

"Interview with Sam Levitan"

Karen: Here we are. So Sam Levitan, tell me, when did you come to the Home?

Sam: I think around 1927. I must have been about three years old.

Karen: Three years old?

Sam: Yes .

Karen: Were you by yourself or were your sisters and brothers..?

Sam: I had no sisters or brothers. My mother died at an early age and I don't remember entering the home but I remember being there as a very young child. I remember walking around the crib. I couldn't be more than three years old I guess. I remember, I guess, I was a pet at times because I was so young. Everybody used to ask me what do you want to be when you grow up and I wanted to be a policeman.

Karen: So, you really can't remember anything before you entered the home because you were so...

Sam: No.

Karen: I can't even remember back from three. It's hard to remember when you're three.

Sam: Prior to being in the Home.

Karen: So probably it was hard on your father to take care of you without your mother?

Sam: I'm sure it was.

Karen: Were you scared? When you got older?

Sam: No. No. That was my home really. I was well-treated. It was a good life.

Karen: Did you make friends with the other children?

Sam: Oh, yeah. We were all very close. We had a good comradery. Everybody was friends.

Karen: You've kept together? You've kept in touch with some of these people?

Sam: Well, we keep contact with some of the local people. Carol Hart for one. Julian Hart, Roger Perlis. I often wonder where some of the other people are, but our paths don't really cross that much.

Karen: Would you like a reunion with everyone if you could have it?

Sam: We did have a reunion about twenty odd years ago.

Karen: That's a long time ago.

Sam: Yeah.

Karen: It's time for another one.

Sam: It was when the Home was still standing.

Karen: Now, I wanted to ask you what it was like living in the Home. Do you remember any type of rules?

Sam: There really weren't any rules to speak of you know other than just an organized living routine. We had our routine we followed, but nothing any different I guess from being in a family home.

Karen: Were there bunk beds?

Sam: No. No. In the dormitory we were in, everything was individual. We maybe had two or three in a room. At one time there was a great big long dormitory but then Uncle Harry evidently wanted to make things a little more homey and he divided the dormitory off into individual rooms. Not individual but smaller rooms.

Karen: Who's Uncle Harry?

Sam: Everybody knows Uncle Harry. His picture is at Gates of Prayer on West Esplanade. He was the Superintendent.

Karen: Maybe we should have put him at Tikvat Shalom.

Sam: He was really a fantastic person.

Karen: Very warm?

Sam: Extremely warm.

Karen: So he made you feel comfortable?

Sam: Oh, yeah he was a good administrator. We didn't realize at the time but he used to read to us like Les Miserables. We finished the book during the summer season, some of it one or two chapters a night. We used to always gather around in summer camp and he would read to us, tell us stories, put on performances in the pavillion; there was the Student Prince. Then, once a year we used to have a program at the old Amphitheatre (?). All the kids would perform. I guess it was pretty well thought out. *Rebanol* Herman (she was Rebanol Hoffman then) was the musical director. In fact, she was my piano teacher in the Home.

Karen: So you actually learned how to play the piano while you were...?

Sam: No, I never really learned how.

Karen: I see the piano there.

Sam: Well, that's my young son, Scott, he plays the piano. I still remember the scales but I never really got into the piano that deeply. I think...

Karen: You can read the music?

Sam: A little bit. The kids were denied nothing.

Karen: It sounds like you had a better time than most people would have in a family. In a family, there is a lot of sibling rivalry.

Sam: Well, I was raised in the Home during the Depression years and we didn't feel any Depression at all. We weren't aware of any Depression.

Karen: So you were well fed?

Sam: That might have been one of the reasons my father had to put me in the Home is because of the Depression.

Karen: People were starving.

Sam: That's right.

Karen: What about your education? Do you feel that it was very good?

Sam: Education was excellent. Well, the cream of the crop of the city, always, everybody went to Newman. Newman was and is still the school in the city and there was nothing lacking in education. And those that didn't or weren't able to cope with Newman curriculum were sent to a training school such as Conely High in those days to learn a profession. Secretarial profession and perhaps a few even went to Delgado. *Cohn*

Karen: Was there much interaction between the sexes there?

Sam: Not really we were all good friends. Everybody knew everybody.

Karen: I mean, they didn't segregate all the boys together and all the girls together?

Sam: I'm trying to remember. The dormitories were separate. As young kids we weren't. Well, I'm going back maybe when I was six or seven years old. I don't think we were segregated at that age.

