

**Interview with Kathryn Rubin  
with Sons, Randy Rubin and Ronald Rubin**

**Conducted by Noel Pugach**

- NP: This is Noel Pugach. Today is Saturday, June 3, 2017. I'm in Santa Fe talking to Kathryn Rubin. I've spoken to Kathryn before and learned quite a bit about her. She knows an enormous amount about Jewry in New Mexico and other things. But, I want to focus today on your experience living in Raton and Temple Aaron. Okay? So, to begin with, give me your full name, date of birth, place of birth?
- KR: My name is Kathryn Rubin. I was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, May 12, 1923, at the Presbyterian Hospital. Every building in Albuquerque that I had anything to do with has been razed. I don't know what that is, but that's what's happened.
- NP: So you've outlived them all.
- KR: I'm the last of my family with my children.
- NP: But I mean, even the buildings.
- KR: Oh, yes.
- NP: Okay. So I've interviewed you before, and especially about your family relationship and about other things. We went to view the cemetery, and you told me about all these people who are buried there.. But I want to focus on your experience in Raton, and also about Temple Aaron. So, when and why did you move to Raton, New Mexico?
- KR: Well, I met through friends a wonderful man whose family lived in Raton, New Mexico, where he also was born. And they were in the retail business, and I was from the same kind of family. And he was just – he was getting out of the service. And that's why I moved there in 1946, after he returned from the European theater in \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_.
- NP: And what was his full name?
- KR: Leon Rubin. L-e-o-n R-u-b-i-n.
- NP: And his date of birth?
- KR: January 2, 2020.
- NP: No, you mean 1920.
- KR: I mean 1920.
- NP: So, you married Leon. Where was the wedding?

KR: At Temple Albert in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the officiant was Rabbi Sol Starrels. And that was 71 years ago.

NP: And what was your wedding ceremony like, and the party? And was it a big wedding?

KR: It was a considerably big wedding for Albuquerque. In fact, after our wedding, they had a run to start a new building because we outgrew the building. There were a couple of hundred people. And I had many relatives from Denver and Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and all the major cities.

NP: And did you have music?

KR: Oh, we had music. We had a choir. Beth Curry Redmond, who was *very* well known in Albuquerque, was the one who sang. And my father-in-law was a nice little man who people liked. And we got married and we had a nice honeymoon to Mexico: Mexico City and Acapulco.

NP: So, you moved to Raton.

KR: Yes.

NP: And your husband, Leon, had a store.

KR: Yes. And what kind of a store was it?

KR: It was retail clothing and shoes.

NP: Was it small?

KR: It wasn't so small. It was about a 25' by 150' store. It had been started in 1915, when my father-in-law and mother-in-law and two children moved from Pueblo, Colorado. And he was widely known and people liked him. And he came back and we ended up having the store to ourselves. We bought it.

NP: You bought it from your...

KR: From my father-in-law in 1948. My brother-in-law, Leon's brother, Irvin, returned from the war, and he came back to Raton, and so we were in business together before my father-in-law and mother-in-law moved to San Diego in 1948, and we bought the store, the three of us together.

RVR: I'm Ron Rubin, Kathryn Rubin's son. And you were in business, you and Dad were in business with Uncle Irvin until 1953, isn't that right?

KR: Correct.

RVR: And then after that, they bought out my dad's brother, and then you were sole owners from 1953 until 2012.

NP: All right. So, it was relatively small at the time, but when I visited you in Raton, it was 2004 or '05, something like that, it was a much larger store.

KR: Yes. We took – a man next door who had also returned from the service, opened up a men's store, and he decided he wanted to quit. And, so my father-in-law, by then he suggested that – it's funny. You want a funny story?

NP: Sure.

KR: Okay. When I came to Raton, he was Barney Rubin who came from Poland, and when he got to Ellis Island, they said, "What is your name?" And it was like Abel Rubichek(sp?). They said, "You will be Barney Rubin." And that's what he was.

RVR: A nice Jewish man from Poland. Having the name of Barney Rubin was not his given name in Poland, of course.

KR: No. And he was well-liked, and a very solid citizen, very nice man. And when I came, oh, he was delighted! They had four sons, two of whom had already left. One went to Kearney, Nebraska, and one went to California. He was out of the retail business. He was a professor of Economics.

NP: Okay. So, what was your competition like?

KR: Our competition was before the chain stores, from 1915 'til 1946, it was a small town with about 9,000, 8,000 people.

NP: Dependent on the mining industry.

KR: Yes, and the coal...

RVR: And railroads.

KR: And cattle. And he would walk to work and he would talk to everybody. And my sister and I met him when my sister and I took a trip to La Junta, Colorado, by car. And, so we stopped in to see the Rubins because I had met his son. And my father-in-law kept up the romance by sending letters from Leon on onion skin. Do you know what that is?

NP: Yes, I do.

KR: A kind of paper.

NP: It kept the weight down, because you paid so much. If it was over a half ounce...

RVR: Oh, I know that.

KR: It was air mail. And he would write interesting letters. And so when he returned, he was sure I was married, so he didn't stop, and he was mustered out in Ft. Bliss(??), Texas. And the things he told me! I think this is funny. There must have been several hundred people that had just come back. He was the second returning from the war come back to Raton, but the district served Texas, in El Paso. And, then we still had the war going on in Japan. And, so whoever dismissed, he said. "Now fellows, how many of you would like to re-enlist?" Not one hand goes up. And he said, "I know you want to go home and fight with your wives." [Laughter]

NP: Well, that's a very cute story. Now, you said when you were married, did you have your own home?

KR: The little town wasn't progressive. They didn't have nice apartments. And my poor husband when he came to visit me, he apologetically said, "You know, you won't be living as nicely as you are in Albuquerque" with my mother and sister. And I thought, "How bad can it be?" I found out. When I came home – we were in Mexico about three or four weeks – and when I came home, he took me to this room. There were like little bungalow apartments. And I walked in. Nothing had been cleaned, nothing had been done from the previous renters, and I looked around and I thought – and he saw this on my face – he thought, "She's going back immediately!" [Laughs]

He said, "Don't worry, don't worry. I'll go to the section where the people want to work as housekeepers." He brought in this *wonderful* woman. She was happy to assist, and the whole apartment was about this size, very small. And Miss Varilla was a wonderful woman! And it was something, you know, to have a new... and they all knew I was Jewish. No, they used to think I was Catholic. They wondered was Monsignor \_\_\_\_\_ Mary? I said, "No, I'm Jewish." They were mostly Hispanic. And so, she got a real initiation.

And so we cleaned up the apartment. We had it all wallpapered by this man who they said, "Don't get him upset." I said, "Why?" He said, "Well, he and his brothers will walk away. They'll retrieve their painting supplies and you'll never see them again." So I was very careful not to give them any trouble! And they were very nice. So we started. And my relatives would come up from Albuquerque, my sister and her man that she was going to marry at the end of the month, and my mother, my mother-in-law and father-in-law. You [to Randy] know where it is.

