

Interview with Marian Silver

for the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society

(Participants: Noel H. Pugach interviews Marian Silver; Linda Goff also present)

Noel: Today is July 21, 2017. I am in the home of Marian Silver and we are going to interview her about her life and especially about her family. There are now five generations of the family that we can talk about. So Marian, first of all, tell me something about yourself, when were you born, the names of your parents.

Marian: I was born in 1932 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Noel: Could you give me your birthdate?

Marian: October 18, 1932. My parents are Barney and Pauline Petchesky, and my grandparents were Emil and Johanna Ulfelder. And they came in 1912 to Santa Fe.

Noel: We'll get to them in a minute. Tell me about yourself. What is the extent of your education?

Marian: Very little (laughter). I graduated from Santa Fe High School and I went to Sophie Newcomb in New Orleans and that is where I met my husband.

Noel: Sophie Newcomb was?

Marian: It's a college of Tulane.

Linda: It's women's college.

Marian: Yes.

Noel: A women's college of Tulane. When did you graduate?

Marian: I didn't graduate. I got married (laughter).

Noel: Okay, so, you have an "M.S. Degree."

Marian: Yes I do! I learned a lot by the seat of my pants.

Noel: Okay. You were married. To whom were you married?

Marian: I was married to H. Silver, Jr., in 1951, on March the 18th, 1951.

Noel: And how many children do you have?

Marian: We have three children. One is John, the oldest. My middle daughter's name is Margaret Jones, and my youngest daughter is Carolyn Silver.

Noel: Okay and you have several grandchildren?

Marian: I have three grandchildren. The twins, who are Johanna and Thomas Silver and they are the children of John and Gloria. Gloria is John's wife. And Allison Jones, who is the daughter of Margaret and Scott Jones. Scott is Margaret's husband.

Noel: Where were you married?

Marian: We were married at my grandmother's house in Santa Fe because there was no temple here and the rabbi from Albuquerque came up to marry us.

Noel: Who was the rabbi?

Marian: Rabbi Scheiling. No, it wasn't Rabbi Scheiling. It was the rabbi right before that.

Noel: The regular rabbi at?

Marian: At Temple Albert, Krohn. No. After Krohn.

Noel: After Krohn? Okay we can find it. Okay, so tell me about the first of your family to come to Santa Fe. Their names.

Marian: My grandparents came to Santa Fe in 1912.

Noel: And their names?

Marian: Their names were Johanna Ulfelder and Emil Ufelder.

Noel: Where were they born?

Marian: They were born in Germany.

Noel: Do you know where in Germany?

Marian: My grandmother was born in Koblenz, Germany. But I'm not exactly sure what town my grandfather was born in.

Noel: And when did they come over?

Marian: Well, they came to Pine Bluff, Arkansas first because that was where my grandmother's uncle lived and he brought my grandmother. They weren't married at the time. They met there. But she probably came around the early 1900s, probably around 1895. It was all in that book about her. Do you have that?

Noel: Yeah, I have it. Now your grandparents were married in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Do you know the year?

Marian: My mother was born in 1903. I think they were probably married about 1900.

Noel: Do you know if they came from a traditional orthodox family?

Marian: Yeah, I'm sure.

Noel: Okay. So they were in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Do you know the extent of your grandfather's education?

Marian: No, I don't. He was a banker in Germany but I don't know.

Noel: Maybe he had a (____nasium?) education. That's possible. Do you know the extent of your grandmother's education?

Marian: She didn't have. I think she was very young when she came and I'm not even sure she graduated from what we call high school.

Noel: A lot of people did not go on in school in those days. It was only after World War I and especially World War II that most Americans went to high school.

Marian: Yeah, right.

Noel: So, they left Pine Bluff, Arkansas and they came to New Mexico.

Marian: They came to New Mexico because my grandfather had a cousin who was a Rosenwald and they came to work with that family in Albuquerque. And they came to Albuquerque in 1905.

Noel: Do you know which Rosenwald?

Marian: It was the whole family that had the business.

Noel: Okay. So, your grandfather worked for?

Marian: He worked for his cousin until 1912 when they came to Santa Fe and during that time he was the secretary, the first secretary I believe, of Temple Albert. And they came to Santa Fe in 1912 and started the department store which they called the White House. It is in a building that is still there today and still has ready-to-wear stores in it. My grandmother bought that building in 1927.

Noel: A very smart woman.

Marian: She was a very smart woman. Maybe not a terrific education but a very smart woman with very good taste.

Noel: Why did they go to Santa Fe? They didn't know anyone in Santa Fe.

Marian: Because they thought it was a good business opportunity. That's why they came here. And there was no store like that and they felt it was an opportunity.

Noel: What have you heard about the Guarantee?

Marian: The Guarantee is for our store.

Noel: What kind of goods did it sell?

Marian: The White House sold everything. They sold piece goods. They sold fashion and ready-to-wear which was not a common thing at that time. Most ready-to-wear was homemade. The women here were just over the moon to get dresses and they only wanted one of a kind in town. They didn't want anybody else to have one like theirs. So my grandmother used to go to New York and shop and it would take months by the time she got all of the clothes and they had everything in that store.

Noel: Do you know if she had family in New York at the time?

