Memories of the Texture of Life, of Feelings, and People

Childhood

In those days the city would open up the hydrants so the kids could cool themselves off during the day. The sprinkler man would do that for us, too. This was on the main highways. They would sprinkle the side streets, too, but you didn’t dare sprinkle them too much because the streets weren’t paved. They were dirt streets, and after a heavy rain, if you walked through them you’d be ankle-deep in mud. An interesting sight on Sixth Avenue in those days was at dusk to see the man come with his long stick. It was a punk at the end of a stick to light the gaslights.

Ben Brochin

We played outside until they called us in. We had a big arc light on the corner of Washburn and Twelfth, and we’d play Run, Sheep, Run and Washington, Poke, and Lemonade. [On] Passover, we played nuts. . . . It’s a great game. You roll [hazel]nuts, just like marbles. If you hit the center one, then you take all the nuts back.

Naomi Kastenbaum

Walking

I can remember walking from my house all the way downtown and back, not necessarily because we had to, but we were used to walking. . . . I can remember going home from Talmud Torah on the 6:00- to 8:00 shift at night. Sometimes, we wouldn’t get home until 10:00 at night because we horded around all the way up. We would walk up one block and back two blocks, but we always had a lot of fun. The cold never really bothered us, and we survived quite handsomely.

Martin Ring

When I went to Grant [Elementary] School, there were Jewish people living on Humboldt and on Fremont and down around those areas, which eventually became the areas where the [Summer Field Housing] projects . . . were. There were Jewish people in the first buildings when the projects went up. There weren’t such clear neighborhoods in those days. We would walk downtown from where we lived.

Ivy Nudell

[I used to walk] from Eleventh and Sheridan to Sixteenth and Girard. It was quite a walk. Sometimes we were able to get a ride. But you know, when you walk to school you walk fast, especially in the winter. But when you walk home, you saunter.

Allen Greenstein

I [lived] on the east side of North Commons Park, which was a three-block square park. I remember, until I was in sixth grade, walking every morning, coming home every noon, walking back, and coming home again every single day through that park.

Maureen Beck

Social Life

A popular place for the people of the North Side to spend their recreation hour was Keegan’s Lake, which was later known as Glenwood Park, which is now known as Theodore Wirth Park. And every Sunday afternoon everybody would pack the picnic basket early in the morning and run over to Brochin’s and get their fifteen and twenty cents worth of salami . . . . They bought two pounds of corned beef for seventy cents and a couple of pounds of wiener for thirty-five cents.

Ben Brochin

My parents were very much involved in the Labor Zionist movement, particularly my father. Between the people in the movement and the two aunts and their cousins, of course, that was their social life. . . . Otherwise, there were numerous meetings that my father went to with the Labor Zionist people, and then they’d have banquets. I remember my mother, on a hot summer night, getting into her corset and sweating. . . . and having the fan blow on her while she was getting dressed to go to the banquet.

Then there were the picnics that they had. They were wonderful. Most people don’t know that’s how Israel was built—at these picnics that were fund-raisers. They would raffle off bricks, bricks for building Israel, symbolically. “Who will give a dollar for a brick?” The picnics
were at what was called Glenwood Park. . . . My mother and I and the picnic basket would take the streetcar there because I was a skinny little kid and couldn’t walk so far. . . . We brought our picnic lunches, but we would buy the pop and the ice cream and so forth. We would ride with the lunch and the rest of the family would walk to Glenwood Park.

ROZ BAKER

[My parents] joined the Workmen’s Circle because then they had some place to socialize. [It wasn’t] necessarily the ideology of socialism. . . . [I] would say they had 400 members. There were three branches. They were associated because of their own personal needs. . . . If they had a party, some people brought food; some didn’t bring food. But they all met, and they had a good time. . . .

I know that when I was about twelve, thirteen years old, every other Sunday, Holman, who peddled fruit, would hitch up his horse and we’d go out to Glenwood Lake . . . for the Sunday. That was the entertainment for the family. . . . Gradually, as the group became Americanized, the children dropped off and it disappeared.

SAM BELLMAN

My parents had a social group of people that they played cards with. I think they would go to other people’s houses for dinner, like once a month. The host would have dinner. Maybe they would play bridge or pinochle or gin rummy. Then I think my father belonged to a poker club where he would go once a week with friends. I know he went to these B’nai Brith meetings, which was either weekly or biweekly. My mother would go to these City of Hope meetings. My mother had four boys, and they didn’t have all the modern appliances. We only had one car. My mother never drove. I think just raising a family was very time-consuming.

ALLEN OLEISKY

Bar Mitzvahs

Nobody [from my family] came. Nobody! There were several other guys getting bar mitzvahed at the same time, so there were people there. But for me, my treat—I was working at the grocery store—was I got Milky Ways . . . . I bought two boxes of them, and my boss gave me the wholesale price on them . . . . I handed out one to each one of the kids. And near the end, I knew I was going to run out, so I took my little pocket knife, and I cut the last half of the ones in the box in half, and I had just enough to go around. That was it.

HARRY ROSENBAUM

My bar mitzvah was at Beth El. I [took lessons there] from a man named Mr. Turchick . . . . He would meet you at Beth El, and he would yell at you. He’d say, “Dummkopf!”—dumb-head. He would yell at you in Yiddish, and . . . we were scared of Mr. Turchick, so we kind of learned it. I remember Mike Pitman’s bar mitzvah was a couple of months before me, so he was a little ahead of me. He would say, “Don’t worry about it. This man just yells. He yelled at me, too, till you learn it.”

