

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Jewish Senior Citizens Project

Personal Experiences

O. H. 657

MILTON RUDICK

Interviewed

by

Irving Ozer

on

June 9, 1987

MILTON RUDICK

Milton Rudick is 67 years old. He presently lives at 579 Tod Lane. He is a native Youngstowner, and was born on Breden Street. In the following presentation, he shares with us his memories of his parents, his family or orienatation--he was one of four sons--and the heritage his parents left him of the Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle), and the Socialist school where he received his Jewish education.

Milton Rudick graduated from South High School, and, after working two years in a general labor job, went on to study at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. He is also a veteran of the U. S. Army Engineers. While in the Army, he married Marie Taussig. He has three children, and he presently heads Ben Rudick & Sons Inc. Milton Rudick is a member and past president of the Rodef Sholom Temple.

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INTERVIEWEE: MILTON RUDICK

INTERVIEWER: Irving Ozer

SUBJECT: Youngstown in the 1920's and 1930's, World War II,
Arbeiter Ring

DATE: June 9, 1987

O: Where were you born? Were you born in Youngstown?

R: Yes.

O: When?

R: July, 1920, on the south side. I was born at 544 Bredan Street.

O: How long have your parents been here?

R: They came to Youngstown about 1911.

O: Where did they come from?

R: Both families were living in Pittsburgh, and that's where they met. They got married there, and dad found a job building a retaining wall for the Youngstown Sheet & Tube at the time when that mill was being constructed in Campbell.

O: Where had they come from before Pittsburgh?

R: What? Originally? My father came from a town called Bellilivkah, a village, which is close to a town called Berdichev in Kiev.

O: Never heard of that.

R: Gebernya is in the state of Kiev; they were both suburbs, evidently, of Kiev. My father was indentured. He would have been 100 years old July 12, 1987. They were very poor. My mother came from . . . I'll remember the

name in a moment.

O: Also Russia?

R: Yes, yes. Well, dad was indentured as a carpenter at the age of, I think, eleven years old. He was sent to be indentured to a carpenter in Berdichev. He says he remembers when he had to work inside the shop building doors and windows. The children were outside playing, and he would cry because he couldn't be out there playing with them, because he was the same age as them. He also tells about having had the education for his Bar Mitzvah. I think that was about his only formal education in Europe. They brought him in on a Saturday morning to do his Mafter. They gave him a piece of cake and wine and that was it. At one time he became very sick, and the master carpenter sent him home to either die or get better. It was a hard life, a very hard life.

O: Why did they leave Europe?

R: It was during the time of the pogroms, and everybody wanted to get away from there. They didn't tell us too much about that, but I do remember something that was very, very amusing. My father evidently joined a union in Berdichev and they were working, I think he said, twelve hour days, seven days a week, and they went on a strike because they wanted Sunday off. It was a long strike and finally they won. They did get the Sunday off. The head of the carpenter's union got up on the soap box in the park in the town and said, "Now you're working 72 hours a week. The day will come when you work ten hours a day and maybe five days a week, then maybe eight hours a day." Everybody said, "You're crazy!" That was in Russia, which is not surprising.

My mother came from Shedrin. It was the only farming community in Europe to the knowledge of these people, and I'll give you the name of somebody to contact in Pittsburgh who can give you this information. His name is Harry Katz.

O: Where did your father become involved with . . .

R: Arbeiter Ring? The Workmen's Circle? My guess, well, dad's parent's brothers went over to Pittsburgh. That where they settled, and when they could raise enough money, they would send the money over for them to come over. It was understood that they would work to pay back for their transportation. I think that mom and dad both were active in the Workmen's Circle.

O: That's in America?

R: In America, right.

O: They didn't pick it up in Europe then?

R: I don't think so. I don't think there was a Workmen's Circle there to my knowledge.

O: All right. Let's drop that for a moment and concentrate on you. Your parents came to Youngstown and settled where?

R: In Youngstown in 1911, I think, and then back to Erie Street. Before that, I think they lived on the east side for a short period, then on Erie Street, to the east of Market Street as I recall. Then in 1911 I believe it was . . . They bought the house on Breaden Street where I was born. I have two older brothers, Harry who was born in 1915 and my oldest brother Lawrence who was born in 1913. Mom went back to Pittsburgh to give birth to two children. I was born on Breaden Street at home.