Marian: No, she did not have family. My father's family was from New York and that's where my mother and father met. My mother went to market with

my grandmother and my father was working for a furrier in New York and that's where they met.

Noel: We will get to that. Okay. Tell me about your grandparents.

Marian: My grandfather died, unfortunately, in 1916.

Noel: What was wrong?

Marian: He had Bright's disease. That's what they called it then and he died and my mother was only 13 years old at the time. Later it must be in 1918, I believe, my grandmother married Morris Blatt who was from Chicago who helped her in the business. Then her name changed to Blatt from Ulfelder.

Noel: So, she hired Morris.

Marian: And they were later married.

Noel: Sight unseen? Do you know? Your grandmother marries Morris. Did she have any children before then?

Marian: No, she only had one child and that was my mother and that was her only child.

Noel: Okay, so that was that the oldest one, Pauline, she had with Morris.

Marian: No, no, Pauline was from Johanna and Emil.

Noel: Johanna and Emil? That's my question. Did your grandmother continue to work in the store?

Marian: She ran the business and work in the store. I think she retired in 1946 or something to that effect. She was a very lively, smart woman and she lived a very nice life. She had a beautiful home. She was really focused on business more than anything. She did love to play poker and many of the Jewish families would get together on Saturday night because they all worked and play poker. That was their big . . .

Linda: Shabbat?

Marian: . . . excitement. Yeah, right. (laughing) There was no Shabbatt. There was no temple here.

Noel: Well, but families observed Shabbatt in the home.

Marian: Not that much.

Noel: Do you know if she lit candles Friday night?

Marian: No, she didn't.

Noel: She didn't as far as you know.

Marian: Well, I mean I knew her from 32 on. She was not terribly religious in that way. She was, you know, Jewish, but she was not terribly religious.

Noel: What about Morris? Was he more religious?

Marian: I don't think so.

Noel: You don't think so?

Marian: No. Those families that lived here at that time did not observe many of the traditions. We did go to Albuquerque for the high holy days.

Noel: Do you know if they did?

Marian: When they could, yeah. I mean you know going to Albuquerque over La Bajada Hill in those days in those cars was not the easiest thing in the world.

Noel: No it wasn't. What stories have you heard about your grandmother and the business? Anything you can recall?

Marian: Well, one really interesting story was there was a judge's wife and she lived in Santa Fe and she walked by the store one day and she saw a dress in the window and she came in and she said "Mrs. Blatt, you're going to have to send that dress back. I just bought one just like it in El Paso." (Laughter)

Noel: Did your grandmother continue to be the buyer?

Marian: Oh definitely!

Noel: So Morris didn't go on buying trips?

Marian: Not that I can remember. It was mostly. I think he stayed and ran the store.

Noel: Okay, but she did a lot of the business correspondence.

Marian: Uh-huh. But they did a lot of traveling on cruises and that kind of thing I think later on.

A1: I remember they went through the Panama Canal. Different places. So they did travel.

Noel: Anything else that you can recall about the White House and its reputation?

Marian: Well, it had a fine reputation. It was the only department store at that time and everybody depended on it for their ready-made goods. I think they had a very devoted group of employees and they were good business people. The archives from the store are in the University. They were all given to the University.

Noel: You mentioned that and I know and I have read through some of it and in one of the fascinating pieces of correspondence, someone, a banker I think, questioned her ability to run the store after her husband died.

Marian: As a woman?

Noel: As a woman, of course. And she wrote back a fiery response and she said "I handled all of the business correspondence before my husband died." And essentially "How dare you question my ability." Well, apparently that...

Marian: That sounds just like her. (Laughter)

Noel: I saw a couple of letters. I should go back and read some more of the business correspondence. The correspondence.

Marian: My daughter-in-law actually got in touch with the University to get these. They took a truckload that were in the basement and took them to Albuquerque and they're all on microfilm.

Noel: Microfilm, right. I did glance at some. I think I got to see some of the pages before they filmed them.

Marian: Oh, really? Oh, that's good, that's interesting. Yeah, I'm glad that they did that because its history.

Noel: Do you know what you are going to do with your papers? Do you have business papers?

Marian: From the Guarantee?

Noel: Yeah.

Marian: Yeah, there are some. I don't know if they would be that interesting anymore, so much as the . . .

Noel: Well, I mean historically. I went through some of the stuff and it was fascinating.

Marian: I will look through and see if there is anything that would be that interesting.

Noel: Please do and think seriously about it. A lot of it was donating to the Society. The Society has an archive. Has a collection in the archives in Santa Fe.

Marian: Of businesses?

Noel: Of their correspondence.

Marian: Well, maybe you can get those ones from Albuquerque.

Noel: No, I can read them in the Southwest collection as I have done before.

Marian: Yes that would be good.

Noel: I mean those that haven't been donated yet.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: You should think seriously of donating them.

A1: We have quite a bit of the business records and the like in our collection here in the archives. Several file folders' worth.

Marian: Milton Tigert. Van Tigert. Van Tigert was one of the initial people that built the temple.

Noel: Yeah, you will tell us all of that. So, I want to stick to your grandparents. Is there anything else that you can remember about them? Were they involved politically at all?

Marian: No, our family has never really been that involved politically. It might get to be more now but when you have a business, you know, especially in a small town it is not very smart to be pro-anything.

