my Uncle Henry, who was the mailman, my grandmother next in age. And then I think my Aunt Edith Brown, who never married, she was a schoolteacher in Duquesne. My Uncle Lou Brown, who was a football player for Duquesne High School, but could not get a job in the mill as a laborer at U.S. Steel, what was Carnegie Works, because he was Jewish. And he went on to become a schoolteacher also. And then...

EL: You said he taught shop, right?

NR: He taught, yeah, shop. He was in the Pittsburgh public schools, actually. And then there was my Uncle Joe Brown, who I don't, excuse me, really remember that much about. When I was growing up he lived in Detroit. And my Aunt Frieda, who married Sam Feinberg, and she was my mother's aunt, but she was only four years older than my mother.

EL: Wow. When you have big families like that it happens.

NR: Right, in those days. Right. And my mother grew up in Duquesne. She was valedictorian of her high school class. Do you want me to tell the rest?

EL: Yeah.

NR: She was, I found at one point and I can't find it again, a letter she had received from the president of Carnegie Tech, welcoming her into the freshman class and congratulating her on being the valedictorian of her Duquesne High School class. And I still have the speech she made, if you want a copy of that.

EL: Wow. Yeah that would be wonderful.

NR: And I said to my father, you know my mother never went to Carnegie Tech, and he said, "Of course not because it was preordained that her brother, your Uncle Eddie, was to go to medical school. And so your mother went to work to bring her paycheck to help send her brother to medical school."

EL: Wow.

NR: Yeah.

EL: What did she do, what was the work?

NR: She was a secretary at Film Row in Pittsburgh.

EL: So this is how your parents meet.

NR: That's how my parents met.

EL: How did your father, oh your father ends up on film row because of the theaters.

NR: Because of the theaters in Duquesne. They might have known each other. In fact, I think I was often told that Chin and Esther Levine, who lived in Duquesne, knew my father and introduced him to my mother. And then they knew each other from film row.

EL: So talk a little bit about how film row worked.

NR: Film Row was at that time, I think, you showed me the book, and it was downtown on Fourth Street in that book, but in the years that I was growing up in was on the Boulevard of the Allies. And one building still is there, it says Paramount.

EL: Right.

NR: But each one of the film companies, MGM, Warner Brothers, Republic Pictures, Paramount, they all had offices. And the local theater owners would come in, and they would book their pictures. They had to book for a week or two, you know a period of time ahead, and they would negotiate when they were going to get the picture, if it was a very big picture they hoped to get it before their closest neighbor because people would go from Duquesne to McKeesport.

EL: To go watch a movie.

NR: To go watch a movie. And so there was competition to get the film, dependent upon the size of your theater and how they distributed.

EL: Did they actually watch the movies at the exchanges.

NR: No, no, no. I'm sure they didn't.

EL: So they just picked up the reels.

NR: They didn't even pick the reels up. They just made a calendar of when they would get it, and they went constantly because movies were being released all the time, and they wanted to get on. And then a truck would come and deliver cans with the rolls of films.

EL: Did they have to have exclusive deals with certain studios, or could they go from one building to another?

NR: I think they could go from one to the other, but I think there was, based on the size of your theater and the size of the small town outside of Pittsburgh, there was a pecking order on who got them.

EL: Okay.

NR: I know McKeesport always got the first run films before Duquesne.

EL: Because it was the big city?

NR: It was the big city. Exactly, exactly.

EL: So what year, when were you born?

NR: I was 1935 at Magee hospital and taken home immediately, or two weeks later, to Duquesne.

EL: Okay, and how many children were there in the family?

NR: I was an only child.

EL: Okay, so you were the only child.

NR: Only child, mhm.

EL: What were your early memories of Duquesne?

NR: My early memories of Duquesne were very nice. We lived in what was a newer part of Duquesne, what was called Duquesne Place. And I think my parents were the first Jewish family to buy a house on that street. The neighbors were nice. Nobody every called each other by their first name, it was Mrs. Danbaugh, Mr. Danbaugh, Mrs. Moffit, Mr. Moffit. And the corner house on our street, at the corner of Richard Street and Commonwealth Avenue, had been a very big home, and it eventually became a funeral home, Allebrand Funeral, and the house next door, which my parents rented first before

they bought our house, the Allebrands eventually lived, and their daughter and I were best friends. And she was always my best friend for many years.

EL: And you said that originally this part of town would have been pasture?