RVR: Yes.

KR: But we couldn't be in the apartment together. There was no room. And so, it'd been over a year since \_\_\_\_\_. And so they'd come and we'd visit. And it was very, very hard

RVR: It was on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, wasn't it?

KR: 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

RVR: Yes.

KR: It was called the apartments...

RVR: But her first place that you lived in with my father, they had their own apartment.

KR: Oh yeah, it was a bungalow type.

RVR: Tell Noel about what Grandpa said to you or wanted to give you and kept the romance going?

KR: Oh no, I didn't. I will tell you. When he met me, we met through nice families in Albuquerque. Since my father was in retail, and my father's \_\_\_\_\_. And the salesmen were Jewish and they went up to Raton, and here they saw this nice young man – this was before the war, and they said, "I know a nice Jewish girl in Albuquerque." And so, then they came to us, came to me and my sister, and my mother who said: "We know a nice young Jewish man in Raton." Well, this was war time and I took Rabbi Sterrels my picture.

NP: Which Mrs. Wertheim?

KR: There was Mrs. Hillson. Nate and Pauline Gilson.

NP: Well, there were many Wertheims.

KR: Yeah, but that was in Carlsbad. And there weren't any...

NP: Well, there were Wertheims in. Fort Sumner

KR: Ft. Sumner.

NP: In New Mexico and Ft. Sumner.

KR: But this was prior to the war. This would be about 1941. And so...

NP: But by that time, Mike [sic. Max] Wertheim was already in Ft. Sumner.

KR: Yes.

NP: So which Wertheims were there?

KR: There were no Wertheims. If I said Wertheim, I didn't mean Wertheim. I meant the salesmen who introduced me.

So we met. And so, then after the war we had a nice social life there. Rabbi Sterrels didn't drive a car. So my sister had the bright idea: "Sis, you could chauffeur for Rabbi Sterrels," because he had small children and a wife. "Why don't we drive him to his appointments at the USO?" I said, "That stands for United Servers [sic.] Organization." And it was the social gatherings were always men here. There were no women in the service here. If there were, we certainly didn't see them. And we had a bombardier school so the soldiers would come in for six months, and then we'd go through and

introduce ourselves. And, so that was a nice, nice time in our lives. And then, however, I didn't marry one of them. I married Leon Rubin.

RVR: Tell your story about what Grandpa had said to you so that you could marry his son?

KR: Yes. So then we met Barney and Minnie Rubin. Anyway, we met with them in Raton, my sister and I, on a trip we had taken. And my father-in-law said, "You know, after you marry my son, I will see that there's \$5,000 in the bank for you to start your life together." Well, the \$5,000 wouldn't mean that much to me. I wasn't that monetary. And it came through us. I don't know, I didn't read bankbooks.

RVR: You showed me the other day.

KR: Did I show you?

RVR: Yes, you did, the \$5,000.

KR: When he gave it to us, they had – they saved interest, for example, \_\_\_\_\_. And I think there was \$70 interest on the \$5,000. And when he saw us after we married, he gave me the deposit.

RVR: So that didn't have an effect on you, taking the \$5,000?

KR: No.

RVR: It was a nice way to start.

KR: It was. We paid \$35 a month for the rent on the apartment. And then they raised it to \$45.

RVR: It was \$10 worse. [Laughs]

NP: All right. So tell me. So you're in business, you have the store. Later on you expand.

KR: Yes.

NP: What was your relationship with other merchants in Raton?

KR: Very, very nice. There were clothing people. We had JC Penney's, which I think they had incorporated. They had about 1935-36. And they were next door. And we had a family by the name of Alicio(sp?) who had a nice clothing store. And you had the specialty shops rented. Usually women's clothing, and Kilmurray; you had a men's store; and they all liked Barney. He was kind of a novelty being a foreign born. He was paid ...[unclear]. And a thrift store. Well, during the war, you know, coal was king. And we had 1,500 miners in the community. And I remember on Saturday nights these stores were open from 9:00 in the morning. On Saturdays they stayed 'til 9:00 or 10:00. And the people would come in, and they needed clothing badly. You know, you couldn't buy anything. My father-in-law was in the old \_\_\_\_\_ military. The

merchants and their suppliers, they had their \_\_\_\_\_ green stamp \_\_\_\_\_. For every stamp, my father-in-law would send in the stamps with an order, and that would be from the community stores.

NP: Well, that was during the Depression?

KR: After.

NP: After about a year-and-a-half. The war.

KR: Yes.

NP: But by '47, all of those \_\_\_\_\_.

KR: No, I was on the committee. There were three of us. Lena(??)\_\_\_\_\_ and I, we'd go over all of this stuff for the government, you know, count the stamps. And then, you had to have an inventory of what you had in stock, \_\_\_\_\_ your inventory again, and how much you saved on \_\_\_\_\_, and how much \_\_\_\_\_. So, it was okay. You did that.

RVR: But there was competition. Alicio's was a large store, very much like ours. I always think of Alicio's as our main competition when I was growing up. I was born in 1951. My parents had two sons, my brother, Randolph, who was born in '49, and me. And by that time you had started R&R Shoe Store?

KR: Not when you were born, 1958.

RVR: Okay. And then, by the time I left you had four stores in Raton, all within the two block area.

NP: So we want to talk about how he expanded. But at first, where did you get your inventory from? Did anyone in the family that drove to New York or to St Louis to buy?

KR: The salesmen were plentiful. Like Levi Strauss had a routine time when they'd come, and they would inventory, and they would put marks of what we had in inventory, and then you would put in the fill-in by sizes. And, you know, we didn't have to go to market right away. But we did go to the Denver market, and Barney already had a good reputation. He paid his bills on time, and they all knew the little man. And he was tiny, 5'6".

RVR: He was so Russian looking. When you see leaders in Russia, he looks like that. Oh, he had beautiful, beautiful black hair, you know, pompadour, striking blue eyes. [Kathryn: Oh, yeah.] He was a handsome man, I think.

KR: And my mother-in-law, she was not interested in this, absolutely. She didn't want any part of it. The home was her...

NP: But you became interested in it.

KR: Well yeah, because my family had come to America in 1906.

NP: Right. Earlier you had become part of their operations.

KR: Yes.

NP: So, let's go into the stores. So, what was the first – what was the second store?

KR: The first store was B. Rubin & Sons. And he'd say, "Do you know, Kathryn, why don't you change the name?" I said, "To what, Dad?" He said, "To Robin." Well, we looked at him, "What's the difference between Rubin and Robin?" I think he wanted to have a new sign.

RVR: Well, no, he didn't want it to be associated as a Jewish store. I think he would have been...

KR: Maybe that's right, yeah.

RVR: Because he thought Robin didn't...

KR: ...sound as Jewish.

RVR: Didn't sound as Jewish, and maybe it would create more business than to have a name like Rubin.

KR: Yes.

NP: Well, did you encounter any anti-Semitism?