Noel: Do you know if they had customers that came to shop there from far away?

A Yeah! They did because they were on the Plaza and that's where everybody went to shop. So anybody that was shopping whether they were near or far would be there to shop. I don't know specifically of anybody but I'm sure they did.

Noel: When did you grandparents retire from the business?

Marian: My grandfather died and you have the date that he died. Before she closed the store I think. What year do I have down there for Morris Blatt?

Noel: Morris Blatt 1944.

Marian: I knew it was like 1948 or 49.

Noel: And Johanna lived until 1965.

Marian: Yes.

Noel: She lived a long life. All right. Let's talk about the next generation who had a business in Santa Fe. And that is the Petcheskys. Tell me more about. . .

Marian: Well, my parents met in New York when my grandmother was on a buying trip and my mother was with her. When they met my father was working for a furrier and that is when they met. They immediately were drawn to one another and got married in 1921.

Noel: Where were they married?

Marian: They were married in Albuquerque at the Alvarado Hotel.

Noel: Do you know who officiated?

Marian: Would it have been Krohn?

Noel: 19 what?

Marian: 1921.

Noel: 1921. No, it wasn't Krohn. Krohn was later. Was it Bergman?

Marian: It could have been Rabbi Bergman.

Noel: So, they get married and why did they come out to Albuquerque, to Santa Fe?

Marian: Well, because, naturally my mother lived here and Daddy came out and he loved the Southwest after being born in New York and living in New York. His parents had a drey business, you know. A moving business. They were Russian. Daddy loved Santa Fe and New Mexico and so they moved out here and he opened the shoe store right next to the White House and they called the shoe store the "Guarantee."

Noel: So he directly operated the shoe store?

Marian: Right, right.

Noel: While your grandmother continued and Morris continued to run the White House.

Marian: The White House, right.

Noel: How long do they have that independent business before they merged it?

Marian: When my grandmother retired, they merged it, the ready-to-wear and shoes as well.

Noel: It was a department in the store?

Marian: Well no, it was a separate store.

Linda: It remained a separate store?

Marian: It then became a department in 19= whenever my grandmother retired which was in the middle 40s. Then the whole store then was called The Guarantee.

Noel: Okay. Now, let's go back and talk about your mother. Do you know the extent of her education?

Marian: She graduated from high school and then she went to a finishing school for a year I think.

Noel: That was common.

Marian: Uh-huh, yeah.

Noel: Especially among those who were upper middle class. They would go East to finishing school.

Marian: Right and that was her education.

Noel: Do you know if she had any Jewish education?

Marian: No not much except that we did have family in Pine Bluff and she did go back and visit them a lot. So, perhaps she got more Jewish education that way but she really did not have much. My father was from an orthodox family and he studied to be a cantor. He had a beautiful voice and so when they did have families gather here for services before we had a temple and he would lead the services.

There was a hospital here, a military hospital. It was called Bruns and he would go out on Friday night and lead the services out there.

Noel: So there were a lot of Jewish services at Bruns?

Marian: At Bruns. There is where the College of Santa Fe started out was there.

Noel: Okay, so do you recall what they said about Jewish life in Santa Fe for the 13 years that they were married, did they talk about it all?

Marian: No.

Noel: No?

Marian: No, I always knew I was Jewish. My father and mother always instilled that but as far as the customs, etc., we lived in a small town with a small Jewish population, no temple, and in my own way I was very religious. I always knew that I wanted to be confirmed and I was confirmed but I really

did not have much of a Jewish education. Later on when there was still no temple here when I first got back, they used to have -- No, it was before I was married the rabbi would come up I think once a month on a Saturday and they would have Sunday school at the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church and I taught Sunday School but I did it before I was married.

Noel: Have you heard stories from your parents about what life was like in Santa Fe itself?

Marian: It was great. It was a small town. Everybody knew everybody. They had lots of friends. If there were more than two cars in front of the house you knew they must be having a party so they would stop. It was great. They had great friends and a lot of fun and worked hard.

Noel: Where in town did they live?

Marian: About three blocks from here on Don Gaspar. [Inaudible].

Noel: Are there any particular memorable experiences you can think of in their life that stood out. In other words were there experiences that they had during World War II that stood out?

Marian: No. Santa Fe was not affected very much by the war except of course there were soldiers that were drafted from here and you couldn't get butter and you were on rationing stamps and all that sort of thing but other than that, Santa Fe is about the last place even still to feel the effects of national politics.

Noel: Oh, Las Vegas may have it beat.

Marian: Oh yeah, maybe so. (Laughter) You could be right.

Noel: Were they involved in any civic things?

Marian: Oh extremely so.

Noel: All right, so tell me about it.

Marian: Daddy was a big Kiwanis man. He was one of the first directors of the Santa Fe Opera, my father.

Noel: How did he, you mentioned, that he got to know John Crosby?

Marian: Well, John Crosby was the director.

Noel: I know. Do you know anything about their relationship?

Marian: Oh yeah. We knew him. John Crosby came here as a very young man and he sort of solicited the business community to help him get the opera started. I knew John Crosby very well too and so did Abe. Abe was a board member of the opera since 1960.

Noel: We're concentrating on your parents now.

Marian: Oh, okay. My mother was a Women's Club member. At that time they started the cemetery. It was the Fairview Cemetery and ran the cemetery.