NR: This part of town my mother had memories of being a child and they, she and my Uncle Eddie, had a goat and a goat cart, and her father had cows. And her father would take her out there, they grazed the cows out there. And she said supposedly the air was cleaner. I question that. Wasn't as close to the mills. But then, when I was growing up, I guess that had been developed in the twenties and thirties, where the older part of Duquesne was quite old.

EL: Did most of the Jews live in the older part?

NR: Yeah. Yes. I think we were the first on our block and then at the corner, Lou and Mim Finklestein, he was a lawyer in town. And then behind us, they were close friends of my parents, and Ray and Gert Silberman, he was Silberman, he was a dentist in Duquesne, they lived there. And then little by little more Jewish families, the Soffer family came to Duquesne Place. They built it up after World War II, Duquesne Place was built up.

EL: Okay, so let's talk a little bit more about your parents. Tell me about your father.

NR: What would you like to know about my dad?

EL: What was he like?

NR: Oh, my dad was, somebody just asked me who was the best teacher I ever had in school and I said it wasn't in school, it was my father. And my father grew up, he graduated from the first class at Schenley High School, he went to Pitt. My father had a natural instinct for teaching. And if it hadn't been for his uncle, who put him to work managing theaters, my father would have been a good professor. And I have friends, my age today, who remember coming to visit me as a child, as teenagers, and they say that my father talked to them at the dinner table like they were adults and discussed things going on in the world that wasn't normally discussed at their homes.

EL: And they like that.

NR: They liked that. Yeah, he was very interested in the world and what was going on. And I remember in my childhood we listened to the news of World War II all through dinner, and my dad was very liberal.

EL: What did that mean in the thirties and forties?

NR: Being liberal?

EL: Yeah.

NR: Probably being [clears throat], I'm losing my voice.

EL: Do you want me to get you a cup of water?

NR: Yeah, that would be nice.

END OF FIRST RECORDING

BEGIN SECOND RECORDING

NR: I'm sorry.

EL: Okay, so I was asking about what, you had said your father was very liberal, and I was curious what that meant.

NR: Probably in those days socialist would be mild, maybe parlor communist almost.

EL: So, was he, did he like FDR, or was FDR...?

NR: Oh, no, FDR was God. Absolutely God. Yes. I have a memory of the night he died. We learned that he died, my father crying, and I think it was one of the first times I ever saw him cry.

EL: Wow.

NR: Yeah. I remember it distinctly. My next door neighbor, Georgeanne Allebrand came over, and we were still having dinner and my mother said take a seat in the living room, Nancy will be done soon. And she was giggling. And my mother said, "Georgeanne, what's so funny?" and she said, "That crippled man in the White House just died." And there was two different views of what had happened, in her family it was something to laugh, and in our family it was something to cry.

EL: That's remarkable.

NR: Mhm. It was.

EL: Tell me about your mother, what was she like?

NR: My mother was a very, very smart woman. And she was very outgoing, entertained a lot. They had a lot of friends, and she entertained. She was a wonderful cook. She was involved in the community, I think I mentioned to you earlier, I'm pretty sure she started the Hadassah Chapter in Duquesne, and the Beth Jacob Synagogue would have rummage sales and things to raise money and she was involved in that. And she loved to play golf. That was a favorite pastime. My parents were early members at the Duquesne Country

Club. And because of my father's hours at the theater, he would come home about four o'clock, and they would go out to play golf and take me along with a five iron. And she was just a very, very smart woman and very interested in, well, she was probably what today would be called a helicopter parent. In steering me to go to Rodef Shalom Temple, to go to Y camp, to participate and direct the way my life would shape up.

EL: So she was putting you in contact with the city Jewish community.

NR: With the city Jewish community.

EL: Particularly with the Reform.

NR: Yes.

EL: Yeah.

NR: Yes. And when it came to, I was ten years old, and when it was time to go away to summer camp I had, nobody in Duquesne, but I had friends in Pittsburgh that would go away to camps in Maine and other places, and my mother said no, you have to go to the YMHA camp because it's more important for you to learn, to meet Jewish children in the Pittsburgh community.

EL: That's interesting, why was it more important to meet...

NR: Because that's where I was going to grow up. And living in Duquesne I was isolated, more or less from that. And it was a wise decision. Some of my best friends to this day were children I met at the age of ten.

EL: At the camp.

NR: At the camp.

EL: Wow.