KR: They didn't know what a Jew was, because my mother- and father-in-law were not – they were community minded that way. My mother-in-law was the first a housekeeper. And my father-in-law was very charitable. But I think he did want to not be so...

RVR: So there wasn't – you didn't encounter anti-Semitism?

KR: No. They all asked me which church I got married in, and I said, "No, I'm Jewish." And I'd lived in small towns before, so it was not unusual. And I became friendly with all my friends, and I would visit the churches. But I also was very Jewish.

NP: I know you were very Jewish. Okay, so what was the second store?

KR: The second store was R&R Shoe Store. By that time, Irvin, my brother-in-law, had started with us and my father-in-law thought it would be good to get the stores separated for a family. One could run one store and then they'd run the other store. R&R Shoe Store, that stood for Rubin & Rubin. And we had – it was a specialty shoe store. They called it "specialty" because that's all we sold. And do you want to know figures?

NP: Yes.



KR: Of how much it cost to open the second store?

NP: Well, tell me, all right.

KR: I'm a figure person. Oh, this man came in. He had troubles with his present renter. And to Barney, he said, "Barney, there will be a vacancy. It was going to be available in two months. And you always said you'd like to know about it or if it's available." He was about four stores down the block. So, Barney said – he gave orders kind of. He said, "I think you should open up a shoe store." So, my son was on the way. We bought that business, and it had a lot of fixtures. It cost \$13,000, and it was men's and children's shoes.

RVR: It was R&R for Rubin & Rubin, 'cause my dad was still real involved in that.

NP: So, did you have to get a bank loan?

KR: No. And you know, my father – the war was very good to him. He wasn't a learned man, you know, but he'd had one son who was a very brilliant man. And the other son – he had two sons – he came actually before they went to war.

RVR: Active in the stores.

KR: *Very* active in the stores. And, so he had this little amount of \$5,000, which was like \$50,000 would you say today?

RVR: Probably a little more.

KR: Yes. And my mother-in-law wasn't a beggar by any means. She had a nice home. And so, he really \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_ with his boys. The name of the store was, his first one, was Barney B. Rubin & Sons. He was heavy on the sons.

RVR: Well, the first store was actually the Golden Rule Store. Originally it was the Golden Rule for a year, and then they changed it to the Golden Eagle Store. And we have ads from 1916. We have one of the original ads in the *Raton Daily Range* or the *Raton Range* that shows – we had it hanging in our store – socks were 2 cents, ladies' coats were \$3.

KR: And he gave you a pencil if you...

RVR: Yes, the first hundred shoppers a pencil when they came in. And so it became, from the Golden Rule, which was the JC Penney name. This was the \_\_\_\_\_.

KR: No.

RVR: It became the Golden Rule Store...

KR: In Denver. It was a very common name, and he --\_\_\_\_\_. Barney just capitalized on their name.

RVR: Oh, so then they forced him to change it? Oh, okay, it became the Golden Eagle. Then it became B. Rubin, and then B. Rubin & Sons. And then he changed it to Rubins.

NP: When did he change it to Rubins?

KR: About 19... real soon after I came. '47 maybe 48. And we went to market, like I say.

RVR: Right.

KR: And the first time we went, Leon's mother was – came from Europe, and her father lived in Denver. And, so he – not her mother, because she passed away. And the grandmother brought her from Russia as a three-year-old child. And so he came -- by that time little Barney that married a woman with children, and they had children. So she was kind of the eldest one that didn't have much training. A very bright woman. She wasn't very educated, but very interested in education.

RVR: Barney was married before?

KR: No, Barney's mother- and father-in-law. The uncle's \_\_\_\_\_.

RVR: Oh, oh, okay, yes

NP: So you opened the shoe store and it does well.

KR: Yes. Yes, it did well.

RVR: It did very well. That was before my store [Kathryn: Right]. When we were going, I took an interest in the shoe store. So that became sort of – and I sort of managed it for the family.

KR: You did manage it.

RVR: And then, Noel probably wants to know about numbers three and four?

KR: Yes.

RVR: Have a drink.

KR: Okay. And so, we opened the Morrow building. You know, that was the last one. And it did well.

NP: So what was number three?

KR: And number 3 was Willow Springs.

RVR: Willow Springs Mercantile, a Western store. And that was in 1978. I remember Willow Springs Mercantile, established 1978. The reason we named it Willow Springs was because it was – the original name of Raton was a little farther north, and there was a spring and it was called Willow Springs. So we thought that would harken back to the

earlier days of Raton, when it was Willow Springs. So Willow Springs was a complete Western store, hats, boots, and my brother became suddenly a Yiddische cowboy! [All laugh]

NP: Well, I mean, a number of Jewish merchants became very prosperous in the Western wear. Cooper's in Albuquerque...

RVR: Absolutely.

NP: ...in Albuquerque.

RVR: Pioneer Wear.

NP: Pioneer Wear and so forth.

RVR: W ?\_ in Denver.

NP: Miller.

RVR: Miller Stockman.

NP: Right. In Amarillo there was big store owned by Jews in Western wear. So, they caught that cycle.

RVR: That's right.

KR: Are you familiar with the name, Moise?

NP: Sure.

KR: The Moises had a store, primarily Western – they were good friends of ours – in Lubbock. And I don't know where we got our business ability, but we were – I was young. But of course, being around mercantile people, that's what I learned. And so, Mr. Moise, who's a \_\_\_\_\_, and Julius Moise, and they had families. They married sisters. They were a *wonderful* family, marvelous family. And all the Jews knew all the Jews. And I don't think – I've heard them say that we had a thousand Jews in the '30s. I'm sure we didn't have a thousand.

RVR: You mean in Albuquerque?

KR: In the state. I don't think we did. I've always said no. Because they were scattered. There was a family here and a family there, and they supported... Most of them were Reformed at that point. And they supported Temple Albert. But anyway, so the Moises came to us and said – what was his name? – but anyway, the Moise young man, very nice, and they wanted to leave the city, and they thought of us. Because, you know, the Jewish people who are in the family, they always have something in the back of their minds. So they came. And I came up with the idea, "Maybe you should get the Lubbock newspaper to see what was going on."

RVR: What year was this?

KR: This was about 1955.

RVR: Oh, so this was after you had the R&R Shoe Store.

KR: Yes. We had not opened yet.

RVR: Right.

KR: We had no \_\_\_\_\_, because we felt, well, that's a good opportunity, I thought, because Leon was embedded in that thing, but he knew I wanted to leave. And so he said, "Here's our chance." I said, "Let's get the Lubbock newspaper." 'Cause this was a downtown location, and I thought we'd better see what's going on in the business world. I'd never been to Lubbock. I haven't even since then. And so, we got the paper, and headlines: the new mall was coming to Lubbock. I thought "uh-oh, that's not good for the downtown, it's gonna move from downtown." And we believe in getting as far as to look at the stores. We said after a month or so, it was determined that we should stay in Raton. By that time we had two stores. And I wasn't so eager, I guess, because I was happy in Trinidad with Temple Aaron, and we'd made friends in \_\_\_\_\_.