Noel: Fairview's in Albuquerque.

Marian: No, [inaudible]

Noel: But there's one here.

Marian: Yeah, there's one here in Santa Fe. It's on Cerrillos Road. She played a lot of bridge. She liked to play bridge.

Noel: How come she got committed to the cemetery?

Marian: Well, the Women's Club ran it. They started it and ran it.

Noel: You mean the Jewish women?

Marian: No, it's not a Jewish cemetery.

Noel: There's only a small section.

Marian: There isn't any in the Fairview Cemetery.

Linda: There are some.

Marian: There are a lot of Jewish people buried there but there is no particular section. My grandparents are buried there, well my grandmother and Morris Blatt and Mother and Daddy.

Noel: I thought it was a section.

Marian: There is in another cemetery but that was later when that cemetery was built.

Noel: So you parents were involved in building the cemetery?

Marian: I mean through the Women's Club. Yeah, the Fairview Cemetery and the Women's Club that my mother was a member.

Noel: Any other organizations that your mother was involved in?

Marian: I think the Boys and Girls Club.

Noel: Was your father a member of the B'nai Brith?

Marian: Yes.

Noel: Were there lodge meetings here in Santa Fe? Or they went to Las Vegas or Albuquerque?

Marian: They had a small group here. That was about the biggest religious thing that was going on, the B'nai Brith.

Noel: Okay.

Marian: I was thinking the other day about the stores. There were a lot of Jewish merchants around the Plaza.

Noel: Let's talk about that. You told me there were very few Jewish families in town.

Marian: Yeah. I'm going to get you the list.

Noel: Now at times you've said there were very few Jewish families in Santa Fe.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: So you had 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. So there were 12 Jewish families in town?

Marian: That I can remember, yeah.

Noel: That you can remember?

Marian: Uh-huh.

Noel: And a number of these are related to one another?

Marian: Right.

Noel: The Kahns. Gus Kahn?

Marian: Yeah, they had a shoe store.

Noel: Yeah, I know. Was there a number of Kahns?

Marian: Uh-huh.

Noel: Albert Kahn.

Marian: They were related to Catherine too.

Noel: They were related to Catherine, exactly. Okay. So, the first name on the list. This one. What is that?

Marian: Marcelle Pick.

Noel: I'd like you to tell me something about the Picks.

Marian: They had a laundry.

Noel: Okay.

Marian: They were from Germany. One of the brothers was killed in the Torero. Did you ever hear about that?

Noel: Yes, I know about that. So tell me since we're on the subject, tell me about the Picks.

Marian: Well the Pick brothers, one of the brothers was killed when he was . . .

Noel: Which one?

Marian: It could have been Henry, I'm not sure. But he was bringing the payroll down from Torero, the mine, where they worked or owned, and he was killed. It's a murder that has never been solved. His brother then came. I

think it was Emil Pick and married Henry's widow and Marcelle was another brother.

Noel: So there were three brothers, right?

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: All right. So after the mine closed what did they do?

Marian: Well, I'm not sure that those brothers were involved with the mine. They had a laundry. That's what they did.

Noel: Oh, okay. A large laundry?

Marian: Yeah. It was called the White Swan.

Noel: And it did a lot of businesses, restaurants and the like. It did their laundry.

Marian: Residents too. I mean people didn't have washing machines and dryers. My mother didn't even know which part of the washing machine to put the clothes in. (Laughing) They sent their laundry to the laundry.

Noel: So, were the Picks were active in Jewish affairs?

Marian: Yes, they were. The children are not. They are not active. Well, one of the Picks was a mayor. One of the children but neither one of them are very active in Jewish affairs. Anyway the mayor was one of the presidents of the temple I think.

Noel: Do you know his first name?

Linda: It's not Samuel, is it?

Marian: Sam. Good for you!

Linda: Don't ask me where that came from.

Marian: Sam Pick.

Noel: All right. So was your father involved in any other civic affairs? Kiwanis. He was a member of B'nai Britt. The opera of course.

Marian: He did a lot of singing at weddings and things like that because he did have a beautiful-- A very interesting fact is that my father had a pig ranch.

Noel: A what?

Marian: A pig ranch. (Laughing)

Noel: Really. Where?

Marian: On the outskirts of town, off of Cerrillos, way out. Don't ask me why but he did. He had a pig ranch. He got the garbage from La Fonda to feed the pigs.

Noel: And how long did he have that business?

Marian: I don't know. Maybe 20 years. I was just a little girl when he had it. I can remember that they took the pigs to Albuquerque to Schwartzman's. That's an interesting little sideline. (Laughter)

Noel: Was your mother involved in it?

Marian: Are you kidding? He wasn't that involved with the actual ranch either. He was running the store.

Noel: Given the fact that your parents were so involved in the opera, were they part of the social elite in Albuquerque?

Marian: We were in Santa Fe.

Noel: I mean in Santa Fe. I'm sorry.

Marian: I don't know why you would call the social elite. Santa Fe is not a social elite town. Santa Fe is a town that people like people for what they are and, yes, they were a very popular couple.

Noel: Well, there were "movers."

Marian: I would call them "movers" but I wouldn't call them -- I mean Santa Fe is not like that. We don't have like an elite group. People, don't you think are very open here?