NR: Yeah.

EL: What level of observance did you have in the home?

NR: That's a hard question because my mother kept kosher for her mother's sake, that's another funny story. My father's family did not have much religion, and my mother would cheat from time to time with paper plates. But you know, she changed the dishes for Passover and did everything to please her mother. My Duquesne grandmother, I saw regularly, my Pittsburgh grandmother I did not see as often and there was sort of a little bit of a jealousy that I knew my other grandmother better. And we would come to Pittsburgh to visit my grandmother Gellman and she would, as soon as I came in, she would say, "Come to kitchen I'll make you a bacon sandwich." So that was the

difference of the two sides of the family. You know, out of respect my mother observed for her family.

EL: And your father?

NR: He went along with it. It was all right with him, it didn't bother him. But he was not one to go to, my mother would accompany her mother to services at the holidays at the Beth Jacob Synagogue in Duquesne. Now he could not do that, he didn't do that.

EL: What do you remember about the synagogue? Where was it?

NR: It was on Second Street. It was across from the City Hall and fire station. I do, I remember it, it was a long thin building. The women sat on one side, the men sat on the other side.

EL: Had they built it themselves, or was it a building that they bought?

NR: Oh no, no. I think they built it themselves, way back before my time because my mother was raised there in the twenties, in the teens. And when I was there the rabbi's name was Moskowitz, Rabbi Moskowitz. And there was, on the lower level, which is where we used to play, I think they had a mikvah and they had schoolrooms where they would have cheder for the boys. And I think at one time, when I was fairly young, they had a Young Judaea Club. And I remember going to that. I remember Girl Scouts better, but...

EL: Was there a Jewish Girl Scouts?

NR: No, it was just the city Girl Scouts.

EL: Was there BBG or AZA or anything like that?

NR: There might have been, but that would have been teenage years, and by then I was really in Pittsburgh, spending my time in Pittsburgh.

EL: Yeah. Were there a lot of Jewish children in Duquesne?

NR: Uh, no. Well, I have to think that in my grade school I was definitely the only Jew, well I was the only Jewish girl in my grade school until about fourth grade and then Beverly Sanes and Marsha Mazeroff came somewhere around fourth grade. And I can't think of anybody else. Later there were definitely more Jewish children in the area where I grew up, the Soffer family moved to Duquesne Place, that would have been Harry and Joe, and there was, I think a Lipsher family, Benowitzes, but by that time I was really more into Pittsburgh. And I mentioned the Finklesteins and the Silbermans. And Ray Silberman had a brother, Al Silberman, and they lived nearby, but most of the older established Jewish families lived in the city, not in Duquesne Place, as it was called.

EL: How did the Jews and the Gentiles get along in Duquesne?

NR: Pretty well. When we moved to that, I don't remember this that much, but it was 19, I think, 37, when my parents bought the house, I was two years old. And nobody rushed out to bring you know a coffeecake over or what, but it was respectful. And I always called, my mother called her neighbor Mrs. Danbaugh, and she called my mother Mrs. Gellman, and there wasn't anything overt. What might have been being said otherwise, I don't know.

EL: And you said you had something of a place of prestige among the children because your father ran the cinema.

NR: Oh, without a doubt. In a small town you couldn't be anything more important!

EL: And what were some of the ways that, what were some of the effects of that? You had said that he had holiday...

NR: Oh every year at Christmas he would have a special show, a holiday show during the day for the school children, and they would be bused in from every school in Duquesne.

EL: Wow.

NR: For you know, a free holiday movie. And it was always something, it could have been a Roy Rogers, or something for children, maybe with a holiday theme or something like that.

EL: Outside of the children, was that seen as a respectable profession to be in?

NR: Mhm. Yes, yeah. I think it was. In, I guess 1950s, I'm trying to remember, I graduated from high school in 1953, by then they had closed the movie theater and my father had to change careers. And there was an established real estate insurance office across the street from the theater, and they were retiring, their name was Mr. Fey, F-E-Y, I think. And my dad bought the practice, or the office, and I can remember him studying to take the real estate and insurance exam. So it was a hard time to be in your early fifties and switching careers.

EL: Why did he have to close the theater?

NR: Something came along, well first of all, television had come along. And that very much cut back on business. And they came along with the first redevelopment, one of the first in Allegheny County. And Duquesne was singled out, and so the Allegheny County Redevelopment Corporation bought, went to all the people who owned buildings on First Street, which was the main business street, and paid them for the properties, including the theater, which was leveled. And my dad's office was leveled, and he had to move to Grant Avenue. But they never really redeveloped it.