We had a bar mitzvah at Beth El. [We] had a lunchon for the whole congregation. They served potato salad and herring and kichel, which was some type of a hard roll, and wine. That was it. We didn’t have a big party or a dance or go to the country club or anything like that. I remember getting some gifts, but I think most of the money my father took and put it in a bank account. We didn’t have any special party like they have today. Most of my friends had it the same way.

ALLEN OLEISKY

Jewish Holidays

Most of our friends . . . were Jewish, and our families were probably quite alike. We’d all observe the holidays. In fact, I remember when I was in grade school, when it would be a Jewish holiday, there were so few non-Jewish kids in the school that they would combine the classes so they would have good-size classes. [We] used to stay out on all of the Jewish holidays: two days of Passover, two days on Sukkoth, two days on Shavuot.

MARTIN RING

The holidays were tremendously significant—Pesach, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Purim, Chanukah. [My father], in the operation of the Liberty [Theater], he used to have a large Chanukah party for all the kids from all the shuls. And they’d come and they’d fill up the six hundred seats, and they’d give them gifts. And it was a wonderful occasion.

MARTIN LEBEDOFF
I remember my synagogue days and all the High Holidays that I would go from one synagogue in North Minneapolis to the other. I would make the rounds because my aunts were at the Sharei Zedeck [synagogue], where the sermons were all in Yiddish... and to the Mikro Kodesh... I went to the Elwood [synagogue], where some other relatives were and the Beth-El. I just made the rounds. That's what we kids used to do.

MAUREEN BECK

We would go as a pack from synagogue to synagogue to where the parents were to kiss and greet the[m], and then we'd go on. Then we would usually end up at somebody's house and eat them out of house and home. I remember going to the Strausses, who were on the corner of Twelfth and Russell—Rivoli Strauss. Her mother baked wonderful things. Her parents were in the synagogue, and we'd eat everything.

When we would sit down to the Seder in my parents' home, my mother would always go and lower the window shades. This was a carry-over from Europe, where they didn't want the goyim (non-Jews) to know they were celebrating Passover.

ROZ BAKER

My mother's background was Orthodox, and she was observant. I have memories of her sending me to Brochin's store on Lyndale and Sixth at Pesach time with a coaster wagon, and I would bring home gallons of milk that was Peasachdikah (kosher for Passover) milk. And my mother used to take her silverware out in back of the house and wash it in ashes. And she'd bake challah every Friday and kept a very kosher home.

MARTIN LEBEDOFF

My father had a little room... and he used that as his Pesach store during the Passover season, so he wouldn't mix the chametz (not kosher for Passover) and the Pesach items. That was on the Lyndale side of the store area.

BEN BROCHIN

The holidays were a big thing. Passover... I still remember how [our maid Jenny] used to tie the cupboards with strings so you couldn't get at [the non-Pesach contents]. The old dishes... they'd bring... up from the basement. I hated our kitchen. It was a big kitchen. They had two great big pans. You washed the dishes in one and dried them in another...

Then you'd empty the water out... Jenny would wash the dishes, and we helped... Rabbi [David] Aronson used to talk about her in his sermons, sometimes. She wouldn't let us mix meat or milk. Yet she was an ardent Catholic.

NAOMI KASTENBAUM

At Passover my job was to go down to the basement and take a bunch of stickers and put them on the Pepsi bottles that we already had. [The stickers read,] "Peasachdikah Pepsi-Cola." I'm sure the stuff was not Passover-quality Pepsi-Cola, but, effectively, it was after we put the stickers on. I don't know where [my boss] got the little stickers. They assured everybody then that the rabbi had... inspected the manufacturer.

RONALD BEAUCHANE
Friday morning on the North Side you knew it was erev Shabbos, just as today in Israel you know that Friday noon it's erev Shabbos when you see the shops closing [and] people hurrying home to prepare for Shabbat with the fresh bread and flowers, etcetera. . . . I remember what Dr. George Gordon said: "Raiach ke ha'yuha'dut is as important as ruach ke ha'yuha'dut. The aroma or the odor of Judaism is as important as the spirit of Judaism. . . . because one Friday morning . . . as we were riding through the North Side streets, we literally could smell the fish cooking.

IDA SANDERS

My mother kept a very traditional . . . kosher in our home. She always observed the Sabbath. We always lit the candles on Friday night and said the blessings. We always had Passover. . . . We always took the days off from school [for] holidays, obviously.

My brother, as he became older, became very active at USY [United Synagogue Youth]. He made the football team at North High School as a starting fullback. Then they started playing games on Friday night, and he refused to play football on Friday night. So he quit the team. My parents supported him on that.

ALLEN OLEISKY

Shopping

I would walk out with my mother on Sixth Avenue or, later on, to Plymouth Avenue. . . . I would be along to help carry. It was something that my mother enjoyed tremendously because she could stop and chat with all the other women who were shopping. Later on, on Plymouth Avenue, I [also] remember the butcher shop that Shepsel [Roberts] had. That must have been after I was married, though. That was when I decided I really understood the Yiddish phrase Scher tzue zayn a Yid. (It's difficult to be a Jew.) Shopping before a holiday at the kosher butcher shop was really tough. . . . A mob scene, and women having to examine everything and wanting to touch things. It really was an unruly thing.

[For] the chickens, I was sent on my bike to Rabuntik's. Rabuntik was [the original name of] Shepsel Roberts's parents, who [killed and plucked] chickens in their backyard. For me, that was an awful experience. I couldn't stand the smell. I just couldn't tolerate it. I would take a handkerchief and put cologne on it and put that in my pocket. And then, while I was there, I would hold the handkerchief up to my nose.