Karen: So, your classes were coed?

Sam: Oh, yeah. Classes were coed.

Karen: When you put on Student Prince it was with everyone?

Sam: Everything was together. There was the big back yard and then...

Sam: Then the inner courtyard where we used to play. We used to rollerskate around the perimeter of the inner courtyard.

Karen: What about religious holidays?

Sam: They were followed. Newman always followed the religious holidays.

Karen: Did you get a religious education?

Sam: Yeah, well we went to the temple. It was divided among the three reformed temples. I went to Temple Sinai. A few of the kids went to Touro Synagogue and others went to Gates of Prayer. In fact, we very faithfully went every Saturday. We walked.

Karen: You had your choice? If you didn't want to go you didn't have to go?

Sam: Not really, I think it was...

Karen: Required?

Sam: Well, like you say required, I just think it was something we...

Karen: You wanted to do.

Sam: We really did. I still have my silver pin from Temple Sinai for going every Saturday.

Karen: Did you get to choose Temple Sinai over the others?

Sam: No, I think we were assigned. We were too young to choose really. It was all part of growing up. Your parents told you to go somewhere. They told us to go somewhere.

Karen: So did you have a bar mitzvah at Temple Sinai?

Sam: No. No. My father remarried when I was twelve, I think. Well, that changed my whole lifestyle. He was Orthodox. He went to the Orthodox congregation. I made a bar mitzvah but at Anshe Sfarde because I left the home in 1936.

Karen: That's where my husband's parents belong.

Sam: At that time, I went to Communal Hebrew School.

Karen: How old did you say you were?

Sam: I was about three I guess.

Karen: No, I mean when you left the Home.

Sam: I was twelve.

Karen: You were in the home nine years?

Sam: Approximately nine years.

Karen: You didn't really go through adolescence there?

Sam: Oh, yeah.

Karen: But nine years is a long time.

Sam: It is.

Karen: Did you miss the Home when you left?

Sam: I think I was pretty, in fact I know I was pretty lonesome. (Chuckle). Well, being an only child, the diet was different. I remember very distinctly that it was different. My first breakfast when I went home with my father was, must have been smoked fish for breakfast. When I went to school, (Chuckle) that whole breakfast came up. My stomach just couldn't take it. But those are things you remember.

Karen: So with the school you might have oatmeal or something not as fancy?

Sam: I would have a normal routine breakfast. Cold cereal or hot cereal. Anything the youngsters wanted really. I recall very vividly my first cup of coffee. As youngsters we weren't allowed to drink coffee. We sat maybe, family style around the table, eight or nine of us at the table and some of the older kids coerced me into drinking coffee. And I have had an aversion to coffee ever since then. I didn't start drinking coffee again till I was, I guess, in my thirties. I never really cared for coffee.

Karen: It's not really good for you.

Sam: Well, I didn't drink it because it wasn't good for me. I guess that first cup you know being coerced into it must have set me against it. But that's all part of growing up.

Karen: You were there nine years. During the nine years when your dad wanted to visit you was there any problem?

Sam: Oh, no. No. Every Sunday he would come and visit. Take me out in his great big Ford car. I was too young to sit down. I used to stand up in the back. We would go to Audubon Park and sit in the park. He had his friends *he* would sit and talk with. Went to the zoo. We all had big sisters, too. I had a big sister.

Karen: Who was your big sister?

Sam: Irma, I think her first name was Irma Isaacs. No, Stella Isaacs. She was from the Marks Isaacs Department Store family.

Karen: Is she still living, too?

Sam: No, she had a very unfortunate accident. She was killed in an automobile accident. I was very, very young but I remember, well

Sam: (Continued) the only thing I really remember was one birthday I must have been maybe no older than five or six years old, she sent me a pail and a shovel and I remember calling her on the telephone to thank her. There are a lot of things you can recall. Like the routine before supper every night. Uncle Harry's sister, Aunt Sonya, Sonya Burger was the, well, she was in charge of our dormitory I guess. And right before supper, I guess a half hour before supper we would go into her apartment, she had a little apartment in the back, and we'd listen to the radio, and it was Jack Armstrong, the all-American boy and Little Orphan Annie. One came on at 5:30 the other at quarter to six. And, while we were listening I would play cards with her, Russian Bank. Many people don't play that today.

Karen: I never heard of that one.