EL: Was he in favor of the redevelopment, or was he opposed to it?

NR: I think he was in favor of it. You know, everybody thought this was a good thing, it was gonna revitalize the town. And it didn't, it just never came back.

EL: Yeah. What was the reason for being in Duquesne, was there a mill there?

NR: Oh yeah. There was always a Carnegie Steel, and during the war they built the Dorothy Works, which ran twenty-four hours a day. That was a very big producer during World War II.

EL: Yeah, do you have memories of that at all?

NR: A little. I have memories of, this is what it was to grow up in a little town, going maybe with a girlfriend to a movie when I was, over to the movie, which I had to take a bus, in maybe an eight o'clock show that let out at eleven. Say I was eleven or twelve years old and my parents had gone to Pittsburgh to spend the evening at Variety Club, and I would get on the bus at eleven o'clock with all the men from the mill who, the mill had just let out. And I remember the bus driver that did our route, his name was Jimmy, he was actually a midget, he had short legs, but he had a big upper body. The bus stop was at the corner, not that close to my house, he would pull up, drop me off in front of my house and wait until I flicked the lights before the bus went on. Now that wouldn't happen today.

EL: No, that's very sweet.

NR: Yeah.

EL: That's very sweet.

NR: I do have that memory.

EL: You had mentioned that television impacted the business in the fifties, but earlier you were telling me that radio was a threat in the twenties.

NR: In the thirties.

EL: In the thirties.

NR: In the thirties. And I remember my dad saying business was falling off a certain night of the week, and they realized that people were staying home to listen to Amos and Andy, you had to hear Andrew Brown and the Kingfisher. And they would turn the film off for a half an hour and run the radio program, and people started coming back to the theater. They wouldn't have to miss Amos and Andy.

EL: I'm struck that both of your parents seem to, it seems that in another time they might have done different things with their lives, but that they seemed to accept the opportunities that were available.

NR: Well they were good opportunities.

EL: Yeah.

NR: You know they never struggled, and in the forties, the early forties during the war years, we lived well. I mean we had a live-in housekeeper and we, we would go, my mother and I would go to Florida for a month in the winter, when I was little, five, six years old, for a month to Florida in the winter. And Atlantic City in the summer, and you know, it was very comfortable.

EL: I don't know if you want to mention this, but you had mentioned a story about segregation earlier that was interesting.

NR: Yes, 'cause I had mentioned earlier that my father was extremely liberal, and very much for the workingman and very much for the unions. And the hardest thing that he ever had to do, was the theater was segregated, and that was just the way it was. African Americans sat on the balcony. And you, if he had tried to change it, the theater would not have survived. And that was in the 1940s.

EL: Wow.

NR: Yeah.

EL: Let's talk a little bit more about some of the other Jewish businesses in Duquesne. I think that that's, is that this?

NR: Yeah. I brought...

EL: So you said that First Street was Jewish businesses.

NR: Almost, my recollection now you know, I basically left Duquesne when I was, well when I got married I was twenty and I moved to Pittsburgh. But there was an Escowitz's Furniture Store, there was Adler's Menswear, there was Benowitz's Ladies Dresses, the Miller's had a menswear store, there was Grace's Ladies Fashions, they were Jewish, Kessler's Jewelers, they were Jewish, there was Ben Weinerman had a children's shoe store. Eagle Drugstore was Jewish, Benowitz's, did I mention Benowitz's? Yes. Almost all the merchants on the main street and going up were Jewish merchants.

EL: And was there some sense of fraternity or camaraderie among them?

NR: Yes. I would say yes. I don't know, I was too young to ever be told if there wasn't. But they all made a good living.

EL: Yeah.

NR: And some of them, some of these store owners actually lived in Pittsburgh, some lived in, I think the Adler's and the Benowitzes, well I don't know, the Adlers I think lived in McKeesport. But, yeah, they all did well. That's just the way it was.

EL: How many of them are part of this group here?

NR: Oh that was a group of my parents' very closest friends.

EL: We're looking at a photograph now or a group of about ten...

NR: Ten best friends. It started as a bridge club.

EL: And they were called the Ten Guys.