O: What are your first memories of Youngstown?

R: I remember when I was three years old, and how I grew up.

O: Any particular memory?

R: One time we went to Passell's Farm, and I . . .

O: Where was that?

R: It was out north of here. I can't remember just where. Maybe ten miles north of Vienna or so. I remember chasing the chickens, and grabbing a chicken by the neck and throwing it over the fence. I killed some chickens because my dad had to buy some dead chickens!

I also remember about the same age going over to Mrs. Fine's house; I don't know if you remember Mrs. Fine. I think she lived on Orange Street or Marshall Street. I got under the table and I unscrewed all those little wing nuts, and the table almost collapsed. I heard about that one too.

O: You were a nice kid, weren't you?

R: I gave a lot of trouble to my parents.

O: Where did you go to school?

R: I started out in kindergarten here for a two-year period, between 1925 and 1926.

O: Where?

R: I went to Harding School.

O: Harding?

R: Kindergarten.

O: From the south side?

R: No. We moved to the north side for about two years. Dad's business got better, then it got worse. It got better so we moved to the north side, then it got worse, so we had to move back to the house west still had on Breaden Street.

O: I see.

R: We lived there, well, until I went away to college and the service.

O: So you went to Harding first, and then what?

R: Harding was kindergarten, yes. I went through Monroe School on Chalmers Street on the south side and then I went to Grant Junior School on Ridge Avenue, I think, and then South High School.

O: You graduated from South High School?

R: Yes.

O: During your growing up period, were there many Jewish families living near you?

R: Oh, yes.

O: Name a few.

R: Iz Feuer and their son Seymour. We came to know the family. The Mirkin's, it was Morris Mirkin, and I can't remember his father's name. A street up, Jerry Camens, and a Levine; I think it was Meyer Levine, I'm not real sure; he had a son Bob, and I can't remember his brother's name. Oh, there were quite a few. I got my annual from South High, 1938, and it's really surprising how many Jewish people did live interspersed all over the south side.

O: But it wasn't a ghetto kind of thing?

R: No, it was nothing like you have here in Liberty where maybe 50% or 60% of the people on any one street are Jewish in a very close area there. Like 10% or something.

O: Where did you go to Sunday school, if you did?

R: I didn't go to Sunday school. Well, if you want to call

- shul Sunday school, I went to the Arbeiter Ring Shul.
- O: We'll come back to that. Did you experience any anti-Semitism during this period?
- R: Yes, once. I must have been around eight years old. We lived directly across Glenwood Avenue from Mill Creek Park. I remember down the hill from my house was Lake Glacier. I was on a big rock that jutted into the water. I don't remember whether I was alone or not, and about three or four boys came up and started throwing rocks at me and said that I was a dirty Jew, a Christ-killer I think they said. I said, "Who told you that?" They said, "Our priest." One other time I was going to Carnegie Tech. I was a member of the Beta Sigma Rho Fraternity which has since joined a larger fraternity. I had come back to finish up my education after the army and I had one semester to go. There was one professor who was going to be away for the summer and I wanted to see whether they would rent me and Marie--we had just gotten married--their house during the summertime until I graduated. So I went up and I was talking to the lady and she was asking some questions, "Fraternity?" "Beta Sigma Rho." And she froze. Needless to say I never stayed in her home that summer. That was the Jewish fraternity. To my recollection I think that those were the worst signs of anti-Semitism.
- O: Did you get into any fights?
- R: As a child, yes.
- O: Did you know the boys that were throwing rocks?
- R: No. I recognized them as somebody I'd seen, but I didn't know their names.
- O: Probably from school?
- R: Yes, probably.
- O: So you graduated from South, when?
- R: 1938.
- O: And you went to college?
- R: I went to college, not at first. Very frankly, I was a "late bloomer" and all my kids are too. I was friendly with three other fellows who were far quicker than me and brighter--Jerry Camens, Larry Haber, and Harry Lev--and none of them went to college. I figured, "What chance would I have at college?" So I went to work from 1938 to

1940. For two years I was employed . . .

O: For your father?