RVR: So it was not until 1978 that you had opened Willow Springs, and then that was a wonderfully acceptable store. It was the only really Western wear store in the town.

KR: Oh yeah.

RVR: And it bears knowing that every one of our stores had a different name, because – and we didn't want them all to be known as the Rubin king.om, because we had some reservation about having people say, "Oh, the Jews are trying to take over the town." So in two square blocks...

NP: Why did you have that feeling?

KR: Because my brother-in-laws went to school in Raton, and one brother, the oldest one, was very, very bright, and he had – I think they persecuted him because...

RVR: Because of anti-Semitism, Uncle Sidney was persecuted.

KR: Sidney was a *brilliant* man. And he experienced... Because when I came to Raton, \_\_\_\_\_, the noted librarian, said, "You know, Kathy, your brother reads Communist books." I said, "\_\_\_\_\_?" "Oh, yes. I order them for him." And that was the red sign. Oh, that was horrible!

RVR: But the store was later.

RR: I guess why did we brand them differently?

KR: Because that was a business deal. [RR: Yeah.] We had a contest for the second one, the R&R Shoe Store. We like to have – to use the name “Willow Street” because of the location.

RVR: Right. And then the fourth one was the Delrose.

KR: Delrose.

RVR: An exclusive women’s store that was right next to Willow’s Printing on Second Street, was called the Delrose. And they wanted to retire, and then you purchased that one.

NP: Del?

RVR: D-e-l-r-o-s-e.

KR: No, it wasn’t Delrose. It was Kilmurray.

RVR: Kilmurray.

NP: Kilmurray?

RVR: K-i-l-m-u-r-r-a-y.

KR: He was a very successful merchant, and he had managers, and he always had older women.

RVR: But we didn’t really... We ran that store, but we didn’t...

KR: ...own the building.

RVR: We didn’t rebrand it or anything. We didn’t own that very long, did we?

KR: Long enough that Leon really became available again. And everybody expanded after the war because times were wonderful.

RVR: Right, but this was in the ‘70s and ‘80s. This was much, much after the war.

KR: Yeah, but the town was...

RVR: ...was still doing very well.

KR: It was doing very well. And so, Mrs. Robinson wanted to retire, and so I guess my father-in-law, not wanting more competition decided he’d – they came to him, Mrs. Kilmurray, and said “this building’s available.” So we bought out the lady and expanded that store, Willow Springs. And then, so we owned the other store for not too long. It was pretty much run.

RVR: Okay. But by the time you opened the next store, Kilmurray’s wasn’t in business any more.

NP: The number 5 was?

RVR: The number 5 is the one that finally remained, which was called Sports Arena.

KR: Tell him why.

RVR: Sports Arena. Why what?

KR: Why there was a demand?

RVR: Yes. That's when all of the athletic looking gear was really, really big news. And so, we opened that store. I can't remember what year we established that. It was 1980-something.

KR: I would say about 1985, '87?

RVR: Yeah, maybe not even that long after Willow Springs.

KR: How old was Randy? About 19?

RVR: I don't know.

KR: By then he was 25.

RVR: Yeah, he was born in 1949. So then that became... So then, we really had four stores. There was Rubins, R&R, Willow Springs, and then Sports Arena.

NP: Back in the mid-1980s?

RVR: Back in the mid-1980s.

KR: And you know why we couldn't even buy under the name, B. Rubins, is that they wanted to have specialties. You know, that's when they permanently had to have only identification with that, I think, Noel. And so, we have letterhead finished that has "Rubins" and it has \_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ an athletic store. And that way we were able to purchase Nike.

RVR: Right. It was very important when we opened a sporting goods store that we had the best line, because Nike, Adidas, all of those big name brands. And so, then that was in the next block up, and then my brother who became the cowboy [Kathryn chuckles] became an athletic guy. And so he started really to have all athletic brand of names. So we'd run among the four stores. If we needed help at one, we'd say, "Susie, could you go help at R&R?" And "Margaret, could you go help at Willow Springs?" So, everyone was running around.

KR: They were all \_\_\_\_\_.

NP: Were they all located downtown?

RVR: Yes.

KR: And we had that intercom, remember?

RVR: We had an intercom that we could call each other.

KR: Yeah, it was real \_\_\_\_\_0.

RVR: Oh, it was?

KR: Yeah, because \_\_\_\_\_.

RVR: I want to give you one funny story also. So then, salesmen would come through Raton, and one man would stop maybe into Sports Arena, and then maybe my brother would say, "You know, I'm really not buying anything now." Then he would go to Willow Springs Mercantile, and he'd see the same person, and he would say, "Didn't I just see you?" And Randy would say, "Yes, we own that store." Then he'd come across the street to Rubins, and he'd say, "You own a lot of stores" and we'd say, "Yeah, you know, we're really not interested in your line for any of ours." [Kathryn chuckles] So they were all impressed that we had four stores within a two-block area.

NP: Okay. So, how did you and your parents keep up with all of these trends? We see that you were on top of these trends in merchandising and retail.

KR: You know how?

RVR: We went to markets a lot. We were in Denver a lot, for Western wear, for shoes, for sporting goods, for men's, for women's. We went to Denver to the Denver markets [Kathryn: often] six or eight times a year.

RVR: And we had relatives in \_\_\_\_\_, the Kahns. And so...

NP: Yes. You seem to be right on topic of these trends.

RR: My brother was, I sort of think, the brains behind some of that, or...

RVR: I'm also blamed for a lot of it.

NP: Now, you want to tell us who you are? So, the man who just interjected is?

RR: I'm Randy Rubin. I'm the elder son of Kathryn and Leon. Born in 1949.

NP: When is your birthday?

RR: 9-12-49.

KR: You didn't ask the other one.

NP: I'm gonna get it. So, and the other brother is?

RVR: I'm Ron Rubin, and I was born September 21, 1951. So we're almost exactly two years apart. And we all got along very well as a family managing these four stores. It was sort of a division of labor. I managed the shoe store, Randy managed the Western store and the athletic store, and my parents managed the junior department store, which was men's, women's and shoes, as well.

NP: Okay, when you speak from now on, because we're going to have a transcription, please identify yourself. Okay?

RVR: Okay, 'cause we sound alike.

NP: Okay. So, so here you are very successful, your family. You keep up with trends in the market. And what was your involvement in the business community? Were you members of Civitan?

KR: Chamber of Commerce. My husband was on the board. He was kind of the – I was behind the scenes because I had – we had two children. And Judaism was pretty important, so I used to go to the synagogue. And Leon loved people, my husband, and he was the one who thought we should expand with the shoe store and with Kilmurray's.

RR: I thought the shoe store was there way back in the '50s.

KR: It was. We've moved on.

RVR: And so the business community, in answer to your question (this is Ron Rubin speaking now), my dad was very, very civic minded. He was chairman of the Human Rights Commission for the State of New Mexico, appointed by the governor, which was of a course a statewide commission.