NR: Ten Guys, they called, well they eventually bought land in Ligonier across from where Idlewild Park is, and they built a, they called it a lodge, it was a very large cabin. And each one of the original Ten Guys were in a different business in Duquesne. Do you want me to name them?

EL: Yeah.

NR: And I, this is how we, I don't know what their given names always were, but there was Chin Levine, he owned a hardware store.

EL: And why was he named Chin Levine?

NR: Because he had a large chin. He was a very good-looking man, but that was a very distinctive feature. Henry Escowitz. I put him down as a banker. He worked at one of the banks which was a very big thing for a Jewish man in those days, to work at a bank, and I don't know what his position was there. My father told me he was inducted into World War I, and he had to write his occupation and wrote "banker", and his handwriting wasn't that good and they thought he said baker, and he spent the years baking in World War I. And then there was my father, Joe Gellman, who ran the Plaza Theater and the Grand Theater, he managed my uncle's theaters. Ad Hirsch, he was a dentist. He went to dental school because he played football for Pitt and that was his way into dental school.

EL: An athletic scholarship.

NR: Probably. Probably under Sutherland, I don't know, maybe. Hym Ferdeber, he had an auto dealership. He actually lived in Pittsburgh and his dealership was in Pittsburgh, but he was related to the Levines so he was allowed to be a Ten Guy. Uh, Lou Burstin, he was a lawyer, Ben Kalstone, he owned Eagle Drugstore. Sam Greene, he had a men's

store. Somebody I don't remember too well, Martin Kovacs, and he had a, I think they manufactured generic drugs.

EL: Was he Jewish?

NR: Yes.

EL: So these were all Jews.

NR: These were all Jews, right. And my favorite of all was Charlie Cohn and Frieda. Charlie was a doctor in Duquesne. And that was the group that was my parents' closest friends.

EL: And you said that that, they originally rent a cabin but then they built one.

NR: No they, one of the families, the Greens, Sam and Esther Green, had their own small cottage on the Loyalhanna Creek and they would invite them up for the weekends. And then I think, I want to say this was 1937, I was about two years old, they all enjoyed it so much they said let's build our own cottage.

EL: It was sort of like a timeshare, in a way.

NR: Yes, it could sleep, it had, divided up in to bunks, there were four bunks and they only had curtains on the door. And everybody got a week of their own; weekends everybody could come. And they would come with picnic baskets and cooking. I remember, I have a memory, like 1940, they got from the state or the government little tiny pine trees, and we went around planting these pine trees. And I looked recently, we drove by and they're still there.

What else was I going to tell you about the Ten Guys. Oh, during the war they had, this is what good business men they were, they had property that fronted right on Route 30, but they built further back up, and they used that ground to plant victory gardens and therefore they were able to get A stickers for their cars to get gasoline, because they had to drive from Duquesne up there to tend to the farm. And so they, and then I can remember driving through Greensburg, it was very hilly, and when you, to save on gasoline, when you went down the hill you went into neutral and you drifted down the hill. And what else was I going to tell you about, about the cottage... Anyway they built it and they just had wonderful, wonderful times there. I can remember going to sleep and the card games were going on 'til all hours of the night. And all the women liked to cook, and we'd go get fresh corn from, you know, the farmers. And they were a very devoted group of friends.

EL: Were there unique advantages to living in a small town that was so close to the city?

NR: Yeah, absolutely, because I had, it was twenty, twenty-five minutes on a streetcar into the city so I had the advantage of, as opposed to maybe friends I knew that grew up in Greensburg or Charleroi were further out. So it was a good location.

EL: And so after junior high you actually come into the city.

NR: I came in at ninth grade to go to Allderdice, I may have been one of the few people that paid tuition, to go to Allderdice.

EL: Tell, tell that whole story because that interesting.

NR: Actually when it was time to go to high school, I couldn't go to high school in Duquesne, because by then if you wanted to go to college it was fairly difficult, but you could.

EL: To get from Duquesne?

NR: Well no, Duquesne High School didn't have the level of education if you were college bound, but I shouldn't say that totally because a lot of people did finish Duquesne High School and go to college. My mother was talking about sending me to Winchester, and by then I had made some friends in Duquesne, I mean in Pittsburgh, because of going to Rodef Shalom and Laurel Y, and all I heard about was Allderdice and I wanted to go there and I couldn't convince my mother. And finally one of my friends said to me, you know what to tell your mother? Tell your mother that you have lots and lots of Gentile girlfriends in Duquesne and you need to meet some Jewish boys, and that did it. I got to go to Allderdice. But I'm still in touch with my closest friend in Duquesne. We lived back to back. When we were sixteen, she went away to Catholic school and became a nun, and she went on to become a Sister of Divine Providence, the president of La Roche College.