ROZ BAKER

You knew it was a yom tov (religious holiday) because, the day before, everybody would be getting their fish, getting their meat, getting their vegetables. You exchanged pleasantries. You went into a place like Brochin's, and not only did you get your Passover supplies, you got recipes. My children knew the grocers and the meat man and the fish people and all of the other shops along Plymouth Avenue, and you did a tremendous amount of socializing there.

SHIRLEY ABEISON

Social Relations

Friendly

I [lived] in the Ascension Parish. So before I went to school, most of my friends were non-Jewish. I had one close friend named Phyllis Rose. . . . She lived on North Sixteenth Street. We played together. In fact—would you believe?—I went to confession with her on Saturday a couple of times. I wouldn't kneel, because that was a no-no. And she remembers going to Hebrew school with me down on Fremont.

MAUREEN BECK

There were three Gentile people on our block. [One of them] was a schoolteacher at Edison High School, Miss [Irma] Todd . . . she was a lovely woman. Someone once said to her . . ., "Irma, why do you live up there with all Jews? They weren't like you, or anything."

She said, "When Miriam Berman got married, I was the only neighbor invited to the wedding."

NAOMI KASTENBAUM

I remember once my sister . . . they were making candy, and they poured hot boiling syrup on her hand. She had third-degree burns and ran out of the house. The neighbors from all over came to help and took her to the hospital and fed the

Irma Todd, beloved North Side teacher, about 1930.
family while my folks were up to the hospital. She was very, very bad off for a couple weeks. Our neighborhood took care of us.

I used to wake up in the middle of the night and walk in my sleep. I'd go over to the next-door neighbor and knock on the door, and they'd take me in. [T]hen they'd go next door to tell my family.

**RONALD BEAUCHANE**

*Guarded*

Having gone to Grant [Elementary] School, we always thought that the kids who went to Willard were stuck up. I don't know that once we got to North [High School] we could differentiate very easily who was who. The more affluent people lived in the Homewood district. But . . . we had friends there. We visited in those neighborhoods without any problem.

**IRV NUDELL**

[When I was [living] on James and they talked about Homewood, I didn't know much because I was a young kid. But I knew that was an exclusive neighborhood. You knew, they kept the Jews out of there, too, for a long time. And then when [Jews] moved in, I knew everybody. I knew every family because we used to deliver meat to most of them. I knew who lived where, and if you dated a girl there, you always figured they had something more than what you had. But when I moved up to the neighborhood, there were a lot of nice people here, and we were all friendly. To me, the real [class] difference . . . was with South Minneapolis.

**ALLEN GREENSTEIN**

I think [there was a class structure]. I don't know that I could have articulated it in that way when I was younger. Of course [I knew who the rich Jews were]. They had the bigger cars. They had more cashmere sweaters. They were the ones who were going off on summer vacations.

**MAUREEN BECK**

It was kind of cute . . . The old Finnish grandmother didn't speak any English at all, and she really disliked, from what I could understand . . . living next door to Jews. But she baked this Finnish flat bread. Now, her grandchildren wanted what we called the "white death" bread from the grocery store. I tasted this flat bread that she made, and I loved it. So whenever she would bake the flat bread, she would tell her granddaughter Frannie, "Go get the little Jewish girl. She likes my bread."

**ROZ BAKER**

I always worked part time when I was a kid. One of my jobs for a long time was working at Strimling's Pharmacy [at Morgan and Plymouth]. I used to be able to sell the Jewish newspaper called the *Forward* . . . People would treat me differently when they found out that my name was Beauchane or that I wasn't Jewish. I think there was just a little bit more coolness. Then, I always felt kind of left out when they'd be speaking Yiddish among themselves, and I didn't know what was going on. But then, I felt that way amongst my family, too, when they were speaking French among themselves . . .

I was a minority kid among a minority . . . Especially when I went to the butcher shop, and I couldn't explain to the man well enough exactly what I wanted, and somebody would interpret for me. I felt like I was a kid in a foreign country sometimes.

**RONALD BEAUCHANE**

*... and Not So Friendly*

The first non-Jew I really knew—my father bought a house on the corner of Tenth and Queen in 1922—I was eleven years old . . . and I went to John Hay School. And my first day on the playground, a non-Jewish boy walked up to me and said, "We don't want any Jews at our school."

**MARTIN LEBEDOFF**

[I served in the State Legislature] from 1935 to 1939. The first [time I] won was [by] 311 votes. The second one was 120. The third time I ran, I got beat by 98 votes. That was out of about 22,000 to 23,000. [Governor Floyd B. Olson] carried the district by 22,000 votes. But for a Jew to be elected, it was a different thing . . . We made the [rounds of the] saloons the last night of reelection. Usually, we'd pass drinks and whatnot. I remember going in one, two, three. Emil and I were two pictures on one card. They'd cut off mine and say, "We don't want no goddamned Jew."

**SAM BELLMAN**

Only once do I remember being called "dirty Jew." It had to be before I was in sixth grade . . . on the street in front of my house. I don't remember who did it . . . Then, I do remember very distinctly my mother
telling me, "Don't talk with your hands. Don't gesticulate." ... I see them as trying to fade into the walls so that they would not be pointed out as being Jewish.

MAUREEN BECK

Feelings of Security

[We] just had this security. It was an insulation to the real world, maybe, but I think it was good. ... I never felt insecure. I knew about Judaism. And to this day, I have many non-Jewish friends. ... I'm comfortable with Jewish people, too, but I feel equally as comfortable with non-Jewish friends.