KR: Which governor?

RVR: Governor Cargo.

RR: Cargo initially, and then he went to four governors: Cargo, King...

KR: Apodaca.

RR: Apodaca and Anaya. And so he was on that board. He was also on two financial institutions' boards, which was unusual. [Kathryn: Yes.] He was on the First National Bank Board of Raton, which was probably the prestigious bank. [Kathryn: Yes.] We had about three or four banks. And he was also on one called Gate City Building and Loan. So he was on both of those boards, as well. So Leon was philanthropic and a very, I would say – of course, I'm his son – a very highly respected [Kathryn: *very*] merchant and community-minded citizen.

KR: Well, Barney said that Leon really wasn't that interested in joining Gate City. But he said, "Leon, I want you to go to every" meeting – because we were stockholders and we could go – "go to every meeting." And so, the old guys that were on – everything was



run by old people then, because the young people hadn't come back from the war, and when they did come, most of them got an education...

NP: And left.

KR: And left. And so, Leon would go. Well, they said, "This man is a good man to ask him to join. We'll ask him to do it." So they did. And then he used to go to the bank board meetings because it was important that those bankers knew him. They knew all about Barney. And so, and the next generation had to be accepted, so he went to that. Well, then they asked him to join the boards. And so, after about four or five years he was on two boards in the community, and there were only three banks then. And so he joined both boards and they said "there's a conflict, because you're on both boards." So he had to make a decision which board he would stay on, and he chose the First National Bank.

[End of Side 1 of tape]

NP: This is Side 2 of my interview with Kathryn Rubin and her sons in Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 3, 2017. So, could you say a word about the decline of the business community and what happened to the stores?

RR: The decline started quite a while ago.

NP: Now, who's talking?

RR: This is Randy Rubin. The coal in Raton is a high grade coal. It's bituminous and it's considered very good coal for power plants.

RVR: This is Ron. It has three qualities that a lot of coal in other areas of the country don't have. It burns very hot, which is what utility companies want; it has very low ash, so there's not a lot to take away; and it's also very low sulfur, so it's not polluting. So it's very, very high grade coal.

KR: This is Kathryn. And our mine – this is how we run everything – was very safe. We never had people in explosions.

RR: There were accidents, but very small. We lost a few miners, and there were people that got – but nothing like the eastern mines. (Randy Rubin). They had big portals.

RVR: There were four or five hundred miners when I was growing up. [Kathryn: Yes.] Maybe even a thousand? Were there that many?

RR: No.

RVR: It was called Kaiser – it was run by Kaiser Steel.

KR: No, originally it was...

RVR: Well, no, when I was growing up. I'm sorry.

KR: Oh, originally it was owned by the Dutch company.

RR: Vanhauser?

KR: I can't think of the name right now. And they had Dutch people in Raton, and they were very, very wise. They started the bank. And the bank — they controlled the town at that point.

RR: There were two banks in Raton. One was run by... well, two banks supposedly. One was run by the older Anglo establishment, Republican; the other one was more Italian and Catholic. It was quite a division.

RVR: It was the \_\_\_\_\_.

KR: And he was in the...

RR: And it was also the same thing in the car dealerships in Raton. One was more Protestant, one was more Catholic.

KR: Catholics seized control.

RR: And that's the way the town kind of was divided. But there was not much said about it. I mean, if it was underlined, it was sublimated pretty much.

RVR: (This is Ron). My brother and I, I think growing up in Raton, I never experienced anti-Semitism either.

RR: No.

RVR: Everyone just — no one knew, I think — many didn't know that we were Jewish, and many didn't... And they didn't care. We had all of our friends, Catholic and Protestant, no other Jewish, family members, one black family in town, and really one Jewish family until a doctor by the name of Dr. Theodore Keough [?] came to town, and that was the second Jewish family. But, in about the — when did coal start going down?

RR: Raton lost its coal mine officially in 2003. But there'd been intermittent strikes, intermittent walkouts, work stoppages, and it was somewhat unreliable. But the other part is the cost of mining coal in Raton was much higher than other places.

RVR: We didn't have an open pit like other places.

RR: It eventually went to surface mining. But the problem was there was so much overburden, meaning dirt, rocks (this is Randy), and then it had to be shipped 40 miles to the main railroad line, the Santa Fe, and then over the pass, which was quite a haul. Raton Pass is in some regards difficult, you know, with these big heavy trains.

RVR: It's the highest point on the Santa Fe Railroad between Los Angeles and Chicago was Raton Pass.

RR: We also had a thriving economy due to tourism. There was a horse racing track, and the Kansans, Texans, Oklahomans, some Coloradans – certainly Texans and Oklahomans would come in for the summer and stay. There were dances, bars, just a fun place in the mountains. And as the racetrack was beset with financial difficulties for various reasons, it ran its course. And horse racing wasn't the king of sports like it used to be.

RVR: Gambling became...

RR: Gambling was a more open... And slowly but surely, it just went away, the racetrack.

NP: I remember hearing about it constantly and never went. So, the town declines, and when do you start closing up the stores?

RR: R&R Shoe Store closed in 1980.

RVR: That's when I left for Colorado Springs. I mean, it wasn't because of me leaving, but there were only three Rubins then to run four stores, so that closed.

KR: Yeah.

RR: The other part that I think is – you'll find this a curious fact – (Randy Rubin) – we had telephones obviously, and each store had one line. But if one line was occupied, you couldn't get checks... We used to monitor who was writing checks, and there were people that had obviously reputations for short checks, bad checks. And we couldn't get through, so my father had these local guys string wires without – this is small town America – “we're gonna put our own communication system in.” So we put our intercom system in over one block over all these other buildings. [Laughter]

KR: Exposed.

RR: And these were lines. This was not wireless. And then the other that was good, it went from Rubins one block south to R&R. Then it went across the business loop of I-25. Needless to say, we didn't get permission. We just did it.

RVR: But we would just (this is Ron) – I'd say, “Come in, Sports Arena,” and they would come in, or “Willow Springs.” And so we had this little internal communications. And so then, when did the other stores close?

RR: Willow Springs closed in 1986, and you may have mentioned this already, but we bought a location – we bought a store after the location to expand Willow Springs in about '82, '83. It was probably one of the prime corners in Raton, and it had big windows. And Sports Arena was opened in '78. So we ran that cord from Willow Springs...

RVR: Willow Springs was opened in '78.

RR: Willow Springs opened in '75. But anyway...

RVR: I stand corrected, I'm sorry. [Kathryn chuckles]

RR: The communication line was kind of funny, and it would... It wasn't known, because you don't see a little wire. But when people, as time went on, that wire went no place. It didn't go to a telephone pole, it didn't go to a... I mean, it just crossed the road. And it was plenty high, so it didn't get snagged on trucks. And everybody, "Well, we can do this to find out inventory was not at one store; was it at the other?" It was fun.

NP: So you sold the shoe store already, you sold the...

RVR: Willow Springs.

