

**** ALUMNI INTERVIEW ****

HERBERT FRIEDMAN

November 14, 1984. Interview in the office with Mr. Herbert Friedman. Since he came into the Home when he was no more than three years old, Mr. Friedman had few recollections, but as he talked he seemed to remember more. He has no memory of his life before coming into the Home, though he now knows some of what happened to the family after his father died in Greenville when he was less than two years old. His mother had taken the money left to her and invested it in a rooming house, which she was unable to make a paying business, and she lost everything. Her sisters were actually supporting Mrs. Friedman and the three children when she realized that she had no recourse save to place the youngsters.

Mr. Friedman lived in the Infirmary for the first two years he was in the Home. Yet he could not remember the name of the nurse in charge of the Infirmary, though he did remember Veenie (Mrs. Anna Kamin) and her husband, Sam, mainly because they were the people he dealt with most during the summers at camp. He also recalled Bill Parker and Miss Packard, the dietician. He described Miss Packard as mean and recalled an episode when, to his remembrance, he had done something wrong and Miss Packard chased him with a ruler, and he ran into the bathroom and climbed up the pipes to the radiator which hung against the ceiling. Since he recalled that he was naked at the time, it may be that this was a dream rather than a real episode.

Unlike the older children, he had no recollections of Uncle Harry at all and does not know if he ever exchanged any words with him. His only recollection of any holidays was that at Passover the children had wine with their meal. He also recalled that at Chanukah, the older boys would fix a "Chanukah bush" for the little boys. This he recalled as a branch stuck in a pot, which was full of nuts.

The most vivid recollections were of camp at Bay St. Louis. Mr. Friedman recalled the excitement of packing the lockers and of the trip over on the train where they had two cars just for the kids from the Home. At first, when he was still under five, he lived in the "white house" with the girls, and later he was in the cabins with the other boys. He remembered that they had different chores, rotating, some of which were to sweep the cabin, to "KP the yard", to set the tables at meal times. Each morning the boys would arise very early, he thought around 5:00 a.m., and run a couple of miles down the beach with Sam Kamin, after which they would go skinny dipping in the Gulf before breakfast. He also recalled crabbing off the pier and having boiled crabs cooked outdoors afterwards.

Mr. Friedman was in the Home when it closed. The only thing he really remembers about Uncle Harry was going to his funeral. He said that when he came into the Home there were about 125 kids there; when he left there were closer to 25. He went home to his mother. That was not a good year for him as he was a "bad kid" and his mother was too busy with her business, a small dry-goods store, to be able to handle him. He recalled going to see his caseworker, Mr. Bronstein, at the Federation, and said he did not like him. After a year at home his mother and Mr. Bronstein decided that he should go to Bellefaire, referred to as "Cleveland."

Mr. Friedman had good recollections of Bellefaire. He said that there he finally learned discipline. He recalled that there were rules which one had to follow. The amount of time a child had to spend on his homework depended upon the grades he got; the better the grades the less time was required in preparation. He also recalled the punishments for infringements of rules: being campused, which meant not being able to go off campus to the movies; being cottaged, which meant one could only play in the cottage and could not go out to play, being roomed, and the worst punishment, being bedded. He also recalled that he developed a small business repairing bicycles and said that he always had spending money as a result. Mr. Friedman compared "Cleveland" favorably with the Home. At the Home, he was the youngest and the baby, and no one ever expected him to follow rules or punished him for anything. He thinks his troubles were mainly that he was spoiled in the Home. He was in Cleveland for about two years, after which he returned to his mother's home.

In relation to his siblings, Mr. Friedman said that he did not develop any close relationships with them during his days in the Home. He became closer to the boys in his own age group, three of whom are still his friends, and they get together at least three times a year to celebrate each other's birthdays. The friends are Philip Slipakoff and Gerson Lachoff.

Mr. Friedman spent a good deal of time talking about his post-placement career up to the present. He centers his life experiences around an automobile accident he was in when he was 21 years of age and believes that his life has been unsatisfactory to him since then because of the sequelae of the accident. From his description of his injuries and what he has since experienced, it is likely that he is correct in his assumption that he sustained some brain damage as a result of the accident. He now has a steady job, but he believes that he has not progressed as well as he ought (he is a G11 and should have long ago been promoted to G12 in the Corps of Engineers); his marriage did not work out; he is not satisfied with his current social life. He summed up his problems by saying that he had never had a "really good friend."