Linda: I think so. I mean there are the older families across [inaudible].

Marian: But I don't consider them elite. I don't consider myself elite by any stretch of the imagination. (Laughing)

Linda: Well, but you had deep roots in the community.

Marian: Yes.

Noel: All right, let's turn to you. Tell me about growing up in Santa Fe.

Marian: Santa Fe. It was wonderful. It was very -- you know I had friends from every walk of life. I would go to church with my friends on Sunday morning or I would go to the Christmas Eve services. I was just as comfortable in a church as I was in a temple and I still am because it was so ecumenical and people didn't make a big deal out of Christmas. I mean they had Christmas. We had Hanukkah at our house and Christmas at our house. Everybody was very friendly and the Plaza was the meeting place for everything. That's where everything went on.

Noel: Did you spend a lot of time in the stores? The Guarantee or the White House?

Marian: Growing up? Yeah.

Noel: Growing up.

Marian: Yeah, I did. I used to wrap packages and things like that. After my father passed away and Abe was involved in the store, I mean naturally, and my brother, I did all the ready-to-wear buying and I loved it.

Noel: You did? Did you travel?

Marian: Oh yeah. We went to market three times a year.

Noel: New York mainly?

Marian: No, we went to Los Angeles a lot. Our representatives were more West Coast than they were East Coast and carried more of the type of goods that we wanted. Oh yeah, I loved it.

Noel: All right. You had that and you bought it.

Marian: Yeah, I was also the director of a bank. I was the first woman director of a bank in Santa Fe.

Noel: Which bank?

Marian: Well, it started off as the American National Bank and it went to be the United Bank and now it's the . . .

Linda: First National Bank?

Marian: No, it's a national bank and I bank there.

Linda: Century? US Bank? Bank of . . .

Marian: It's stupid!

Noel: All right, if you think of it.

Marian: I know I will. I bank there!

Noel: Well, get out your checkbook.

Linda: I was just thinking American Express.

Marian: Wells Fargo.

Noel: Wells Fargo.

Marian: Finally, it turned out to be Wells Fargo but that was the bank I was the director of. That was something I really enjoyed.

Noel: In terms of growing up Jewish in Santa Fe? What was that like?

Marian: Well, there wasn't a lot of Jewish life as such in Santa Fe. There was no temple. There was no rabbi so you know it was the family and that was only reason you even knew you were. There wasn't a real Jewish community as such.

Noel: Why?

Marian: Because there was nothing to bring them all together. I mean to be a community – this was a community that it didn't matter your nationality. Everybody was sort of together.

Noel: Well, could you give us some insight. It took so long for Santa Fe to have a synagogue.

Marian: Yeah, 1953 -- 4.

Linda: I think it was 54. I'm not sure.

Marian: It started off as a very small synagogue. It was a little building. It seated 100 people. We thought it would be big enough for the lifetime.

Noel: So you think there weren't enough Jews in Santa Fe to warrant?

Marian: To warrant it. And I never, ever experienced any anti-Semitism until I went to New Orleans. I mean, you know, it's different. But Santa Fe not at all.

Noel: But you did go to Temple Albert and you were confirmed there?

Marian: Yes.

Noel: So, you went there every week?

Marian: No. It was very loose.

Noel: Loose?

Marian: I guess when the rabbi came often.

Noel: Which rabbi was that?

Marian: It wasn't Sterrels. It was the one after Sterrels.

Noel: Shorr? (Schorr?)

Marian: Shorr. Shorr is the one who married us. Thank you for remembering.

Q. All right, of course, he was around for so long.

Marian: I knew Sterrels too. He was English.

Noel: What was he like?

Marian: He was very kind of straight-laced and English.

Noel: [Inaudible]?

Marian: Uh-huh, yeah, more so than Shorr. Shorr had a family.

Noel: Right. Any memories you have of Shorr growing up?

Marian: Well, no, except he would come up and he was a friend. He was a very shy guy. He would come up to talk about when we were going to get married and Abe said he was going to say to him, "Is there is anything you would like to know?" (Laughter) My husband was a character. He was a big jokester. I don't know if you've ever known that or not. People remember him by his sense of humor.

Linda: Well, that's what the article in the [inaudible], the tribute [inaudible] seems to –

Marian: And we as a family have the bench out there for him and the bench says "Have you heard the one about?" (Laughter)

Noel: That's very cute. Let's talk a little about Abe. So, you met him in New Orleans. You both went to school there.

Marian: Well, he had already graduated by the time I went to school. He worked for the Times Picayune. He was a sports reporter and he had gone to Tulane.

Noel: So, why was he willing to come to Santa Fe?

Marian: Because he was just like my father. He loved it.

Noel: Had he been here before?

Marian: Not until we got married. He just thought Santa Fe was such a welcoming, warm town, and the climate. He just liked it.

Noel: So, when he came to Santa Fe what kind of work did he have?

Marian: He worked in the store. He and my brother ran the store.

Noel: Right. Tell me about your brother. You mentioned him. How many siblings do you have?

Marian: I had one brother and he has since passed away.

Noel: And his name?

Marian: Gene Petchesky

Noel: Gene?

Marian: Eugene actually.

Noel: When he was born?

Marian: I think it's on that list.

Noel: Okay, all right. Is he older or younger?