R: Yes. For most of the time with my dad, but one time his work got slow and because I was a member of a labor union, I got another job. The foreman there made an offhand remark one day while we were having lunch. He said, "Last year I had a couple of college kids working as laborers." "Yes," I said, "Where are they now?" He said, "Back to college." I said, "They were getting 65¢ an hour here. What would they want to go back to college for?" He said, "I don't know. I guess they were thinking of their future." That little offhand remark made me think, Do I want to spend the rest of my life digging ditches? Shortly after that dad asked me again if I wanted to go to college, and I thought, What have I got to lose? So I did, and I made it.

O: You went straight through then, for four years?

R: From 1938 to 1940 I was out of college.

O: But once you started you kept . . .

R: I finished my third year after which time I was taken into the army. I had enlisted into the army, ROTC and what they call ERTC (Enlisted Reserve Training Corps). At the end of three years, they inducted us into the service. I had my basic training. I was ready to go to OCS, but the backlog of waiting to go into the engineer OCS was so great that we had to wait. During that period they sent us back and we were hoping to be able to graduate. So we had one semester plus six weeks back at college. After which they brought us back in the army. We went through OCS and we thought that we could just graduate maybe by taking some tests or something like that. We could get our degree. But the head of the department changed during this time when I was away, and the new head of the department said, "I saw your concrete design book. I don't like it. I want you to take that course again. So you'll just have to come back this summer." So Marie and I had to move back. It wiped out all my savings.

O: Where did you go?

R: Carnegie Institute of Technology which has now been changed. The name of it has been changed to Carnegie Mellon University.

O: So that takes you up through armed services?

R: Yes.

O: Now where were you in the armed services? Where did you serve?

R: Well, most of the time I was in the United States, but they did send me over to France. I was there just three days less than six months. I was there about four months when I contracted hepatitis. I was in the hospital there for six weeks, and then they put me on the hospital ship and took me home. I had a long recovery period during which time I got married. After I got married, they set me back on active duty. If I was well enough to get married, I was well enough to be on active duty.

O: What year was this?

R: That was 1946. I spent another six months in the service after which I was discharged and then Marie and I went to Pittsburgh to finish up that one semester in college.

O: How did you and Marie meet? Where, when, who was she?

R: Min Raven. I was on leave once, and I stopped over to the Raven house on Goleta Avenue. We had been friends for years and Min said, "Where is your camp?" I said, "Fort Belvoir, just south of Washington D.C." She said, "Why don't you look up that cute little girl who lives with the Umansky's from McKeesport?" So I did and I dated her about three or four times, maybe a half a dozen times, and then I went overseas. We wrote letters steady for six solid months every day. She writes a hell of a letter. I don't know if you've seen them or not. We got engaged as soon as I got back.

O: And your family?

R: I mentioned my oldest brother Lawrence who lives in California.

O: I mean children.

R: Oh, children. Well, Jerry is forty years old, and he's in business with me. He's an expert at writing computer software. Lenny is thirty-seven, but just one year ago he received his civil engineering degree after studying for seven years part-time. Jerry had two daughters; Lenny had two sons and a daughter, and Lois is single. She is living in Washington D.C. She has a Master's degree in Health Administration. She works for a consultant there.

O: Both boys live in Youngstown?

R: Yes.

O: You started to talk before about your brothers. Can you give us a little more about them?

R: Yes. There were four boys. Lawrence was born in 1913; Harry was born in 1915; and Irv was born in 1925. I was the third of the four boys. As I remember, it was a fairly nice childhood. I don't think we really knew how poor we were. Mom was able to brag one time, about being able to feed the family of six on one dollar a day. Isn't it amazing?

O: I suppose you had three bathrooms in the house too?

R: No, one. Did you ever hear of sleeping "Tsu Fusen".

O: Yes.

R: My two older brothers, Harry and Lawrence, had the back bedroom; Mom and dad had the front bedroom; Irv and I had the middle bedroom, and we each slept in a double bed. I mean there were three double bedrooms in the house, but when one of us caught a cold, then the other in that room had to sleep "Tsu Fusen"--to keep our faces as far apart as possible.