NAOMI KASTENBAUM

... and of Distance

[When I was in the tenth or eleventh grade], there started to be a separation, because I couldn't belong to the Sons of Herzl and I couldn't belong to the YMCA. They didn't have any Catholic organization, so I was kind of out by myself. ... Then I sometimes jokes would be ethnic Hebrew jokes, people calling each other meshugah, talking about the goyim and a Jew, and so on. I think that's probably when I really noticed a dichotomy developing. Until then, Donald Pink and Harold Swatez and Rod Cooperman and all sorts of Jewish people were my friends.

RONALD BEAUCHANE

I was with some friends who'd been to see a movie at the Homewood Theater on Plymouth and Newton, and I remember somebody ordered a corned beef sandwich and a malted milk, and I was so shocked. I didn't think anybody that I knew would do anything like that!

PACEY BEERS

I remember once Leo Gross said to us that even though he doesn't observe kashrut (dietary laws), if the community is sponsoring a function and if there's only one person in the community that observes kashrut, that function should be kosher. ... People themselves who observe these things have to be the ones that promote it and make it clear to the community why it's important.

Some people have said ... that we gave an image of Orthodox Jewry that maybe not all people understood. [You know, the] stereotype [of the] Orthodox Jew as a Hasid (a movement characterized by ecstatic prayer and charismatic leadership) with payas (sidelocks), or the man with the black hat and that sort of thing. ... We felt that as moderate Orthodox Jews, we were presenting an image to the community of what an Orthodox Jew is.

HELEN ZIFF

Memorable Characters

My dad [A. N. Bearman] was president of the synagogue, so naturally they'd bring the people home. ... When my father and mother went to hear Woodrow Wilson in 1919 speak on the League of Nations [and then] came home, my brother Pete was sitting on the top step ... waiting for them. [T]hey got out of the car, and he looked and he looked, and he said, "Where's the president?" He didn't know that you [could] go to a meeting and not bring the speaker home.
[A]ll of the people that came to Minneapolis—[Chaim] Weizmann and [Nahum] Sokolow, all the Zionists, [Vladimir] Jabotinsky—all were at our home for dinner, and then they would go to the lecture. Weizmann was in our house several times, including on my sister's sixteenth birthday. I remember him saying to my father . . ., "You don’t have to be meshugah to be a Zionist, but it sure helps."

On the way home, my mother said to [Weizmann], "Is there anything particular you would like?" And he said, "Marinier (marinated) herring and some pumpernickel bread." What house didn’t have marinier herring in it and pumpernickel bread? So that was no effort. But mother wanted to stop and get something, so she bought a fresh [bread], and I can see him sitting in the back of the car squeezing it. . . . At my sister's birthday my mother had a birthday cake, and I remember he kissed her . . . Chaim Weizmann kissed my sister! . . . I guess I looked kind of sad, so he kissed me, too.

Guitta Gordon

This little Mr. Kass was a giant when it came to teaching Hebrew, and he had a number of fascinating techniques. He had a closet, which was filled with toys, where each of the toys would represent something in his lessons. If he talked about a dog, . . . he would have little toys of dogs, or cats, or mice, or whatever it was that he was talking about in the classroom . . .

I first met Dr. [George] Gordon . . . the day I was born. He delivered me, as he had so many other children on the North Side. And before I knew him at the Talmud Torah, I had heard stories about this very special doctor, who, when he left my mother and father's home with a prescription, [would] hide some money—a dollar bill or whatever it would cost to pay for the prescription—because he knew my mother didn’t have any money . . .

Dr. George Gordon. Gordon cofounded the Minneapolis Talmud Torah, then became a physician. He served as the Talmud Torah's director from 1926 to 1941.

[When I studied with him, he] had a special way of interpreting Talmud and a big emphasis on what he called "shocial justice."

Dr. Samuel Schwartz

One of my buddies had an older brother that was working for the Combination. He said, "How would you like to make some extra money? I said, "Sure"—not "What?" but "Sure," He said, "When you're out delivering, deliver some packages for me." I said, "Great." He said, "Two bits apiece . . . right in the neighborhood." I did that for maybe three months or so. And then I said, "You know what? I’ve got some buddies, some friends, that would like some of this, too. I want a cut for it." So he said, "Sure, for you, it's a different price. You get the wholesale price." I did that for about six months.

Then we went over to Wisconsin once, and we were able to buy some stuff called Ever-Klear, which is 200-proof alcohol. We cut it so there was about 20 percent. Now, 200 proof is pure . . . Scotch will usually be 80 proof. So this is two and a half times as strong. So we cut it so that it was milder, and we found out that the young guys, my guy’s buddies, didn’t like it real strong. So we cut it down a little bit more. The more we cut it, the better it was. We used Glenwood Inglewood water.

There was a guy named Moshe that I had been buying booze from before. He was making it, but he would sell it to me to use, like a half a pint or a pint at a time. He told me how to make the caramel color by burning sugar. I could buy the scotch and bourbon flavors from him. He charged me a fortune, but it was worth it. I could sell it . . . I was just, maybe, fourteen by then.

The Combination was a combination of the Italians and the Irish and the Jews that controlled the illicit things in Minneapolis. They had whorehouses. They had the booze. And they had the gambling. Some of the people that I wouldn’t mention names of, [they] all have derivative names now. But in the old days, they had the old-fashioned names, the long Jewish names, [In the Combination] there were only a couple of Irish people that I knew of, and there was only one Italian and he was also in the fruit business—no Greeks . . . If you had a problem, you went to somebody in the Combination and said, "Hey, help me." If you were decent, you’d get help from them. The police, you never went to; that was out!