Marian: He was older. I think he was born in '24, no '26.

Noel: I don't see Eugene on this.

Marian: Eugene Petchesky.

Linda: Oh, here. No . . .

Noel: Which bank?

Marian: Well, it started off as the American National Bank and it went to be the United Bank and now it's the First National Bank? It's a national bank and I bank there. Century?

Noel: All right, if you think of it.

Marian: I know I will. I bank there.

Noel: Well, get out your checks.

Marian: I was just thinking American Express.

A1: Wells Fargo.

Noel: Wells Fargo.

Marian: Finally, it turned out to be Wells Fargo but that was the bank I was the director of. That was something I really enjoyed.

Noel: In terms of growing up Jewish in Santa Fe? What was that like?

Marian: Well, there wasn't a lot of Jewish life as such in Santa Fe. There was no temple. There was no rabbi so you know it was the family and that was only reason you even knew you were. There wasn't a real Jewish community as such.

Noel: Why?

Marian: Because there was nothing to bring them all together. I mean to be a community that's what that the community it didn't matter your nationality. Everybody was sort of together.

Noel: Well, could you give us some insight. It took so long for Santa Fe to have a synagogue.

Marian: Yeah, 1954.

A1: I think it was 54. I'm not sure.

Marian: It started off as a very small synagogue. It was a little building. It seated 100 people. We thought it would be big enough for the lifetime.

Noel: So you think there weren't enough Jews in Santa Fe to warrant?

Marian: To warrant. And I never, ever experienced any anti-Semitism until I went to New Orleans. But Santa Fe not at all.

Noel: But you did go to Temple Albert and you were confirmed?

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: So, you went there every week?

Marian: No. It was very loose.

Noel: Loose.

Marian: I guess when the rabbi came often.

Noel: Which rabbi was that?

Marian: It wasn't Starrels. It was the one after Starrels.

Noel: Schorr.

Marian: Schorr. Schorr is the one who married us. Thank you for remembering that. Yeah.

Q. All right, of course, he was around for so long.

Marian: I knew Starrels too. He was English.

Noel: What was he like?

Marian: He was very kind of straight-laced and English.

Noel: [Inaudible]?

Marian: Uh-huh, yeah, more so than Schorr. Schorr had a family.

Noel: Right. Anything of memories you have of Schorr growing up?

Marian: Well, no, except that he would come up and he was a friend. He was a very shy guy. He would come up and talk about when we were going to get married and Abe said he was going to say to him is there is anything you would like to know? My husband was a character. He was a big jokester. People remember him by his sense of humor. And we as a family have the bench out there for him and the bench says "Have you heard the one about?"

Noel: Let's talk a little about Abe. So, you met him in New Orleans. You both went to school there.

Marian: Well, he had already graduated by the time I went to school. He worked for the Times Picayune. He was a sports reporter and he had gone to Tulane.

Noel: So, why was he willing to come to Santa Fe?

A Because he was just like my father. He loved it.

Noel: Had he been here before?

A Not until we got married. He just thought Santa Fe was such a welcoming, warm town, and the climate. He just liked it.

Noel: So, when he came to Santa Fe what kind of work did he have?
Marian: He worked in the store. He and my brother ran the store.
Noel: Right. Tell me about your brother. You mentioned him. How many siblings do you have?

Marian: I had one brother and he has since passed away.

Noel: And his name?

Marian: Eugene Petchesky.

Noel: Is he older or younger?

Marian: He was older. I think he was born in '24, no '26.

Noel: I don't see Eugene on this.

Marian: Eugene Petchesky.

Noel: Oh, here. No . . .

[*Side Two*]

Noel: [This is the second side of the tape. Still talking to Marian Silver.] Your husband got into the business?

Marian: Uh-huh.

Noel: What did he do?

Marian: He was in the shoe department in the beginning. He and my brother ran the shoe department and when my father died, Abe more or less ran the ready-to-wear part and my brother, the shoes.

Noel: Did they also serve as buyers?

Marian: Oh yeah. Well, of the shoes, and Abe and I, we went to market together. He was the finance person and I was the buyer. So that's what we did. He was also the president of a bank. He was the president of the Bank of Santa Fe and he was very, very active in the community.

Noel: Tell me something about that. I did read that in some of the articles. Did he enjoy the business?

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: He really did?

Marian: Yeah, yeah he did. And we closed it in 1988 because it got to the point-- Well, my brother by then had had a stroke and we just decided. When we closed the business it was the best year ever. So, it was not for any other reason than that. But we did in 1988 and enjoyed a lot of traveling community service and fun and had a great life.

Noel: Now, your kids did not want to take over this?

Marian: No, none of them did.

Noel: All right, so tell me about your children.

Marian: My son is an attorney.

Noel: And his first name?

Marian: John.

Noel: That's right.

Marian: And he is married to Gloria and they had the twins and they are both very active in the community too. He runs a foundation also. And then my daughter --

Noel: He runs a --?

Marian: A foundation.

Noel: Oh, I'm sorry. Which foundation?

Marian: It is the Lopidus Foundation.

Noel: I don't know anything about it.

Marian: And he has also been on the Goodall Board. He was the head of that. Anyway, all of my kids are involved. They sort of got the DNA. I have a daughter, Carolyn, who has been the director of a hospice for many years in Arizona and now she has a biofeedback. You wouldn't call it a business.

