

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Jewish Project

Youngstown Area

O. H. 530

SIDNEY DAVIDOW

Interviewed

by

Irving Ozer

on

November 21, 1986

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Jewish Project

INTERVIEWEE: SIDNEY DAVIDOW

INTERVIEWER: Irving Ozer

SUBJECT: Youngstown in the early days, Jewish temples

DATE: November 21, 1986

O: This is an interview with Dr. Sidney Davidow. The date is Friday, November 21, 1986. The interviewer is Irving Ozer.

Where were you born?

D: Youngstown.

O: What year?

D: 1912.

O: Were you born in a hospital or at home?

D: I believe I was born at home.

O: Where was that?

D: On Poland Avenue.

O: How far out?

D: Near Alpine Street, halfway between Stop Five and Franklin Avenue. The actual address was 919 Poland Avenue. It's not there anymore.

O: Did you live there because your father had business nearby?

D: My dad had a business at 1231 Poland Avenue. My uncle had a business closer to Alpine Street.

O: What kind of businesses were they?

D: They were grocery businesses.

O: What was your dad's first name?

D: Louis.

O: Were there many other Jews in the area where you lived?

D: There were a few.

O: How long did you live there?

D: When I was four or five we moved to 1231 Poland Avenue, which is right next door to the fire station.

O: Where did you go to school?

D: I went to school at the end of Poland Avenue, where you took the bridge to cross over to Center Street. I don't remember the name. Probably Center Street School.

O: From there where did you go?

D: Then I went to Adams School. Then in 1920 we moved to the north side of Norwood Avenue. Then I went to Parmalee. From there I went to Rayen.

O: At that time Rayen had moved already?

D: Yes. I think Rayen had just been built. When we moved in 1920, they were just in the process of building Rayen.

O: When did you start high school?

D: 1924.

O: During your years growing up did you experience any anti-Semitism?

D: I don't think so. I probably was not aware of it at that time. We lived on Poland Avenue and there were a lot of ethnic people there.

O: Were there many Jewish kids at Rayen when you went?

D: Yes.

O: Where did you get your religious education?

D: My folks belonged to the old Temple Emmanuel on Rayen Avenue. My dad was a rather religious man; he would not work on Saturday.

O: How did he get from Poland Avenue to Rayen Avenue on Saturday?

D: Walked.

O: Were you aware of other temples or synagogues?

D: Yes. When we moved to the north side in the 1920's my folks belonged to the Anshe Emeth. I was Bar Mitzvahed at the Anshe Emeth.

O: Who was rabbi then?

D: Rabbi Birnbaum.

O: What other temple do you remember?

D: I remember the Summit Avenue temple; I remember the one on Himrod Avenue, Oher Zedie. There was Rodef Sholom also.

O: Did you go to the Hebrew Institute on Lincoln Avenue?

D: I never went there as a student, but I went there when it became the Jewish Center.

O: Do you remember the playhouse in the backyard?

D: That was farther down on Arlington.

O: Could you give me your impressions of downtown Youngstown when you were growing up? What kind of things come to your mind when you talk about Youngstown in those days?

D: I remember Ritter & Meyer's, the old Strouss building next to the Paramount, the Union Bank Building being built, Petraki's, Burts, Bomboles. There was McKelvey's, Ole's Market, the Brass Rail, the Public Market. I remember East Federal.

O: I would like you to talk about that particularly.

D: I remember my mother used to buy her chickens there.

O: Who were the butchers that you remember?

D: Rosenberg, Ostash, Glickstein, Mostov.

O: Where did you date?

D: You went to a movie and went out afterwards. Later on they had dancing at the Wick Mansion. I remember Avon Park, Yankee Lake, and Southern Park, Idora Park. At Southern Park there was a racetrack and one time later they had

dancing.

O: After you graduated from Rayen in 1928 where did you go?

D: Ann Arbor, Michigan to the University of Michigan. I got an M. D. at Ann Arbor.

O: Among the Jewish population who are some of the people that you've known that stand out in your mind?

D: I knew the Strouss'. He was sort of a quiet person. I didn't know him that well.

O: Who were some other people?

D: I knew all the physicians. I knew Nathan Darsky who owned Golden Age Beverage.

O: Did you belong to any organizations growing up?

D: No.

O: Why did your parents come to Youngstown?

D: Because of your parents, the Ozersky's.

O: What do you remember about services as a kid? Who were the rabbis?

D: Manello, Cantor Block, Rabbi Philo, Birnbaum.

O: Did anybody in the Jewish community have any kind of impact on your life in terms of your career or whatever?

D: Dr. Samuel Zoss was a cousin of mine and when he was a student at Ann Arbor and I wanted to go to Ohio State, he talked me into going to Michigan. I was always interested in medicine because my brother was a doctor.

O: If someone asked you to talk for one minute about what has happened to Youngstown what would you say?

D: I would say what has happened here is happening in a lot of cities. The downtown has deteriorated.

O: Any memories of Idora Park?

D: Fond memories. I went dancing and used to date there.

O: Do you remember Jewish days at Idora?

D: Yes. I remember baseball there too. I also remember the Niemark Farm on Meridian Road. It was near Cornersburg.

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Many Jewish picnics were held there.

O: Who taught you Bar Mitzvah?

D: I guess it was Rabbi Birnbaum.

END OF INTERVIEW