Harry Rosenbaum
Dorothy Brochin Wittcoff tells the story about when she graduated in social work that she went to work for, I think it was, Jewish Family and Children's Service or the precursor. And she came home from one of her first days at work, and her father asked her how it went. She said, "Pa, today, I was dealing with a prostitute." Of course, all the clients were Jewish. He said—I'll say it in Yiddish first, and then I'll translate it—"Narisske maidel, mir hobn mit azaynok. Foolish girl, we don't have that kind of people."

ROZ BAKER

Jack Haskovitz had a bar on Plymouth next to the Homewood Theater, and next to that was a billiard parlor. . . . I went there every once in a while, but I never knew what was going on. My grandparents and my mom used to say, "That's a place for thugs and ne'er-do-wells." A group, including somebody named Kid Cann, spent a lot of time there. When I was a kid—I think I was about twelve years old—somebody who had gotten in the way of the group was found shot to death in his car at the end of Plymouth Avenue, at Glenwood Park. That was the only time I remember anyone ever being hurt or anything from the time I was born till I came back from the Korean War. . . . It was a Jewish guy that got killed, and it was a Jewish guy that probably killed him . . . and it was a Jewish guy that led the group that was probably responsible. People just let it go by. It was something that didn't affect us because it was not part of our everyday life.

Another place that I was always warned about by my grandparents to stay away from was the bathhouse. We had a bathhouse on the corner of Plymouth and Logan. In the basement of the bathhouse there was a gambling den, and that was bad news. . . . The walls were all concrete, painted green. I remember it was dull and dingy, and no one was there at the time. But I saw the gambling tables and a bunch of cards piled up.

RONALD BEAUCHANE

Work

I must have been about eight years old [when I started working]. I had a big can, and I would rake in those pennies for the Jewish newspaper, and nickels and dimes. . . . [O]ne night Mr. Heilicher, my Hebrew teacher, walked into the store. He came in to get a herring. And he looks at me, and he says, "What are you doing in the store at this hour of the night?"

"Well, it's my share. I alternate with my older brother, and my sister Ida works also." . . . We all had duties. Some had to go down in the basement, where we had an earthen floor with big vats of pickles, and sauerkraut, and pickled watermelon, pickled crab apples, and whatnot, and fill up the big pails.

Another means of income for a lot of the young Jewish men was boxing. They were both amateur and professional. If you were an amateur, you got five dollars for a four-round bout. And a lot of times, these boxers would box their friends to earn the money. So naturally, they wouldn't box themselves up unless they were boxing a stranger. One time one would win, and the other time the next guy would win! But these same amateur boxers later turned professional, and they were very good. Some of them went the wrong way. In those days a fifty-dollar purse was an awful lot of money. They fought in the old Kenwood Armory. Mostly, the kids had older brothers who were boxers, and if we couldn't get any passes, we used to sneak in to watch the fights.

BEN BROCHIN

[My] grandfather was a middleman. My mother remembers his going out, picking up items. I think he . . . tried very hard to trade in usable items, because she remembers Sunday mornings when other traders would meet at the house, and they would deal. They would seal their deals with schnapps. . . . So it sounds like he was out hustling used furniture and that sort of thing pretty early and was turning it around without any location outside of his home.

EARL SCHWARTZ

My parents were relatively recently arrived immigrants. And what happens to the immigrants in that situation is that the parents sort of lose control . . . because they don't know the mores of the country as well their kids do. So [my father] did not press anything in terms of education and stuff like that. The work ethic you learned from observation. Everybody in my family worked and worked hard and was expected to do their best. There wasn't much talk about it.

IRV NUDELL

We had my Uncle Izzy, who was a bootlegger during the Depression. . . . My uncle owned a very famous speakeasy bar in Minneapolis called the Keystone, which was a well-known black bar on Olson Highway and Lyndale. I remember going there with my dad a lot. My dad seemed to
know a lot of characters. My dad himself had gotten in some trouble during Prohibition. My uncle and my dad were bringing in some liquor from Canada, and my uncle got caught, and actually, my dad got caught, too. He was put on probation. But my uncle was sent to prison in Leavenworth, Kansas.

ALLEN OLEISKY

[M]y father ran a garage [on Plymouth Avenue]. . . . In 1935 my mother opened a children's clothing store across the street, next door to Malcoff's. She claimed she couldn't find cute children's clothes, but I think the real reason was that we needed the money. In the beginning we lived behind the store. . . . [Later] her business was doing very well, and the garage was only moderately successful. They decided to remodel the whole garage and make a big store out of it, and the store moved across the street. I still remember the number: Cherry 4818.

My life was spent going back and forth from [our home at] 1601 Oliver to the store.

REVA ROSENBLUM

I put in seventy hours a week. I was up at a quarter to five some days, and I'd be at the packing houses six o'clock in the morning, picking up the [meat]. . . . And then when I got through work, I went to the St. Louis Park store and finished up there at six-thirty. So it was that way Monday through Thursday. Friday, I was done about two in the afternoon. Otherwise I'd never have had time to get a haircut or go to the bank! And Sunday, it was back to six until one or so. And Shabbos, thank God for that!

ALLEN GREENSTEIN

[W]hen I was thirteen, I worked first for the Lebedoffs at the Homewood Theater, answering the telephone on Saturday mornings, making popcorn, selling candy. And then I went to work for Bill Strimling in the drugstore. [T]hen I worked for Izzy Bialick and sold newspapers on the corner of Eighth and Hennepin, downtown. I used to ride my bike [there].

[When] I was still in high school . . . [I started at] Baker Shoe Store on Sixth and Nicollet . . . [and] I worked there pretty much all the way through college, with a break in between when I had a falling-out with the manager. And I worked in a battery factory for several weeks, lug-

ging battery acid for submarines. That was the dirtiest job I ever had, and I went back and begged my boss to give me the white-collar job back in the shoe store.