Noel: A clinic?

Marian: No, it's like a doctor. She has patients and she has developed quite a following and still does hospice training. She went to Yale Divinity School and is a very active Jewish participant.

Noel: A what?

Marian: Active Jewish participant in many ways.

Noel: So she got a degree in Divinity Studies?

Marian: At Yale.

Noel: At Yale?

Marian: She graduated from Colorado College as did my son and she went on to Yale and he graduated from the University of New Mexico Law School. And my daughter, Margaret Jones, is married to Scott, and she has been a teacher and travel agent and is now retired and enjoying tennis and she is an active person too in the hospital and thrift shops and things like that and the temple.

Noel: So she lives in town?

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: How did the business community change over all these decades from the time that you were young? Tell me about that.

Marian: Well, it used to be totally focused on the plaza and around the plaza. That's where all the business took place. And then shopping centers opened so a lot of the business moved out that way and a lot of the national chains came in and it did change the complexion of the business; however, as far as we were concerned when we got out of business it hadn't really affected our bottom line, so to speak. We were still viable. But in today's world, as you know, has changed a lot.

Noel: Well, the Plaza is very different than it had been fifty years ago. It's now select shops. Very chic. Galleries. It is not the retail business that it used to be.

Marian: That it used to be.

Noel: So, a lot has changed then.

Marian: Yeah, it used to have a grocery store, drug stores, and any kind of –

Noel: Capitol Pharmacy.

Marian: -- Capitol Pharmacy. [Inaudible] Pharmacy. County's was on the plaza. There was another grocery store called Cash-N-Carry which was in the building behind us, which we owned. As a sideline, we started, -- The Guarantee started, a Pendleton store besides and it was in the building behind.

Noel: How long did that last?

Marian: Until we closed the store.

Noel: In 1988 too?

Marian: Yeah, Abe and I started it. Probably for 12 years or so we used to go up to Washington to Pendleton.

Noel: It's in Oregon I think.

Marian: Yeah, but it is right on the border and their offices I think were in Washington and manufacturing. It was very interesting. We enjoyed it.

Noel: Were there any other enterprises that you were involved in I didn't know about?

Marian: Business?

Noel: Yes.

Marian: I guess not any business. We had property.

Noel: Real estate?

Marian: Yeah. And we still do.

Noel: Okay, so any other reflections on the change?

Marian: Well, Santa Fe has changed 360 degrees from when I was growing up but it's a good thing that it has because it would be like Las Vegas or any other small community. Santa Fe for the size, it's only 70,000 people, has the most incredible museums and music and everything and I think it was the opera that originally started the change, when people started moving here. Because before it was an art community but it didn't have the music and the cachet that it has now.

Noel: So when did the Jewish community really start to grow in Santa Fe?

Marian: After we built the temple.

Noel: So you think that was a turning point.

Marian: Yeah, definitely.

Noel: So, where did these Jews come from? Out of the woodwork? (Laughter). You know we have supposedly 14,000 or 15,000 Jews in Albuquerque but maybe 2500 are affiliated in any way.

Marian: Well, that's true in Santa Fe too, wouldn't you say?

Noel: Yeah.

Marian: We have five different temples now. We started out with one.

Linda: I find that amazing. Five communities for such a small town.

Marian: They all seem to be doing okay. I don't know about Beit Tikva.

Linda: I think they are kind of on the edge.

Noel: So, tell me about Abe and his involvement in civic affairs and your own involvement in civic affairs.

Marian: We both have been very involved. We have a long list of different things that we have been involved with. Of course, we have been involved with the Temple Beth Shalom since the beginning. Abe was the president at one

time and I have been on the board and the auxiliary and taught Sunday School and been very involved with that.

Noel: Why were you and a few others moved to suddenly establish a congregation? I mean for years Santa Fe had been without one.

Marian: Well, I guess we felt that it was growing and that it would be time. I think all of the older families like my parents had wanted to have a temple. Somebody gave them the land. That was the beginning. To build it on. And then they did built it and it was very small. It served the purpose for many years. But I couldn't believe it when I walked into Temple Beth Shalom. It just, you know, amazing. Who knows how it all transpired but it did.

Linda: My understanding Marian, again correct me if I'm wrong, is that Rabbi Neil Amswych, our current rabbi, is interested in having a history of Temple Beth Shalom written. I have heard that. I don't know to what degree that project has gotten off the ground, etc. But apparently, that is an interest of his.

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Marian: That's interesting. I haven't heard that. I think I'm the only one that is part of that definitely (laughing). Part of any family. I mean a – a person that was there at the time it was built.

Noel: Were you involved in the sisterhood of the --?

Marian: Oh yeah, very involved. We used to do all the Passover Seders. That was before people started having them in their homes much. You know, the sisterhood would good the whole Seder and all the families would come in the basement of the little temple.

Noel: When did it change that the families started having Seders in homes?

Marian: In seems like after the larger temple was built and more people came in and it got so big probably that people started doing it on their own.

Noel: What else was Abe involved in that he liked?

Marian: Well, as I said, he was a banker. He was a very active Rotarian. He was on the Boys Club board and I told you the opera board.

Noel: Was he a member of B'nai Brit?