O: Personalitywise and all that how did they differ?

R: What's that?

O: How do you all differ?

R: Oh, I think Harry and Irwin are the most, let's say, warm. I was a little colder, and I guess I still am. I think I'm "thing" oriented perhaps.

O: Irv was president of the center or federation . . .

R: Federation in Canton.

O: I remember we used to be very jealous of him because he flew his delegates to the conventions in an airplane, et cetera.

R: Harry died about fifteen years ago. All the brothers got along pretty well.

O: You remained a pretty close family?

R: Yes.

O: Let's shift gears now. Let's talk about the Workmen's Circle. In order to get into it, let's start with your school, how you happened to start that school, what you learned, and what the curriculum was like.

R: Well, the school was on Walnut Street, just about a half block north of Rayen Avenue.

O: The school was what?

R: The Arbeiter Ring Shul, and as I remember right it was also called a Labor Lyceum. That's a nice word. People don't use it anymore. It's an organization that promotes culture through lectures.

O: Great in literature.

R: The first floor as I remember was a meeting hall. I think that there were classrooms down in the basement, and there may have been places for some people to live upstairs; I don't know. During recess we would get down into the lower part of the back yard and play. You might know at least some of the families who were members. Victor Camens was a member; Louis Lev was a member. By the way, Mrs. Lev and my mother were first cousins. Helen Giber, now an Engel, her family were members. The Roginsky's were members and for a while at least Bernard and Harvey Black's parents. Harvey told me he did not go there but Bernie did. I'll probably remember some of the other ones here as we go on. Give me a second.

O: What age, what grade level was this, approximately?

R: I think it was probably about grade one to ten.

O: But it was a secular school?

R: Oh, yes, it was definitely not religious.

O: Not religious? They didn't daven at all?

R: No, absolutely not. You have to understand this, my father would tell stories about learning the Hebrew and when he recited anything wrong, the teacher would hit him over the fingers with a ruler. It was, I think, a reaction to this strict kind of an upbringing that caused him to rebel, let's say, from the strict Orthodox. When he came to America, later in life, he started to become more religious. I guess when people get closer to their death they tend to do that.

O: You just spoke of Giber, for instance. I always thought of old man Giber as a devout religious man.

R: I think you could be religious and still be active in the Workmen's Circle.

O: Maybe it would help a lot by sort of outlining the philosophies

of the Arbeiter Ring as opposed to the labor groups involved.

R: There was a Communist group during that time and they were definitely non-friendly to this group which was Socialistic. In other words, their feeling was that this country and the world should be made into a Socialistic state and world by peaceful means by convincing the people that they should do it. The Communists believed that they had to do it by revolution. In fact, one of the things that I remember is the question, "Revolution versus Evolution?" As a matter of fact, I remember my Uncle Julius Weissberg married Eva, who was my mother's sister who was very active in the Socialist party.

The Jewish Daily Forward which I remember was the Arbeiter Ring publication, at least they read it all the time.

Julius was definitely a Socialist. He started out in Pittsburgh and then he ended up in Cleveland. He used to come to Youngstown--this was in his territory--and collect for the Jewish Daily Forward. I remember one time shortly after the Second World War when I was in their house in Cleveland and my cousin Sam mentioned, made some critical comment, about the British government. Julius said, "You can't talk like that. This is our party. The Socialists in England and our politics are exactly the same."

O: What was their program?

R: They felt that a rabbi or a cantor did not work for a living, therefore did not add to the society. I think I remember the word "sponge" on society. In other words, they didn't produce anything. These people all worked. As I remember, Giber sold shoe leather and maybe he worked fixing shoes, I don't know. Some of them had grocery stores. But they were not what I would call intellectuals.

O: In other words, they worked with their hands as opposed to working with their minds, like teaching. Is that their definition?

R: No, not quite. Teaching per se, they felt that they had a good purpose. Educating the children was important. They spent money to educate us.

O: Do you remember some of the teachers?