ROBERT LATZ

Decline of the Jewish North Side

Movement of People

The argument was that, when many of the young people were coming back after the Army, that there weren't lots available on the North Side for them to build houses. And, therefore, they were having to move into [St. Louis] Park. To a certain extent it may have been true, although there was some building that went on [on the North Side] even after the war. They had this idea that in St. Louis Park, the schools were better and more elite . . .

Gradually, the shuls began to move [too]. We were distressed that the movement was taking place, but as long as Kenesseth Israel remained on the North Side, we were content to stay there. But once the shul moved and so many of our neighbors and friends had begun to move, we just felt we had to make the move also . . .

We had a Negro family living next door to us, a very nice family. She worked for the telephone company, and he, I think, worked for J. Phillips Liquor Store . . . . When those riots happened on Plymouth Avenue—when there was a fire and Brochin's was attacked—he came over to us the next day and he said, "You don't have to worry. If anybody tries to bother you, I'll take care of them." . . . But there were incidents on the North Side, and people were beginning to get frightened, and one by one they were leaving.

HELEN ZIFF

[Al]s the Jews moved west, the black community moved into the . . . [old] Jewish neighborhood around the Talmud Torah and the Sumner Field [Housing] Project. And the movement then continued westward, very gradually, until you got into the '60s. There were no blacks living, for example, on Knox, Logan, Morgan, or Newton when I lived here. When Carolyn and I were married and I [was elected to the State] Legislature, at that time, which was in the late '50s, there were already black people
Decline of Schools

In the early 1960s, the newspapers carried accounts, in the spring, of gangs that preyed on students at Lincoln Junior High—they didn’t specify Jewish students—taking their lunch money from them, beating them up if they protested, and so forth. . . . Between [one] spring and the next fall, those young couples who had said they were going to stay on the North Side picked up and moved. Their children were exposed. That marked the rapid downturn of the Jewish community.

I went with my wife to talk to the principal of Lincoln [Junior High School]. The principal told me, “You know the school has changed. It is no longer academically oriented. We have different kinds of students, and the whole school has changed its emphasis.” Which signaled to me that my kids were not going to get an education there. My two younger [kids] were shifted to Torah Academy. The school system was not viable. . . . There were not enough homes on the North Side for young couples who married and came back from the war—small homes. They shifted, mainly, to St. Louis Park. The community had begun a gradual drop in numbers. But many people were devoted to the older Jewish neighborhood. That [school situation] changed it.

RABBI KASSEL ABELEN

Joel was leaving [Lincoln] Junior High and . . . going to North High. At junior high, they had a very progressive principal who had set up an accelerated class in the seventh grade. There happened to be, maybe, a dozen or more Jewish students in this class. Joel was in that class. They were giving them an accelerated program. They gave them geometry earlier, and they started them with languages, which they hadn’t been doing. And so forth. So when they finished ninth grade and they were going up to North, some of us parents had a meeting with the principal [and the assistant principal] at North High to request that they continue this accelerated program.

North High prided itself on the fact that it was very democratic. It mixed up everybody, and they did have a mix of minorities. They had, from the North Side Jewish population, a more or less middle-class, upper middle-class [group]. Then they had a percentage from the black community, and then they had that upper North Side, which was the blue-collar, white, Christian groups. . . . We’re meeting, and we were all Jewish parents that had come to see the principal. They [told us they] can’t make homogeneous groups. They insist on being democratically
organized. We kept saying, “Look, these kids have had this accelerated program. It's a shame not to go ahead with it.” The assistant principal turns to us and he says, “The trouble with you Jewish parents is that you're always pushing your kids.” They wouldn't listen to us.

HELEN ZIPF

Beth El Synagogue’s Plans to Move

In 1957, 1958, when I came [back to Beth El from another pulpit], we began dreaming . . . of an activities building, which would serve the young couples who had moved to [St. Louis] Park. Our vision, at that point, was that we bought enough land to transplant the entire synagogue [from the North Side]. We placed the building on the lot in a way that could be expanded, as actually did happen. Then we said we would stay on the North Side for maybe twenty years more, but we would shift our preschool and our youth activities [to the St. Louis Park activities building]. And, eventually, we established a minyan here that I ran for many years. I think it would have gone on that way until [July] 1967, when the riots came, and opposite my home in [Farwell] Park, the National Guard encamped. Brochin’s was burned out, and the Jewish stores were gone. That was the end. There was no saving of the North Side. Until then, even though the young couples had left, there was no push to move the institutions from the North Side. But with the riots, Jews no longer felt safe coming to the neighborhood.

RABBI KASSEL ABELOS

I remember some of the arguments and the soul-searching that we did before [Beth El] moved from Penn Avenue to our present location . . . [W]e first built the activities building because so many of our young people were moving out to the suburbs, and we wanted to make it more convenient for them for Sunday school . . . When the time came, there were, of course, many people who were still opposed to the move and thought we ought to stay on the North Side. I remember particularly the moving and controversial meeting that was held where the vote was taken. This was, of course, a very important time for us because the whole future of the synagogue, we felt, depended on what decision was made that night. And the decision to move was made that very evening. I think we lost very few members . . . and I think the years proved us to be correct.

I remember [that] last service held at Beth El. [A]t the end of services, [I left] immediately because I couldn’t stand the thought of saying goodbye. It was a regular Shabbat service, but everybody knew. There may have been some special prayer [, but I'm not sure]. I think I was crying so hard during the service that I don’t remember much about it.