Sam: It's a form of double solitaire. That was a routine we followed quite rigorously.

Karen: It sounds like there was a lot of leisure time and pleasant experiences.

Sam: Everything was pleasant.

Karen: When wasn't it pleasant? There must have been a few bad times.

Sam: Well, I can recall a couple of times. Well, let us see, I recall everybody getting a shot in the back. There must have been an epidemic of some type going around. Small pox or something. It was a very severe type of inoculation because everybody was confined to the infirmary. Evidently this shot caused a fever or something.

Karen: How long were?

Sam: Well, I was young then and I couldn't have been. Probably before I was ten years old.

Karen: So it was kind of scary?

Sam: Well, not really. I don't think we were scared other than the fact that I can still remember that incident.

Karen: Were there people visiting you?

Sam: Oh, yeah.

Karen: Cheering up the crowds of children?

Sam: The Shermans from Mississippi used to come in once in a while and come visit me. I remember Ms. Packard. Now, Ms. Packard was a fine lady too. She used to listen to the Metropolitan Opera every Saturday. And I still listen to the Metropolitan Opera every Saturday.

Karen: So you got a good musical background?

Sam: Because of that background, she used to lie on her sofa and

Sam: (Continued) every Saturday very faithfully she'd listen to the Metropolitan Opera.

Karen: You had a lot of good influences.

Sam: Oh, yes. Excellent influences. We even had pets around there, let's see. There was Sport the Collie. He used to have free run of the yard.

Karen: That was going to be one of my questions and now you mentioned it.

Sam: I forgot who it was Mrs. Sharpstein or Mrs. Rubin. No, Mrs. Rubin owned Sport, or Irma Simon; one of them had a mean Spitz. You don't see Spitz dogs anymore.

Karen: What do they look like?

Sam: A Spitz is a white dog. Little hairy I guess but they were mean.

Karen: Like a bulldog?

Sam: No. No. Not really. They were nice-looking dogs. Very little dogs.

Karen: Were you afraid of him?

Sam: Not really. I hit him in the face with a broom every now and then. Every Sunday morning the people from, you know the Jewish people from, the men would come I guess from YMHA. There was Rudy Stein and Barney Seigal and a couple of others would play baseball against the Home kids. One of our stars was Maurice Garb. Maurice had one arm. Just one arm, but he was a spectacular...

Karen: Athlete?

Sam: Athlete. He had two brothers in the home, too. There was Maurice and Harris. Harris was my age, and Milton. I'm not sure if he had a sister or not.

Karen: You have such a good memory of all of those names.

Sam: Well, I grew up with them.

Karen: Did you keep a journal or anything?

Sam: Not really. I have, and I'm trying to locate it. I guess when the home was either, it must have been on the fiftieth anniversary they put out a booklet. I have it here somewhere.

Karen: That would be great.

Sam: I'm going to try and find it. It gives a history of the formation of the home and it even lists what they paid for the ground. You know that big square? They paid \$6,000.00 for that whole square or whoever bought it. And then the Newman school site, the original

Sam: (Continued) site, I think they paid about \$6,000.00 for.

Karen: I wonder what it's worth now.

Sam: I don't think you could sell it. On rainy days we used to put all our raincoats from the school, when we had gone to school without our raincoats, in the wheelbarrel and Bill Parker would wheel them all to school. Then we would walk home in the rain.

Karen: Who was Bill Parker?

Sam: Bill Parker. Bill was a general handyman around.

Karen: Like a janitor?

Sam: I guess so. And, Uncle Henry was the man who operated the heating system. He was the engineer, Uncle Henry.

Karen: Did you get special treats like ice cream? Birthday cakes? Like what did they do for your birthday?

Sam: Birthday, that's a special. Me and David Ross. David Ross and I had the same birthday, July 14.

Karen: Oh, you got a birthday coming up.

Sam: So that we wouldn't have a conflict I and I still today, I celebrate July 13 as my birthday and he has July 14.

Karen: Oh, so you'd have your own special day.

Sam: So we'd each have our own special day. So there wouldn't be any conflict. So my birth certificate is July 14. My Social Security has July 14. (Chuckle)

Karen: (Chuckle) That's funny. So, your birthday was a special day.

Sam: Those are little incidents of how thoughtful they were really to everybody.

Karen: Hanukah time? Were there presents?

