

SEP 12 1983

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September 6, 1983

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Mrs. Viola W. Weiss, Executive Director
Jewish Children's Regional Services
P. O. Box 15225,
New Orleans, La. 70175

Dear Mrs. Weiss:

I. Using your guideline. I was two years of age when entering the Home, twelve years old when I left: I had a sister, Mathilda, and a brother, Harry, also in the Home. Both were older than me. We had five other brothers and sisters but when our mother died they were too young to take care of us. I was placed on the "girls side" but cried so long and loud they placed me with my brother on the "boys side".

II. There were approximately 100 girls and 110 boys, and like all institutions we were guided by rules and regulations. Each of us had a numbered locker of our own, and whenever we broke any rule or got an unsatisfactory (U) for deportment at school we were punished by having to sit on our locker after school 'till suppertime, for two weeks. If we failed any subject at school, we had to show our homework to our study-master before retiring to bed. Study period was from 6:00 PM to 8:00 pm, depending upon what grade we were in. Families were composed of six boys and one "big brother". The boys were about the same age and the big brother was one of the older boys. We were awakened by bugle call at 5:00 AM. We had to shower and do our activities before breakfast. A family was responsible to make all beds on top floor of the dormitory, another family made up beds on bottom floor. Another family would sweep the sidewalks. Another to clean up the lawn fronting St. Charles Avenue. Another to clean playground yard. Another to work in the gardens. Etc. As for fun., there was very little in the winter months but during vacation it was all fun. Baseball League play in the morning. Choose up sides in the afternoon and soft ball after supper. The superintendant of the Home, Rabbi Leon Volmer, joined us in the soft ball games. Also, each boy was allowed two weeks at a summer camp in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. (Later moved to Bay St. Louis). Each Friday nite supper we had candlelight service, and Saturday morning had Shool. Sunday afternoon was visiting day. We usually had one of our family visit us and always gavw us a nickel or dime. About a half block from the Home was a beer joint that sold hamburger sandwiches for a nickel. My brother, Harry, would take the money and run down to Sprauls (the beer joint) and buy sandwiches. I was the lookout. He was caught one time and Rabbi Volmer put Harry's head between his legs and gave him a belt whipping. Each anniversary of the Home, the early part of January, the boys and girls put on a minstrel show which the sponsors of the Home and most of the Jewry of New Orleans attended. Donations to this affair ran high. When I was older our new superintendent of the Home, Harry Ginsburg, organized a Boy Scout Troop. I played cornet in the Scout band and marched in the "Victory Bongs" parade on Canal Street to raise money for the

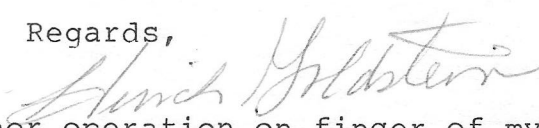
World War I fund. Every other weekend in summer the band played at the nearby Home for The Incurables, which was under the auspice of one of the Jewish Womens' Organizations. It was there that I had my first taste of the harsh realities of the outside world. During band break I was watching an elegant Jewish woman, Mrs. Albert Wachenheim, who would be welcomed in any elite gathering, feeding a misshapened creature who had two stubs about a foot long for feet and two arms, stopping at the elbow. No hands. When Mrs. Wachenheim left the man said to me "what are you looking at sheenie". I did not know what sheenie meant but found out from one of the older boys. Up to this time I had not heard a derogatory remark about Judiasm. It ~~do~~ tho, prepare me for the fact that the outside world did not consider us The Good Samaritans.

III. We all attended the Isidore Newman School. I graduated from the Commercial Course, where we ^{were} taught secretarial and manual training work. Very few women worked in those days. I had quite a few friends at school who were not Home kids. Jack Loeb, whose father owned the Crescent Laundry; Louis Scherk, whose father owned Hansell's Book Store; Jack Lancaster, whose father was president of the M.P. railroad; Henry Newman, whose grandfather founded the school; Newton Carlton, whose father was head of Western Union. To name a few.

IV. I consider the highlights of my life to be the years spent in the Home. Many successful men came from the Home. Martin Behrman, who was mayor of New Orleans for sixteen years; Judge Louis Yarut, US District Judge; Max Tobias of Tobias Bag Company; Simon Rosenthal was mayor of Rolling Fork, Mississippi; June Block, banker in Thibodaux, Louisiana. And on and on.

Hope this letter will be of some benefit to you.

Regards,



P.S. Excuse errors. Had a minor operation on finger of my left hand.

HG