SHIRLEY ABELOS

The July 1967 Fires and Their Aftermath

[W]e got the call from Helen Toretsky. [She and her husband] owned the little grocery store on James or Irving and Plymouth, and they lived upstairs . . . [S]he called in a panic at about two o’clock in the morning saying, “My God everything is burning around me! Bob, can you do anything to help us?” . . . I just felt that I had a responsibility to go see if there was something I could do to keep a lid on the stuff. Carolyn didn’t want me to go because there was a matter of physical safety. But I got up, and I went down to Plymouth Avenue, and I ran into Larry Harris. Larry was a caseworker for the Wells Memorial House, down on Glenwood Avenue, and had worked with [many black] folks . . . And Larry and I went together down Plymouth Avenue . . . but by that time the police were there and the fire engines, and it was just a mess.

ROBERT LATZ
I'm home, it's one o'clock in the morning, and the phone rings. And it's Hymie Pesis, the guy who works for me. And he says, "Hey, they're burning Plymouth Avenue. Are you coming down?" So I get in my car, and I get over there on Penn and Plymouth, and the cops wouldn't let me through. But I said, "That's my building over there," and they let me through, down close to the fire. But... they didn't burn us out, so we stayed in business. We had smoke damage, but that was all.

**Allen Greenstein**

Following 1967, there was the setting up of the Urban Coalition [which] involved the leadership of the major industrial corporations, the leadership of the black community, some of the political leaders. And I was kind of the representative Jew who served on the executive committee. I was there for many years, until I went on my sabbatical in 1972... We dealt with it, and we had all kinds of bitter attacks by the blacks on "the Rothschilds of the North Side." They never said, "the Jews." It was "the Rothschilds." Then they were talking, "Every revolution has to have its bloodshed." I remember responding, "But you're talking about my blood, and I'm not going to shed it." So there were bitter exacerbated feelings that grew and were never bridged between the Jews of the North Side and the blacks...

Let me say that the relationship to the top of the community with the Cecil Newmans and people [like him] was cordial, with a sense of sharing a common problem... I remember meeting many times at The Way [a community center that served the North Side black population]. The meetings themselves were angry meetings. There's a difference between your top leadership and your street leadership that we dealt with; and they were appealing to their own constituency, and so [had] nothing to gain from cultivating the Jews or stores they burned... I did some real shouting. I was not a patsy... but I wasn't their image of Mr. Moneybags [either]. It was strange, but when we weren't talking at each other at meetings, but sitting and talking, we got on fine. We were both representing constituencies at meetings, and you have a different voice and different arguments to make...

They were pouring out rhetoric... But the rhetoric was inflammatory, and we were the people on the spot. Even if we weren't the real target, we were on the spot. There was a need to distinguish between their resentment of Wall Street and the Rothschilds of the world and the bankers who were doing whatever they were doing and the Jewish neighbor next door. The others, whoever they meant, were unreachable. When they burned stores, they didn't go down to Dayton's and burn it: they burned Brochin's and Gold's and the others.

**Rabbi Kassel Abelson**

National Guardsmen patrolling Plymouth Avenue, July 1967.

Plymouth Avenue in the aftermath of racial violence, July 1967.
Last Remnants of the Jewish North Side

Teen Life

I and some friends were chased by a group of black kids and also saved by another group of black kids, which is an integral part of the story. There were isolated incidents of intimidation. But it is interesting that that became much less common, and there were no serious examples of it that I can think by the time I got to North [High School in 1968]. I would guess that in the school as a whole, there were maybe eight Jewish kids by the time I graduated . . . maybe ten . . . I think I and my Jewish friends were kind of proud to be on the North Side. We thought of ourselves as a little tougher, a little more streetwise—sneered at our suburban counterparts. I don’t know if we saw ourselves as heirs to any history. The group of kids that I was closest to had a very strong Jewish flavor. Even the kids who weren’t Jewish had a very strong Jewish flavor about them . . .

We had a surprise party in our house [once] when I was about fourteen for an African-American friend. His family came and our classmates. We had a friend whose mother was Jewish and father was African American. He was a good friend who spent a lot of time in our house. There were white non-Jewish kids who were close friends. I think . . . if I were to say what set my parents at ease about this, what made the whole process relatively comfortable, was that the circle of friends that I moved in was dominated by behaviors and expectations and language and a mood, a tone, which was Jewish. That was a plus, I think, in the case of at least of some of my non-Jewish friends in the eyes of their parents, who were quite pleased to have their children moving in a Jewish-dominated group.

From 1971 through about 1976, almost till the time I moved out of my parents’ house, every Friday night, my friends knew where they could find me. I would be home. For that reason, they came to our house week after week and brought guitars, and we cracked a few beers and sang for hours and hours and hours, and then we’d schmooze. In this group, there were two or three Jews occasionally, two or three or four white non-Jews, and occasionally African Americans. The whole thing revolved around the fact that it was Shabbat and so, on the one hand, the parents of the kids who were coming knew exactly where their kids were and what they were doing. My mother, on the other hand, couldn’t have asked for more, to know that every Friday night I was with my friends and they were in her house. She was willing to put up with terrible racket. It was just very warm and haimish (homey). When my father came home, if we were still singing, we’d go downstairs and argue politics with him. That aspect of the dynamic among my friends was stabilizing and comforting, I think, to Jews and non-Jews alike. It provided a certain security and stability.

EARL SCHWARTZ

North Side Minyan

In 1972 Richard [Woldorsky] told me about this neat little minyan that was meeting on the North Side in a person’s house, and would I like to check it out. So we went one Shabbat morning, and I ended up being at the North Side minyan off and on for the next ten years.