NP: Willow Springs. And you just had the Sporting Goods and the main one left.

RR: Correct.

NP: And when I visited you in 2005, '06, I don't even remember, it was – I met you at the general store.

RR: Yes.

NP: Okay. And now nothing remains.

RVR: Right. That's right. The clothing store closed. My parents moved from Raton to Colorado Springs right after the store closed. And that was 2012?

RR: '11.

RVR: 2011.

RR: It closed in 2011.

RVR: Which was a big deal, 'cause Rubins had been in business from 1915 'til 2011. It was almost a hundred years that that store was in business. And then Randy kept Sports Arena open until this last year, right?

RR: 2016.

RVR: 2016. And now, of course, they're all gone.

RR: Anyway, this is the first time there hasn't been a Jewish merchant in Raton since 1915. If your thrust is Jewishness, and there hasn't been a Rubin in business in...

RVR: Yeah, that's right.

RR: I mean, we noticed that, but the community is ongoing, in a little smaller fashion certainly. There was a bump in business when the natural gas or methane – coal bed methane gas was being discovered, as well as piped out of the area for about five or six years. That was a good bump. But the town has slowly but suddenly shrunk. It's reflected by other small towns. And the Temple... I just found something out, if I may backtrack. There's been two rabbis in Temple Aaron. Did you know that?

KR: Rabbi Freudenthal was the longest.

RVR: That was the second.

NP: There was an initial rabbi who was there on for two years. [Randy: Yes.]

RVR: I didn't know that.

NP: And then he left, and then Freudenthal.

RR: Yes, you are right. I just found this out.

NP: Well, Sharon Neiderman wrote a story, and I was reading that before – last night.

RR: You are right. I didn't know that either. Tell me his name?

NP: I have it. I can send it to you.

KR: Did he live in Trinidad?

NP: Huh?

KR: He lived in Trinidad?

RR: Yeah, he was there for two years.

NP: Right.

RR: From 1887 to 1889.

RVR: But the building wasn't built until 1889.

RR: Correct.

RVR: But they had a congregation where they met somewhere else.

RR: At the Jaffa House, Opera House, I found this article by the Historical Society of the Rocky Mountains, the Jewish Rocky Mountain Historical Society, and they have that outlined. There were several sets of brothers, Sanders, Jaffa, Moses...

KR: Rice.

RR: And you're right. I didn't know about that.

KR: I didn't.

NP: Okay, let's go to Temple Aaron. So, Kathryn and Ron and Randy, Temple Aaron was founded in 1889.

RR: Actually, 1883. [inaudible] Yes, the congregation.

NP: Okay, you arrived in 1946. How soon afterwards did you get involved with Temple Aaron?

KR: Well, quite early. It was news when a Jewish woman is moving to Raton from Trinidad. So, we didn't keep hours. We didn't have children at that point. And we were at our store on Sunday, doing what Jewish merchants do, going over things. So, there's a knock at the door with two young men, who they knocked on the door and they said they were the Alperts. Could they come in and talk to us? And I said "sure." So we let them in. And I guess the mother and father, they took an afternoon drive 20 miles away.

NP: How far is Trinidad, 20?

KR: 17.

RR: 19, 20.

RVR: 19 or 20 miles. It's easier now it's a four-lane road. It wasn't when we were growing up. It was a two lane pass.

KR: And I'd like to annotate the these people kind of criticized my father-in-law and mother-in-law not being members. And they were Orthodox in their background. And there wasn't this communication, you know?

RR: Was this the Alperts?

KR: No, this is something separate. And so they all said – they didn't know Barney. He contributed to the B'nai B'rith, anything Jewish. And my mother-in-law *really* was a contributor, and not only to Jewish things, but non-Jewish. She melded into the non-Jewish group in Raton. Well, the same goes in Rocky Mountain – I followed that name – they only had a couple of customers. And CF&I was their primary.

NP: Now, who's that?

KR: Colorado Fuel and Iron.

RR: But who's – what were you talking about?

KR: I'm talking about that...

RR: "Only had a couple of customers?"

KR: They didn't have – they weren't nationally on the market to supply coal. And the CF&I steel started going down, and that reflected in our local business.

NP: Yeah, but how does this pertain to Temple Aaron? Let's stay focused.

KR: But you know, there were no Jews employed by any company.

RR: But wait, you started with someone – there was a knock at the door...

KR: Okay. The Alperets came and they were young men our age. And so they said, “We’re gonna have a get-together tonight at Temple Aaron for B’nai B’rith and the Sisterhood of Temple Aaron, and the men have their meeting and the women have their meeting at Temple Aaron.” We didn’t have a car at that point. I guess that was 1946. And so, we didn’t know how we were gonna get over there, but my father-in-law [sic] said, “We’ll ask my father and mother.” So they let us use their car.

RR: You mean your husband asked his parents.

KR: Yeah, that’s what I mean. And so they said “yeah, you can borrow the car.” So we meander over...

RVR: And how long did it take to get to Trinidad at that time?

KR: Probably 30 minutes, 40...

RVR: Is that all it took even at that time?

KR: Well, hey, that was 1946.

RVR: Oh, okay.

KR: It’s not the dark ages.

RR: Big Buicks, Ron, big Buicks.

KR: And it was a beautiful Buick. 1940 Buick. And Barney didn’t drive much. And so anyway, we drove over, and they were so happy to have somebody under 70 come to the synagogue. [Laughter] Oh, you would have thought...

RR: Well, the Alperets were under 70, too. Kathryn was 33 at that [time]. She was born in ’23 and this was ’46.

KR: And women associate with women. The men weren’t that important. They had their meetings, and the women carried the load. So they were so nice to me, and the man who I have his obituary, that’s Leo Gottlieb, met us at the door and he said, “I’ll help you with your coats.” And he was about...

RR: He was 60 years old then. He was born in 1869.

KR: Yeah.

RR: He lived to be over a hundred years old in Trinidad.

KR: Almost 101. And so he came, and he said, “Let me help you with your coat.” Well, at that point I was about 5’5” and he was about 5’. You know, he was a tiny man.

RR: Yes.

KR: And I said, "How nice of you!" He said, "Well, I help people of all ages because there's nobody my age here." And he was a lovable man, and he had a wonderful wife. And so, they welcomed me. And I'd been confirmed and I'd been active at Temple Albert. I was a teacher in the Sunday School. And, then when I went to Raton, I enjoyed being with people. So we'd go over. We finally bought a car. Every day we'd spend time just going to car agencies, because you couldn't get one. And nobody would – they'd say, "Oh, tomorrow come back. We'll have a car for you." Well, that's what we did is circulate. Well, when we finally...

NP: Have a glass of water.

RVR: So Kathryn became active in the Jewish community soon after she arrived, because that was important to her (this is Ron Rubin) in Albuquerque and she wanted to associate with Jews. And at that time there was a good number of Jews in Trinidad who were merchants and...

NP: How many are we talking about?

KR: 35 members at the High Holy Days. But they came from Walsenburg, outlying...