EL: Really?

NR: Mhm, yeah. And her mother had gone to school with my mother in Duquesne High School. So I still am in touch with Sister Mary Joan.

EL: What do you remember of Kennywood, because you grew up close to Kennywood?

NR: Oh, yes. My, well, I went to all the school picnics and my great aunt was a teacher in the Duquesne school system so she got a lot of free tickets so we always had tickets for the rides. Then my birthday was June 8<sup>th</sup> and my mother would always have my birthday party and all my cousins from Pittsburgh would come and it was always at Kennywood. And then we'd come back to our house for cake and ice cream. But my father didn't love Kennywood because it infringed on the movie business in Duquesne and he used to always hope for rainy Sundays, which wasn't good for Kennywood, but it was good for the Plaza Theater.

EL: Was the park different then?

NR: I haven't been, I haven't been there lately, but, yeah, it was. It was, we had a housekeeper who lived with us, she was just, I loved her, a young, country girl. And she would go in the evening to Kennywood to dance. They had a dance pavilion and they had all the big bands came, and, yeah, it was a very family oriented, even when my children were growing up, the school picnics were a big deal and we packed picnics.

EL: Yeah.

NR: Did you grow up in Pittsburgh?

EL: I did, yeah. Did you go to Pitt? Is that where you went?

NR: No I went to, I started to PCW, and I graduated from Chatham.

EL: Okay.

NR: When I was graduating from high school my friends were all going away to college, and I had thought I would go away to college, but I knew that was when my father was switching careers, and I knew that it would be hard for them to send me away to school at that time. So I applied to PCW and to Tech, Carnegie Mellon was Tech in those days. And I really like PCW better, and my reward was I got a little gift from my parents of a used Plymouth coupe so I didn't have to take a streetcar anymore. But I lived at home, and I was quite popular at PCW because when girls started to, my friends started to date, they could come and spend the weekend with me and they didn't have to get in by the ten o'clock deadline, my parents were more liberal.

EL: You got married at twenty you said.

NR: I did.

EL: Did your parents stay in Duquesne after you got married?

NR: They stayed until, I got married in 1955. My son was born in 1960, and they moved to Pittsburgh in 1960. The roads had improved, my father could commute, and they sold the house. And every so many years I go back on my birthday to look at the house, and it's been well kept. And I see, the house was sold with my mother's wicker furniture, it still sits on the porch, it's been painted and repainted, and the neighborhood still looks very nice. Duquesne, if you cross the bridge from Duquesne Place into Duquesne, it's a disaster. My grandmother's house was torn down. It's not a very pretty site.

EL: Is Duquesne Place its own municipality?

NR: No. It was just a suburb of Duquesne. A newer part, more recently developed part of the city.

EL: How long did your father maintain a business presence there after?

NR: After they moved? That's a good question. Um, let's see, they moved in 1960. I would say, my mother died in '69, by then they had retired, so somewhere between '60 and maybe '65, when he was sixty-five, they retired.

EL: So you didn't get to see the decline of the congregation or the city first hand.

NR: No. I basically cannot tell you much about Duquesne beyond 19-, the early 1950s.

EL: Do you know when the congregation closed?

NR: I don't.

EL: There was no ceremony or anything like that.

NR: If there was, I wasn't part of it. There are people in, there are a lot of people from Duquesne still in Pittsburgh that you could talk to, yeah. I mentioned David Ehrenwerth.

EL: Yeah.

NR: Who's a lawyer in the city. Who else can I think of... maybe there aren't that many. I don't know. The children of the Ten Guys that I'm thinking of, that were mostly older than I am, didn't always stay in the area either and had passed away. So, I don't really know that much, but I do know that the Walmarts and the big stores killed Duquesne like it did the wholesale area in Pittsburgh.

EL: Right, the Fifth Avenue.

NR: Yeah, the merchants weren't coming in on Sundays to buy for their stores. That was the beginning of the change.

EL: Alright, well thank you so much for your memories.

NR: It has been my pleasure! I would like to tell these stories to my children, but they're not interested.

EL: Well they can listen to this.

NR: So you let me talk.

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