R: Well, there were two I remember. One was Treister and one was Beinfeld. I remember that Beinfeld was a much nicer person than Treister was. Treister was really more of a disciplinarian. It was interesting. We did learn the Yiddish alphabet. We read Yiddish. They explained to us

that Yiddish did not have the subtitles underneath, not at all, but the Hebrew did. They never bothered to teach us Hebrew though. Nor did they teach us anything that had to do with the Bible.

O: How were all these older men able to daven? Your father used to daven.

R: No, he didn't.

O: He didn't at all?

R: He was taught to daven in his Bar Mitzvah.

O: The more Communist group was called what?

R: Communists.

O: They were a separate group?

R: They were not friendly. The Young Communist League I remember they had . . .

O: Who were some of the people in that? Morris Slavin's family?

R: I don't think so. I think Morris Slavin . . . I remember going to Mill Creek Park one summer for a class, you know, in the park. And as a member, they called it YPSL (Young People's Socialist League). He was the teacher. I guess they taught rope tying, other than that, natural things, plus Socialistic philosophy. But they were, he was not a Communist, as I recall, no.

O: How long was the school in existence, would you say?

R: I would guess at least ten years, but I'm not sure.

O: The Fahrband and the Arbeiter Ring weren't the same, were they?

R: I don't think so. I don't remember the Fahrband.

O: What was the Fahrband?

R: I don't remember. I'm sure that somebody else can help you more on that than I can. I do remember when I was just a kid sitting on the steps to the bedrooms listening to some of the Arbeiter Ring friends of my parents sitting around the dining room table singing Yiddish songs. When I saw "Fiddler on the Roof," I could swear that they were singing some of the same songs. Yet I've been told that "Fiddler on the Roof" was all original music. I just had it in the back of my mind that some of it was copied from that old Yiddish music.

O: It came from memory?

R: Yes.

O: I'm sure they used some of the old leidlach in their writing, in their songs.

R: Incidentally, there's still a very strong Socialist, I mean Arbeiter Ring, group in Cleveland. My cousin Sam Weissberg is one of the members. I remember that his mother passed away; they had nothing in the way of a ceremony there until about six weeks later, and then after that, they had a memorial service. Well, we all went up there just to hear the service. Her granddaughter sang a song which she had made up about her grandmother and played a guitar which was excellent. It was really very touching.

O: So you weren't really aware of any philosophical comparison between the Fahrband and the Arbeiter Ring?

R: Wait a minute. You tell me what the Fahrband is.

O: I don't know. I was hoping you could.

R: Yiddish Fahrband, that may be the Communists. I'm not sure.

O: Was it the Circle or was it the Fahrband that used to bring all the Yiddish folk shows?

R: I don't remember any Yiddish shows. Furthermore, I think that the group was too small and too poor to afford this kind of thing. This was during the Depression.

O: Did it have any connection with business? Did anyone resent the fact that those who belonged to it were . . . That kept them from getting into business, in other words?

R: I heard nothing like that.

O: Nothing?

R: Well, I mean, you have to remember dad was a contractor. Emanuel Katzman was also a contractor. Emanuel was probably a better salesman than dad. Dad was just a hard-working person who made a living with his hammer and his tools and everything. I kept trying to talk him into maybe getting a little more dressed and spending a little more time watching the people rather than working with tools. He took a great pride in how much work he could do and how well he could do it. Manny, on the other hand, was more of a salesperson. I think he made better connections; he did extremely well, compared to dad. But dad raised us, you know.

I never felt that dad received any discrimination from other people because he was a member of the Arbeiter Ring. I'm sure that some people didn't like it. He was either atheistic or agnostic and I still don't know which. At times he was atheistic and at other times agnostic.

O: So you had no religious education?

R: I wasn't even Bar Mitzvahed. I didn't go to the temple.

O: The Arbeiter Ring didn't have any Bar Mitzvahs in it?

R: That's right.

O: Many years ago at that time anyway.

R: Yes, that's right.

O: Did you join any clubs?

R: Well, I've been very active in the temple.

O: Did you join any Jewish clubs at that time?

R: No. At that time, no. I didn't join anything. I was called G.D.I.--God Damn Independent. Irv was more active, as you know, in B'nai B'rith.

O: What was your attitude in growing up about Israel, about Zionism, I should say?