Sam: Everybody got presents at Hanukah. Uncle Harry used to have us in there and everybody got presents. He would make sure of that. On Passover, we would have grape juice. We had a seder. The youngsters would have grape juice and I imagine the older kids must have had wine.

Karen: At Purim you had Hamantashan?

Sam: I don't remember Hamantashan. I guess we did.

Karen: But you dressed up (for Purim)? You celebrated all the holidays. You knew you were Jewish. Jewish background.

Sam: Oh, yes. Everybody knew they were Jewish.

Karen: What about Mardi Gras?

Sam: Mardi Gras we would on occasion and I think they did have a truck on occasion. Not the very youngsters. There were junior counselors, too. Kids who were in school studying Medicine. There was H. P. Marks, and Joe Stan and Rap Laws was a teacher at one of the girl's schools. Rap was a little older than they were. The girls had their counselors, too.

Karen: This is all year round?

Sam: Oh, yeah.

Karen: So you really had like big sisters and big brothers. Because that is how they acted.

Sam: Right. I remember on my 11th or 12th birthday. Joe Stan gave me a quarter and H. P. Marks gave me a quarter.

Karen: That was a lot of money too then.

Sam: Darryl Garden and I got on the streetcar, we went to the Saenger Theatre and then after the show we came back on the streetcar, so that's 14 cents for the transportation, 10 cents for the picture show, and a penny change. I don't know whether we spent the penny on popcorn or not but those are little things you remember. Rap Laws when he came back from Guatemala one year, he brought me a little antique clock. Rap liked antiques. It was like a mantle clock.

Karen: This is while you were living there.

Sam: Oh, yeah. I treasured that clock, until I don't know my father did something with it. It got kind of lost.

Karen: So you must have missed the home actually after you left because you got used to it.

Sam: Yeah.

Karen: You said the food was really different at home.

Sam: The only difference it wasn't, you know, well in the Home. we had regular good wholesome food.

Karen: Were you ever hungry and not fed?

Sam: No.

Karen: You always got fed?

Sam: Always enough to eat and enough to wear.

Karen: So if you wanted three helpings of something you could have it?

Sam: Well, nobody was ever hungry. There was always enough on

Sam: (Continued) the table.

Karen: Did you wear uniforms?

Sam: No. No. Regular clothes. Everybody had their own clothes. I imagine a lot of it was donated.

Karen: Did you ever shop for clothes?

Sam: I don't recall going shopping so much. If we needed something special we got it. I needed high top shoes. Dr. Hatch prescribed high top shoes for me I got high top shoes. They used to call me, "t-legged, toe-legged, bow-legged Sam." But, the shoes with the lace?

Karen: Orthopaedic shoes?

Sam: Orthopaedic shoes.

Karen: I had them too when I was a kid because I had very narrow feet.

Sam: And glasses. I remember glasses.

Karen: You had good medical care completely.

Sam: Oh, yeah. Excellent medicare. Dr. Debres. Henry Debres was the evidently the physician for the Home. In fact I run into his grandson every now and then. He's living in the city here.

Karen: Do you think that it was? It sounds very ideal the way you are talking about it.

Sam: It was ideal.

Karen: It sounds like utopia. You think it was connected, it was run by Jewish people?

Sam: Cause it was run by people who were concerned, I think. Who really liked what they were doing.

Karen: It sounds like there was nothing bad or nothing negative.

Sam: A couple of the counselors, I guess they were tough. Nobody really liked Aaron David Aronson. He was tough.

Karen: Is he still alive?

Sam: I don't know. I really lost contact with him.

Karen: We'll censor this part.

Sam: No. No. He was tough and I guess he just rubbed some of the kids the wrong way. But, he never hit anybody. He never was...

Karen: He just wasn't Mr. Friendly.

Sam: He wasn't Mr. Friendly. He had a convertible automobile. You know at that age we considered him an older person. I guess he might have been a young college student at that time.

Karen: Eighteen years old, nineteen years old?

Sam: Yeah, eighteen, nineteen years old. But, he was probably older than that.

Karen: At your age then that was ancient.

Sam: Yeah, that was ancient.

Karen: Now, it's young.

Sam: But all the memories are really very pleasant.

Karen: Did you go to camp at Bay St. Louis?

Sam: We all went to camp at Bay St. Louis.

Karen: How did you like that?

Sam: That was, that was fun. That's when Uncle Harry used to read to us. Les Miserables sits in my memory and then the Student Prince, the play we put on every year.