Marian: I don't know that he ever was. I don't think that he was. Gosh, there is a whole list in there.

Noel: I'm sure I would remember. He was very active and his heart was mainly in the opera and Kiwanis.

Marian: And Rotary. Well, his heart was in anything he did. He did it with gusto and he raised a lot of money and he really loved people and he loved what he was doing. But there's a list of stuff that he did.

Noel: All right and you traveled a lot.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: What was your favorite trip?

Marian: One trip that we really loved was when we went to Africa and then we went to the Seychelles Islands and then we went to Egypt, all in one trip.

Noel: Oh! Have you been to Israel?

Marian: Oh yeah, we have and I loved Israel. I must say that I loved it.

Noel: Well, you gave me a whole list of the people who were in Santa Fe that were Jews.

Marian: That's all I can remember.

Noel: What can you tell me about the Bells?

Marian: Well, they had a department store later on. It wasn't from the beginning. You still know Lance.

Noel: Very well.

Marian: He's a great guy. I love Lance. Very sweet. There were two Bells. His father and his brother that lived here.

Noel: Was there anything special about their operation and their business?

Marian: It was a very successful business.

Noel: Were their clientele different from yours?

Marian: Yeah, I think our store was a little higher end.

Noel: What about Livingstons?

Marian: They had a furniture store.

Noel: What was the name?

Marian: Livingston's.

Noel: Where was it?

Marian: On San Francisco Street.

Noel: So, right near the Plaza?

Marian: Near, it wasn't on it. Then there was the Kaufman's.

Noel: I don't see it.

Marian: That was his son-in-law. That was later that he took over Livingston's.

Noel: What was Kaufman's first name?

Linda: Have to think about that one. (Laughter)

Noel: K-a-u-f-m-a-n or two m's?

Marian: I think it was just one m.

Noel: One m. What can you tell me about Spitz?

Marian: They had a wonderful jewelry store. They never were supporters of this temple. They always stuck with Temple Albert. It was very strange.

Noel: I know the Spitzes. One of the older families in Santa Fe.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: He opened his jewelry store.

Marian: His father.

Noel: His father.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: Not the present.

Marian: No, Bernard was the father.

Noel: So there were three generations?

Marian: I think so, yeah.

Noel: And he was one of the earliest of the Jews to come to the Plaza. The newer ones. Not the Staabs. That is very important around the turn of the century.

Marian: Uh-huh.

Noel: The fact that I think Spitz came in the 1890s.

Marian: Did he?

Noel: Yeah, very early, and then of course the clock was his contribution. That was the second Spitz.

Marian: Bernard.

Noel: Who was the first?

Marian: I don't know his father's name. Do you want any more coffee?

Noel: No. He did it for the bicentennial. He gave the clock. That's what I heard.

Marian: I guess. I don't know. I know it has been there forever.

Noel: I know a little bit about the Kampernick(?), and the Ganzses(?). They were related. They had kind of a curio store on the Plaza.

Noel: What kind?

Marian: A curio.

Noel: A curio. All right. Anything else you think would be helpful about understanding the changes in Santa Fe, the growth of the Jewish community from your perspective?

Marian: It's an amazing thing. I don't know how many families Chabad has, do you?

Linda: No, not off hand.

Marian: But I think the Jewish presence has become more and more known because as I said before, it was sort of assimilated. Now there are definite temples and organizations and I think they are much more noticeable than they were before because they are a big part of the community.

Noel: Oh yes, it has really flourished.

Marian: Yeah.

Noel: But there was nothing before the 1950s in terms of an organized Jewish community.

Marian: Really? You're right. It's amazing. I can't believe it. It really is. You have a list of all the stuff I did.

Noel: I xeroxed it.

Marian: A lot of it was in the tribute I got.

Noel: I xeroxed everything. Oh, tell me about Pauline remarried?

Marian: Oh, my father died in 1960. And she remarried I think in '63 to a man by the name of Emil Pollock and he is on there I think, the date of his birth and death, and they were married for 13 years until he died. He was a very nice man. We all really liked him a lot.

Noel: I can't make out the date that he died. Is it 1966. It can't be 1916.

Marian: 1976.

Noel: 1976. What did he do for a living?

Marian: He was retired when they got married.

Noel: Okay. What he had been?

Marian: He was in the retail business and he lived in California. He was from California. He was born in Oklahoma but lived in California.

Noel: All right, anything else you can think of that would help us understand your family?

Marian: Well, I think our family has been a major presence in the Jewish community.

Noel: And in the business community.

Marian: And in the community. We have all been very loving of the community and wanting to give back and active. I really do feel like and our children are the same way, so that's nice.

Linda: You raised them right. (Laughter)

Marian: I did give you [inaudible] of my children.

Noel: If you want them included, definitely. So Marian, remember she needs to give us the name of her grandchildren.

Marian: Because they are the fifth generation. One of the grandchildren is Thomas Silver and his sister is Johanna Silver and they are children of John and Gloria's. My third grandchild is Allison Silver Jones and she is the daughter of Margaret and Scott.

Noel: Okay. I did forget to ask you. Marian. if your grandparents and parents were Zionists? Were they active in Israel activity, supporters?

Marian: No, they were not big Zionists.

Noel: They were not, okay. Were you an Abe involved in Zionist activities?

M. No.

[end of recording]