R: I did not believe that we should build Israel. My feeling was it would be nice to have a land of Israel, but I wouldn't want to go there. I would want to live there, until, of course, when it became a state and then like everybody else, I became proud of the fact that we had an Israel. I've always felt that I'm an American. I owe my allegiance to the United States of America, but I owe my pride as a Jew to Israel. Very frankly, I was always ashamed of being a Jew until the State of Israel was born.

O: Have you been there?

R: Yes, 1969, I think. Quite some time ago. I should go back one of these days.

O: I think you should.

R: You know, its strange, when we went there I was told to expect a great revelation when I went to the Wall and I didn't get it. But when I got on top of the Massada, I got that revelation. I really enjoyed it, thrilling. When you get down to that wall what that is is a retaining wall; that's

not the wall of the temple; its a retaining wall which supports the earth so that they have a level ground around the temple which of course is the Temple of the Rock. When you get up on top of that Massada, you actually can see how the people lived and the temple that is still there. Somebody says that there are no remains of the temple from the Second Era, but there is one on the Massada, and the place where they had the cemetery, where they had the Columbaria for those who were cremated, Gentiles. The Mikveh, the storerooms, the water storage chambers, it was just . . .

O: Unbelievable, incredible.

R: It's there; it's there.

O: It is mind boggling.

R: Yes. There's so much more than there was at the Wall. It was to me . . . I was astounded at the Wall. I mean I would conceive of somebody building there. The top of some arches which show how much fill has gone on through the ages. Over some thousands of years, so much. But I just had the mental feeling that . . .

O: What is your feeling now in regard to religious, Hebrew education?

R: I think it's important. I mean Jewish education and religious education still are important. I'm still a reformed Jew. I can't buy some of the things that were written in the Bible as if they are to be taken literally. I accept the ethics that we find in the Bible. I believe that the Bible was inspired by God. It was not written by God. There's too much evidence that is shown in the writings. There are different styles of writing through the centuries the Bible has evolved. So I can't buy the Orthodox feeling that this is strictly the Word of God, and every word is to be taken literally. You must take into account that we're a changing society. We have things in our standard of living and our way of life that were never even conceived during the time when the Bible was written. At times I have my agnostic feelings and I think everyone does.

O: In terms of the people you've known in Youngstown, who were the ones that you most respected or were most involved with?

R: You're talking about Jews?

O: No, not necessarily.

R: I admire Jackie Steinberg. In her physical condition, and possible constant pain, I have never seen her without

a smile that looks like a meaningful smile. How can you pity someone who smiles like that?

Gilbert James, for all the time he gives to many activities in our community. He says that Sidney Moyer started him in this direction.

Elie Wiesel with whom I had a private one hour talk when he spoke at the Rodef Sholom Temple. He is the only Nobel Peace Prize winner that I ever met.

Reverend E. G. Diehm, my speech teacher at South High School, who told me that I should be proud to be a Jew.

O: Anything that you would like to throw in the pot on your own that I haven't asked, observations, anecdotes?

R: Observations. I feel pretty good about myself and about my being a Jew. I love what I'm doing. I'm ashamed to be paid so well for something that I like so much. Then I feel good about Marie and the children and the grandchildren.

O: Relating to the general community, what are some of your memories about Youngstown as you were growing up, where you dated, where you went, the kind of things you did?

R: Well, I remember going to school. I remember a black girl called Irene Dunn, beating me up in about fifth grade. I remember a black policeman Robert Harris. He retired just a few years ago, a big, strapping guy. I told him how Irene beat me up one time. He made a big, scared face and laughed saying, "Yes, she beat me up too."

O: Where did you go?

R: I never was interested in girls until about age sixteen.

O: That's normal. Where did you go with girls?

R: Where did we go? I remember The Griddle on Market Street. It was Harry Malkoff's place.

O: And Mr. Wheeler's?

R: Mr. Wheeler, yes. They made the best malted milkshakes and hamburgers. The Griddle was at the "V" where Market Street and Southern Boulevard meet.

O: Harry was the first one out there. Wheeler came next.