Karen: Could you read if you wanted? Was there an opportunity to go to a library and get books?

Sam: I imagine so, I don't remember.

Karen: There must not have been a lot of time. It sounds like you were pretty busy every minute.

Sam: But, we were always occupied.

Karen: Did you have to go to bed at a certain time?

Sam: I imagine so. If we listened to Little Orphan Annie and Jack Armstrong and played Russian Bank at a certain time I'm sure we went to bed at a certain time, too.

Karen: It would be utopia if you didn't have to go to bed. You said you had a big sister, so you didn't have a big brother?

Sam: No, not me. There might have been some.

Karen: So you went to Newman School?

Sam: I went to Newman till my father remarried, at which time I transferred over to St. Peters, and I imagine if he would have asked if I could continue Newman they would have let me do it. I don't think they would have denied it.

Karen: It was only the children from the home that went to Newman?

Sam: No. No. Newman was built initially for the children from the home as a manual training school and it evolved into a college preparatory school.

Karen: Now, it's probably one of the best in the city.

Sam: It was at that time, too. In fact, one of my teachers, her sons works with me at the bank up on the platform where I sit. Louis Banos went to Newman. The most prestigious people in the city really have a Newman background.

Karen: I know in my law class the best ones went to Newman.

Sam: Our paths are always crossing. Like somebody the other night who was a classmate of mine at Newman and I haven't seen him for 25 years.

Karen: Well, is there anything else you think we should put on the tape that stands out in your memory?

Sam: I don't know, just memories that keep coming back. I'm surely going to have a lot more.

Karen: We covered everything. Maybe even more.

Sam: I think this is where you gonna cull most of your information. Just from people thinking back and, I remember, or I can still recall when Lindberg first made his flight to Paris. We were in the yard and everytime a plane would pass by we would stick up our heads and wave and say, "Hey, Lindberg." But those are kids. I imagine everybody in the city was doing that.

Karen: There was a lot of comradery because of all the children being together.

Sam: There was, we had our little pony, I guess. I don't know whether he was at the home all the time. But, I recall riding a pony in the backyard. I recall falling off of that pony in the backyard.

Karen: You didn't break anything?

Sam: I didn't get hurt, no.

Karen: You really weren't lonely there because there was so many activities and people

Sam: No. There were a couple of bad boys. I can still see Uncle Harry grabbing somebody by the arm. I could see the ashes falling out of his pipe. He was fussing at him.

Karen: He spanked some of them, didn't he?

Sam: I don't think he ever really spanked anybody.

Karen: Then it was really utopia because most children do get spanked.

Lachemin
Lachemin
Sam: Occasionally. You know, I don't recall them. Now Mrs. Lachemin, her husband was the superintendent before Uncle Harry, then when he passed away, he passed away before I even came in the home. But Mrs. Lachemin a lot of people still know her. She passed away a few years ago. I guess, she was the director of the finances of the Home. But they were always around the because she was in the office all the time.

Karen: They were good guys, her sons?

Sam: Oh, yeah. There was Ed and I don't remember who the other one was.

Karen: Tell me this, when you went home and when you lived back with your father and his second wife, were you homesick for the

Sam: I'm sure I was. I was.

Karen: Did you say send me back I miss all the children? I miss the pony?

Sam: No. No. I was a docile-type person. No, I didn't mind that much.

Karen: So you were a perfect child. It sounds like.

Sam: Not perfect. No.

Karen: You didn't go through the rebellious stage.

Sam: No, we had a few rebels though. But I think looking back that 99%, even greater than 99%, of the people from the home all had grown into...

Karen: Fine individuals.

Sam: Fine individuals.

Karen: You mentioned baseball, did you have swimming and regular athletic events?

Sam: No, they built a pool in the backyard. A very shallow pool. Remember that pool in the back? It couldn't have been more than two feet high deep. We used to go to Audubon Park to go swimming.

Karen: Oh, that's nice.

Sam: And we would come home, we used to walk to Audubon Park. We would go swimming and walk home and we were hungry. Holy cow, were we hungry when we got back. (Chuckle) I remember that now that you asked about swimming. No, Audubon Park was a swimming And, of course, in Bay St. Louis we all went swimming in the Gulf.

Karen: What was your favorite part of everything at the Home?

Sam: I don't think there is any real favorite. You know. We just liked everybody.

Karen: You had a girlfriend?