RVR: Were there that many?

KR: Yeah.

RVR: We have pictures from probably the '50s or '60s...

RR: Oh, that's '40s.

KR: '47, I think.

RVR: ...of a lot of the members whom either my brother and I remember, many, many of these people who were wonderful. And when we had our Bar Mitzvahs, many were still around. So these are a lot of the members of Temple Aaron in the '50s?

KR: But guess whose family they are? My family.

RR: No, there's only two here [looking at photo].

KR: No.

RR: Doris and Fritz.

KR: In that one. But, they used to come up from Albuquerque.

RVR: So my parents were so interested, or my mother more, because my grandparents (this is Ron Rubin) weren't as – they didn't go over the pass that much, and so they didn't go to



Temple Aaron; nor did they raise their children to be particularly Jewish, as my mother's family was. Would you say that?

KR: Well, the first son had a Bar Mitzvah, and he went for training to Denver.

RVR: Who's this?

KR: [with RR:] Sidney.

KR: And he lived with his Aunt Rose and Uncle Morris, and the poor guy, my father-in-law. [Chuckles] And he had ideas. Once he got an idea, it never changed. Sidney got pneumonia as a 13-year-old child, and my father-in-law said, "We will send no more people to Denver to be trained to be Jewish."

RVR: Oh, is that what happened?

KR: Yeah.

RR: So the other three didn't get the benefit because they \_\_\_\_\_.

KR: That's why he has asthma, my father-in-law said. And he was \_\_\_\_ with the anti-religion. And he's the one that had wonderful training at Temple...

NP: So at this time, who led services? Now, there was no rabbi for many, many years already. The rabbi who served a long time, Rabbi Freudenthal, what was his first name?

RVR: Leopold.

RR: He died in '16. 1916.

KR: From 1896.

NP: And so, thereafter there was no rabbi.

KR: I wouldn't say that. We had student rabbis from Hebrew University.

RR: But there was no one in residence. In 1916 there was no permanent rabbi.

KR: Right.

RR: I'm curious who led services -- I don't know this (this is Randy) -- from '16 to the '40s. Now, Gilbert Sanders led from the '30s.

KR: Yeah, he was a real rabbi.

RR: 30 or 40 years. But before that, who did it in the teens and the '20s?

KR: The teens? Let me see. They had rabbis only for the High Holy Days.

NP: Right.

KR: Well, they'd do like we did. They'd send their children...

RR: No, no, services.

KR: Then in Raton.

NP: Did they have regular Friday night services?

KR: Yes. Gilbert Sanders was the child of the founders, Leopold – the Sanders family. And they sent him away to college. And they have a big business of cigars and wholesale liquor in Trinidad, and they sent all their children away to school, all of them in Trinidad. And they did not return to help. You know, they weren't interested any more. Well, then all the student rabbis, the Temple had many at that point because there was a Dr. Freudenthal who bestowed it with the money. And so, the famous doctor, Freudenthal, went to Harvard, and he was subsidized by the Temple in – by individuals, I think I should say – and he got his degree and he returned to Trinidad and became a very personable... benefactor.

RR: He was well known in the Trinidad community.

KR: Well, there weren't many doctors.

RR: Yeah, and his brother – there were two. The brother became a lawyer. And the underwriter was the doctor, or the foundation. I just read all of this.

KR: And it was very... There was a German Jewish founders. The one man came, because that was the point of the list. Oh, and as Jewish people do, they want other people to be around, so they would write their relatives: "This is the town to come to because it's flourishing and their future is here." And so they got them to come.

RVR: And there were merchants who were in the clothing business.

KR: Yes.

RVR: Leo Gottlieb was in the insurance business.

KR: He was in the clothing business.

RVR: The Seipels(sp?) were in the shoe business. They all had thriving businesses until they left.

RR: You're talking in the teens and '20s. In the 1800s it was the Jaffas...

RVR: The Freudenthals?

KR: No.

RR: I'm trying to remember. The Jaffas. The Jaffa brothers, who eventually moved away to Santa Fe...

NP: And Albuquerque and Roswell.

RR: Exactly right.

KR: And they were the first mayors(??)

RR: And they were liquor wholesalers and tobacconists.

NP: They, too?

RR: Yes.

NP: Let's get back to the question. Who led services?

KR: Well, Mr. Sanders.

NP: Who was Mr. Sanders?

RR: Gilbert Sanders.

KR: He was sent away to school, and they didn't need any more business people, so they said, "Okay, we'll make you a lawyer." They sent him to Brown University. He didn't like law. Comes back. He loved religion. He was a single man, and he was very interested in having Friday night services. And he's the one when I came, they had services – maybe there'd only be 8 people, but they met every time.

RVR: How often did you go to Trinidad?

KR: Well, they shamed you if you didn't come.

RVR: So you went almost every week to services?

KR: Yes.

RVR: Did you really?

KR: Oh yeah. It was an outing. I was among Jewish people.

RVR: So it was always Gilbert Sanders who ran...

KR: And Bea finally.

RVR: Yeah, he passed away in 1949.

RR: '52.

KR: Right after you were born, yeah.

RVR: No, after I was born, '52. (This is Ron). I was born in '51, and then he died in '52, and then after he did it, 'cause he was there from what date on?

RR: That's what I don't know. From the '30s to the '50s?

KR: Yeah.

RVR: Okay. So he was there 20 years. And then his wife, Bea Sanders, became the lay rabbi, who was *very* highly respected at the Hebrew Union College, in fact got a doctorate, Doctor...

KR: Those were honorary.

RVR: Well, yes, that's what I mean. But, there are a lot of honorary doctorates that are very significant, and they don't give them just... And Beatrice had that until...

RR: Well, they came out of Cracker Jack boxes is what Bea Sanders told me. [Joking]

RVR: Don't even kid.

KR: Anyway, we went to Cincinnati, because Bea was old by then. And we were the youngsters. They didn't figure we were aging. And a lot of this happened, the subsequent time that everything's happened, we were getting old. We had children. So we went back to... She was a widow from Gil Sanders, who passed away. And her niece from the \_\_\_\_\_ -- what was her name?

RVR: Rose Mae.

KR: No, the second one.

RR: Ruth.

KR: No. That was the mother.

RR: Anyway, go ahead.

KR: It'll come to me. Anyway...

RR: Judy.

KR: Judy. So she and I and Leon and Bea went to Cincinnati to Hebrew Union. And it was a very impressive ceremony. It was during graduation time for the rabbis, Spring of the year, and they made a big deal over Bea. Dr. Marcus, who maybe you've heard the name, Kay...

NP: Yes, Ben Marcus here.

KR: Jacob Rader.

RR: Bear something in mind, too. I think it's fair to mention this, although I don't know how you would – if you're going to compile this... The Freudenthal Foundation was a great supporter of the Hebrew Union College. And I think it was – what was it...

NP: Pro quid pro.