R: Idora Park we would go to sometimes. I remember one time Ella Berkowitz (Lackey), Harry Lev, and I on the second day of Rosh Hashanah went down to Mill Creek Park and went

canoeing. She had a new maroon corduroy slack suit on. The canoe tipped and her suit got all wet and her mother almost killed her. She said it happened to her because she didn't observe all of Rosh Hashanah.

O: Like a "hole in one" on Yom Kippur?

R: Yes.

O: How did you get to where you were going?

R: Oh, very often we would take the streetcar. It was marked Glenwood and we boarded it right around the corner from us. It was later changed to a trolley bus. There was a six-plex next door to us, and there were a bunch of Jewish people living there almost all of the time. Maybe three or four. There was a streetcar conductor named Smith. His daughter, Gertrude Smith, married Joe Cohen who had a grocery store down on Logan Avenue. Do you remember who I'm talking about? Gertrude is still around. Joe finally retired; he was manager of Seven-Eleven on Belmont and Colonial.

To get back to Mr. Smith, the streetcar conductor. He was able to buy a brand new Chevrolet, but he never knew how to drive a car; all he could run was that streetcar. He asked my brother Irv to teach him how to drive, and then he went on the solo trip with him. He sat right next to him. Smith drove from Breden Street down to Glenwood, turned right, then followed the railroad tracks down Glenwood past Isaly's, went down Mahoning Avenue, turned right, followed the railroad tracks down West Federal, East Federal Street, and drove right into the streetcar barn. That's the only route he knew.

Bernstein, Sam and Louie Bernstein lived across the street from us. Sam, I think, retired as a radio technician in Columbus.

O: I was a little disappointed we didn't pick up on the Fahrband. Did you ever get involved with the Arbeiter Ring . . .

R: There was one time. There was a picnic I remember at Yankee Lake. There were some Ku Klux Klan people that decided to try to break it up. Jack Simon, Bill Roginsky, and dad got involved in a fist fight with them. But they were picking on the wrong people because most of them lived by physical labor and were pretty strong. I think we chased them away. We used to go on a lot of picnics.

About the age of five or six until I went away to college, every summer dad rented a cottage.

O: Where?

- R: Lake Milton. We always went there in the summertime for two weeks to a month. Mom would stay there all day and dad would drive out there at the end of the day. Dad was a very strong person. He would jump into the water and for about a minute--it seemed like forever--he would be unseen. All of a sudden way out there his head would pop up. It scared the hell out of us, because we thought he had drowned. He always did it, but we always thought he had drowned.
- O: Do you have any recollections about how you reacted or how the community reacted to Hitler and the Holocaust?
- R: Jack Simon was a member of the Arbeiter Ring. He was Morris' and Sam's father. I think he was also religious. He belonged to the association and he also belonged to the temple.
- O: Do you recall your reaction to the community reaction when words first started coming in about Germany?
- R: I knew nothing about it. The first time I heard about it was in OCS (Officer Candidate School). There was a class in "ethics", or "current events". The question of the day was "What should we do with Germany after we defeat them?" Answers came like "split them up" or "Balkanize them" or "Make them into an Agrarian State" "Destroy all their industry." One cadet--a very ugly Orthodox Jew from Brooklyn--said, "Kill them all. They're killing all the Jews in Europe." It shocked everyone. The next rest period, Kelly, who bunked beside me, was shining his shoes in a deep pensive mood. Finally, he said, "Rudick, you're Jewish, aren't you?" "Yes." "Do you believe that all the Germans could be killed." I replied, "No. Aren't you Irish?" "Yes." "Do you believe everything every other Irishman believes?" Shortly after that, all cadets received order to list their fellow cadets in the company in the order in which they felt they were the best officer material to the worst. It was called the "F.Y.B." list. "____ Your Buddy." The ugly Jewish cadet was flunked out, and I am sure it was because he ended on the bottom of everyone's list. He was very frum (Orthodox). He would never eat anything but vegetables, even though the rabbis said Jews didn't have to be observant during military service.
- But I never picked it up. I knew that there was a lot of anti-Semitism, but the wholesale murder of millions of people was something I probably wouldn't have believed if I heard it. It was too monstrous for the imagination to comprehend.
- O: Okay, Milt, thank you very much.