Sam: No, I really didn't. I remember Darryl Garden. Darryl was a real conniver. We used to go visit the Plotkins. I imagine they had a store on Magazine Street because we knew when we went to the Plotkins that we would each get a nickel and we would each be able to get an ice cream cone on the way home. We must have been a little older then because we were allowed to walk that way. We used to walk to Prytania. That was my first picture show was at the Prytania.

Sam: The rest is just reminiscing I guess.

(Mrs. Gertrude Levitan entered into interview.)

Karen: I asked all of the questions, and I think we even covered some more.

Sam: I guess the rest is just reminiscing. I guess just talk as it comes to the mind. The food was -- getting back to the food -- we had Rosena in the kitchen. Rosena was the cook I think. Magnificent cook. (Chuckle)

Karen: Sounds like Italian.

Sam: No, she was a colored girl.

Karen: Oh.

Sam: Rosena. And there was a couple of others. Mrs. Kaiser was the dietician. That's right Sam Kaiser's wife. She was the dietician. Rosena was the cook. The food was good.

Karen: You had plenty of vegetables and healthy food?

Sam: I'm sure we did.

Karen: Wasn't kosher? It was Reform-run.

Sam: No. No. Nothing was Kosher, I don't know we ate traf so much. I really can't recall.

Karen: I guess you would remember if there was ham or bacon? Yes, because you said your father was Orthodox.

Sam: Yeah, well my mother was more than my father. Then Veanie and Mrs. Karen, who we call Veanie was the nurse. Well, before her was Dora Magolen was the nurse. But, she, I imagine she got married. She moved to Washington. And then Veanie, Mrs. Sam Cannon was the head nurse. I remember being in the infirmary for Chicken Pox and sticking the little metal something in the electrical receptical and blowing out every fuse in the building I guess.

Karen: Did you get punished for that?

Sam: No, I was too young to be punished.

Karen: Oh, that's good. Was there discipline for those children you said were rebellious?

Sam: There weren't that many rebellious kids. I don't want to mention them by name but there were one or two.

Gertrude: Why not? It would be interesting to see which of them have become staid judges?

Karen: Especially if they are still around in New Orleans. Are any of them in the city now that you know?

Sam: No. No.

Karen: Well, then we probably can mention them.

Sam: The big murals on the side I remember when they painted those, it was one of David and Goliath, and I remember now they were painted with the little square.

Karen: Did the children paint them?

Sam: No. No. They were painted by...I can't think of the man's name now. They were two big murals. Religious motif. One was David's slaying Goliath and I don't recall what the other one was. But, I remember when they put that big chandelier on the main entrance hall with the big yellow candlestick like things to hide the lights.

Karen: Did you get much affection? People putting arms around you, kissing and that kind of thing?

Sam: Oh, I was the sweetheart.

Karen: Oh, so you were the pet?

Sam: Mildred Garden, Mildred Tobias she is now, and Dolly Fruitgarden and the Redmond sisters. Judge Gertler, Sadie Gertler, wife was a Redmond. I was a sweetheart because I was so young I guess.

Gertrude: But other babies came in as you grew older?

Karen: You were the baby?

Sam: I imagine at that time I was the baby.

Karen: He is still the baby. I think that was interesting about why Sam celebrates July 13 for his birthday. That's interesting.

Gertrude: I remember asking him when our children were small. What happened when you cried? He said there was always someone there.

Sam: I never cried that much really. I only remember one incident where anybody ever hit me, and that was at school. I think it was David Barishen. I must have did something to aggravate him and he gave me a punch in the nose. That's the only time in my life I've ever seen stars. Aah, my cracked tooth in the front. He didn't do that, we were horsing around before supper. Bobby Steinberg and I, and I can still feel that tooth when I cracked it. We were horsing around and I fell over on my face and that tooth is still cracked today. (Chuckle) But, that hurt. It took me to this stage of the interview to remember that cracked tooth.

Gertrude: When did you start wearing glasses? In the home?

Sam: Yes, my glasses were prescribed by Dr. Blum, the eye doctor. He told me I should wear the glasses for reading and sewing only.

Karen: You did a lot of sewing?

Sam: Dr. Tiblier was the dentist. He would come a couple of times a year and look at our teeth. Dr. Debres was our physician. Oh, yeah, I remember. I remember I had to go to the hospital to have my tonsils removed. And, I remember it was a rainy day when I came home and they wrapped me in that yellow raincoat and carried me into the Home. I don't know who carried me.