RR: I think there was a little bit of that going on. They both received doctorates. Gilbert did, and his wife, Bea. And they're hanging in the Temple. I didn't realize all this.

KR: Oh, yes, you mean Rose. 'Cause she marched down the aisle with – she was about 5'0" tall, no she wasn't even that.

RR: Anyway, they both got – both Sanders...

NP: Okay. My next question: did you or your husband ever serve in an official capacity at Temple Aaron?

KR: Oh, yes.

NP: President? Tell me.

KR: Well, there was a board to govern the financial part, and they needed Jewish men and women. And there were the – Mrs. Moses by the time Albert died. There are the men that got married at 30, 40 and 50. So they didn't have children, some of them. But they were related. And sometimes there would be friction, but not much. You didn't know about it.

RR: You're talking about the board that Alfred Freudenthal founded?

NP: No, I'm talking about the Temple Aaron board. Did you or Leon serve officially on the board?

KR: Leon did earlier than I.

NP: So he was elected president?

KR: No, they were president. Albert Moises was President. Leon was on the board.

RR: May I interject something? There were two boards. One is President of the congregation, you asked me that, and then there was the Alfred Freudenthal Memorial Foundation.

NP: That's it.

RR: And the Alfred Freudenthal Foundation had the wherewithal, obviously the congregation board, the administration of the Temple. Does that make sense?

KR: But I was active, as some Jews came and Jews left, you know.

NP: Did you hold an office on the board, the Temple board?

KR: No, Leon did. I was on the sisterhood board.

NP: You were a president of the sisterhood?

KR: No, I don't think I ever was, but I was a very active... We went to all the conventions. Bea Sanders was idolized by the Colorado – that was a different district. I would have been in New Mexico, having resided there. But, so she and I would go, because the other women weren't interested.

RVR: But, after Beatrice, your question, Noel (this is Ron Rubin) – after Beatrice, my dad became President of the congregation and my mom was Secretary.

KR: Secretary.

RVR: So, even though Leon was the President, and he presided at the meetings, my mom really was like her predecessor, Beatrice Sanders, who really made sure that the Temple continued functioning, from 1987 until you left in 2012.

KR: But I was very active from, say, '50...

RVR: Right.

KR: Because I wanted my boys to have a Jewish education.

NP: So, you wanted the boys to have a Jewish education. Was there anyone at the Temple to give them that education?

KR: No, they both went to Albuquerque, '61...

RR: If I may...

KR: Go ahead.

RR: (This is Randy). There was a Presbyterian minister in Raton who became Moderator of the Presbytery of the United States of America. He came out of Raton. John Conner.

KR: May I inject there? Just because he schooled our son, taught him Hebrew – I mean, kept the Hebrew going. That's what he put in his application, and they made him Synod President.

RR: Of the United States. So our initial introduction to Hebrew, as it was, or as it were, was with this Presbyterian minister. And he was a good guy. Nice guy.

KR: Oh, yes.

RR: And he knew Hebrew.

KR: They had to be...

RR: He was a classically trained minister. And then we went to Albuquerque, both of us, and stayed at our Aunt Bertha's, my mother's sister, our Uncle Hymie, which she was married to.

NP: And Danoff

RR: And Danolf. Mike and Robbie Danolf.

RVR: For three months of training each, he – two years before I, in '62 (this is Ron) and me in '64 – and that's where we were trained for our Bar Mitzvahs that Fall in September when we were 13.

NP: So, when did the Temple Aaron stop holding regular High Holy Day services?

RR: That is a great question, and I want to jump in and say (this is Randy), 2015 was the last formal one. So it was 125 years, isn't that right? [Ron: yes] No, 126 years. We didn't have them this past High Holy Day services. That's the first time.

RVR: Ever.

RR: The significance to me, and I think to my family and anybody else, would be it's been continuously used since 1889. Our congregation and the building has never been repurposed, moved. I find that significant. And this may get a little dramatic. They're hallowed walls. It's a truly sacred space. And it's a big deal.

NP: Okay. I'm going to ask each of you, one minute, is there anything you want to add that would help us with understanding the role of the Rubins in Raton and in Trinidad?

RR: Help you understand us?

NP: Yes.

RR: Our roles in...

NP: Your roles and your importance in...

RR: In Raton and Trinidad?

NP: Right.

RR: I don't know if importance... You live your life. (This is Randy). You try and do the right thing. And you live your life, and that's just how it goes in a small town. Everybody kind of shares the load, whether it's secular or not. And our involvement with the Temple, while it has been exasperating in the last few years, has been a good thing. And when I go in there, I'm accustomed to the creaks, I'm accustomed to the odors. And

when I show it, which I have done recently, it's grand! And the stained glass windows that Ronald Waxell(sp?) told me about, it's just, there's something there. I just took some people in this past week from the state of Colorado, and people from Trinidad. We're finally becoming more relevant to the community of Trinidad. Part of that has been because we have administrated it as a family, and we don't live there. And, but now there's a little more awareness within the city. And it's perched on a hill. You've been there.

NP: Yes.

RR: It's a magnificent structure overlooking the community.

RVR: (Ron Rubin) I would say what my most memorable and my involvement in life in Raton and Trinidad, of course, I think we sort of echo and it's redolent to us of my parents, because we became... We had our own life in Raton growing up, and went away to college and then came back. But when we lived there, of course, it was the secular part of our life. And then, as we did more and more with Temple Aaron, that became probably even more important to me. And in recent years, the Temple has become even more important.

NP: It's a cause for you.

RVR: Because there are so few people there. And so, Temple Aaron, it really is a shining example on the hill of what Judaism has meant throughout the history of Southeastern Colorado and Northeastern New Mexico. So, it's had much more of an effect on me than I have on Raton or Trinidad. But, it will always be at my heart. And the Congregation Aaron Cemetery – is that Sons of Israel?

KR: No, Temple Aaron congregation.

RVR: All of our predecessors, many of whom were there, are buried there, and that's my history that I hold very close.

NP: Kathryn, a closing word?

KR: Okay. Every time I went in – and I've gone in a lot to the Temple since '46, and I always would say, "Why don't these walls talk to me?" Because when people get on our pulpit, every visiting rabbi we've ever had feels that it's really sacred to be at Temple Aaron, and it's been my life, and my children's. Which means a lot to me. And so, and I want to say one thing. After the money that was left by Rabbi Freudenthal with a simple codicil on his will, it said he wanted his money to be spent for the upkeep of the Temple, because it was his father who was the rabbi. And, so they did very wise things. They appointed a board when the three men, Moses, Gottlieb and Sanders were the benefactors of – he left them some money. He was a very kind man. Never married. And very respected, and a *fine*, fine doctor. I didn't know him. He had just passed away about five years before. But he – they used the money for well baby clinics at the Courthouse – that was Bea Sanders' suggestion – and Moses and Sanders, they had well baby clinics.



RVR: They did things like the Rotary Club would get some. It's spelled out in percentages.

NP: All right, so I want to thank all of you, and we'll talk some more.

[END OF INTERVIEW]