Sam: Oh, Yeah. I remember I had to go to the hospital to have my tonsils removed. I remember it was a rainy day when I came home and they wrapped me in that yellow raincoat and carried me into the home. I don't know who carried me.

Karen: That was a pretty serious operation.

Sam: At that time, I guess perhaps tonsils weren't taken lightly.

Karen: Even now people die...

Sam: Older persons maybe...

(Portion of Gertrude and Karen's discussion omitted.)

Karen: Did you feel when you were having your tonsillectomy that people were concerned about you and visiting you?

Sam: Yes. I had my visitors and I remember the ice cream. Of course, they still serve ice cream when they take your tonsils out. It was done in Touro Infirmary. I had the best of medical care.

Karen: Once you went home you went back to the Children's Home now and then?

Sam: I would visit occasionally. I was kind of shy I guess. I didn't go back that often. I should have I guess.

Karen: The only reason you didn't go was the shyness?

Sam: Yes.

Gertrude: (Omitted.)

Karen: So you had to make new friends and start all over again

Sam: Yes, I had to start all over again. It was a whole different environment. From Temple Sinai to Communal Hebrew School was quite a change.

Karen: I should say.

Gertrude: (Omitted.)

Karen: (Omitted.)

Gertrude: What is your earliest recollection of going to the bathroom?

(Some of interview omitted.)

Sam: You don't want that on the tape. I do remember we used to bathe. There was a long trough with spigots maybe interspersed where I guess we would get up in the morning and stand there and brush our teeth at all. But I was young enough to be placed

Sam: (Continued) in that trough and one of them must have been leaking by the feet and they were washing my body at one end and I was burning at the other end. But I guess I was too scared to tell them what was going on but I remember crying then. And nobody knew what was wrong.

Karen: Did you have to wait in line to brush your teeth?

Sam: No, not really. That trough had spigots on both sides. So everybody had a place. No, there was no problem.

Gertrude: What about a bathtub?

Sam: No bathtubs, there were showers. As a youngster I don't know whether I took a bath or not. Only thing I remember is walking up and down that ---and they asked me what I wanted to be and I wanted to be a policeman.

Gertrude: Did you sit in a high chair?

Sam: I don't remember any high chairs.

Sam: We sat around a table with six or eight people.

(Some interview omitted.)

Sam: He was in college. H. P. Marks and Joe Stan were contemporaries. Irma Sodder was one of the matrons of the home. She was on the girl's side. She and Rae Sharpstein. Miss Rubin was the seamstress. She was the one who owned Sport the Collie.

Karen: You had a seamstress who altered clothing?

Sam: Oh, yes, she was constantly busy.

(Some of interview omitted.)

Karen: I think that we have a lot to be proud of. It sounds like it was just a beautiful home. I was really looking for one negative thing because I know every one from his childhood has some negative...

Sam: There really aren't any negative thoughts about it, darling. Because everybody liked everybody. We got along extremely well.

(Some of interview omitted.)

Karen: Did you feel envious of the children who had siblings?

Sam: No. We were all really one big family.

(Some of interview omitted.)

Karen: So you feel that your experiences growing up in the Home made you what you are today?

Sam: I'm sure it contributed a great deal to what I am. It provided me with, first of all, an education that I probably never would have gotten. It provided me with, I'm sure, an ability to get along with people. I seem to have a capacity for getting along with...

Karen: The Home taught you right from wrong, ethics?

Sam: Oh, yes.

Gertrude: Did anyone at the Home go wrong?

Sam: Nobody that I know of ever went to jail. I hate to bring up names. Those who know who they are will know. The pillars of the community came from the Home.

(Some interview omitted.)

Karen: If it weren't for the Depression then most of those people would have in the Home.

Sam: The Home really was formed in late 1800's. There was always a need for it. It was formed initially as a widows and orphans home. I'm sure there were a lot of widows there too. The Home was always supported by the community. Dr. J. W. Newman was President of the Board. His family, I think, founded the St. Charles Streetcar line.

Karen: You said there were organizations that came and visited?

Sam: Similar to what you have at Willow Wood now. We were assigned Big Sisters and Big Brothers on occasion. Of course, this goes back when people had more time to spend with people. People are more interested in welfare of their brother than they are today. Today there's a lot of Hooray for me, and the devil with you attitude.

Sam: We were never aware of financial problems at Home.

Sam: Those were good days. I don't regret them at all.