It was in the basement of a house on Tenth and Thomas. The name of the family was Shpayer. . . . They were an older couple who had had their basement very modestly remodeled to allow for davening (praying) there. It was about fifteen feet long by about fifteen or twenty feet wide but divided down the middle, I think originally, between a very small recreation room and a very small laundry room. The wall that divided those two areas had had the top of it cut out so that it could serve as a mechitza (physical barrier separating the sexes), and people on the other side could see across that cutout. It was small—a very simple, portable Aron Kodesh (ark holding the Torah), Sefer Torah (Torah scroll), various and sundry chairs, a couple of shenters . . . . A shenter is like a . . . personalized davening podium . . . . [There was] a little table in the back for a little kiddush (refreshment after services) and a davening table. That was pretty much it and odds and ends of kippot, talisim, sedarim, chumashim (scullcaps, prayer shawls, prayer books, and Pentateuchs) . . .

After a while, Richard disappeared, and I was drafted . . . One was that they knew where to find me, and if they needed a minyan, they weren’t shy to check on me Friday afternoon and make sure that I could come, if I was at my parents’ house over the weekend. The second was that there was Mr. Chemrinow, who lived around the corner from me . . . [who] had lost his license because of erratic driving, I believe, and needed somebody to drive with him . . . He couldn’t walk. He had heart trouble . . . I also could daven a little bit, which made me a little more valuable to the minyan. But really, they needed warm bodies, whoever they could get. Especially in the winter, a few people would disappear.
This was the last vestige of Keneseth Israel, which was the last shul to have a building on the North Side. . . . Certainly after Tifereth B'nai Jacob merged with B'nai Abraham, the North Side minyan was all that was left . . . 

When I first started attending the minyan . . . the most prominent members were Mr. Leon Fishhaut, known as Reverend Fishhaut, who was the ba'al t'fillah (service leader). . . . He might have had some delegated responsibility from Keneseth Israel, or it might have been self-imposed; I'm not sure. There was the Friedman family that was in the oil-recycling business. Mr. Friedman, his children, and his father, who was this very distinguished elder, lived a few blocks away. They lived in a duplex: the younger Friedmans down below and the older Friedmans up above, I believe. I'm quite sure they could have—and would have liked to—have left the North Side and did shortly after Mr. Friedman, the elder, died. . . . There was Mr. Idolkopf, who was a man in his fifties, I believe, who nevertheless was always called up to the Torah as chasen (bridegroom) Idolkopf because he was still available. There was Mr. Straucher, who was a survivor, who lived in a house on Broadway. . . . He was kind of a volatile fellow. There was Velvl Green, who used to walk to the minyan from his home in Golden Valley, about a mile- to two-mile walk, most often with family members and quite often with [college] students that he brought home for the weekend. This was in all sorts of weather and all sorts of students with all kinds of Jewish backgrounds.

There was Mr. Bergazon, who . . . was the shammes (sexton) of the shul. And he, once on a memorable occasion, got into a fistfight with Mr. Fishhaut . . . about what was the proper haftarah for that particular Shabbat. It was unbelievable. At one point, it looked like it was going to be resolved. Rabbi [Milton] Kopstein occasionally attended this minyan because he lived just on the other side of North Minneapolis, in Golden Valley. When the issue was turned over to Rabbi Kopstein to adjudicate, Mr. Bergazon had a calendar (listing haftarah readings for each Saturday), which he gave to Rabbi Kopstein as evidence. Rabbi Kopstein was about to give his ruling when Mr. Fishhaut ripped the calendar away . . ., insisting that Rabbi Kopstein didn't have to give a decision because, obviously, he knew what the proper haftarah was. This was reignited when Mr. Bergazon closed the Aron a little too quickly during “Etz Chaim” (song sung as the ark is being closed) [and] was reignited again during kiddush . . .

There was Mrs. Pichey. . . . who came on yontif (religious holidays). . . . She was quite old but would walk from about Fourteenth or Fifteenth

and Knox—quite a ways. She would bring a hot kugel on yontif. There was Mr. Shpayher's wife, who was ill through much of this period but who would also come down, and Velvl's daughters, who would come to shul as well.

There was Mr. [X], who lived in the projects. [He] was a shoemaker, I believe. He had an alcohol problem and would sometimes come to the minyan already having had something to drink. It was somewhat of an issue in the minyan as to whether he would be allowed to daven, because he was a ba'al t'fillah and loved to daven. But the halakha (Jewish law) doesn't allow inebriated people to daven publicly. I remember one occasion when he was not allowed to daven, and he stomped off to the Homewood Park to sulk. I learned words from Mr. [X] about parts of the anatomy and what people should do themselves to those parts of the anatomy that I had never heard before. . . . There was Ike . . . I don't remember his last name now. Ike was this man who also, I think, lived down by the projects but not in them. He had a long silvery ponytail. I think he had been a bit of a bohemian for quite a while [and] found a home in the minyan, from the mid-1970s on.

The kibbutzim were extremely humble. Once in a while, there was a beer, a little wine, a little kichel (sweet dry biscuits). Unless it was the yontif, and then there might be something warm. . . . On the other hand, it was so devoid of pretense that it was an absolutely unique davening experience. There was simply no one to pretend to. There was no audience. There was no gallery. You just were there, and that was very, very valuable. That . . . and knowing that if you didn't come, they knew it, and they needed you.

Eventually, the minyan ended up on Nineteenth and Vincent, in Joe Weitz's apartment building. I believe Mr. Shpayher moved in with his daughter in St. Louis Park. When they moved, the minyan moved to a little tiny storeroom of an apartment building on the northeast corner of Vincent and Golden Valley Road, half a block from my parents' home. That was its final home. It was there until 1982, I believe. . . .

There was one very sweet occasion. The minyan had finished davening, and we were coming upstairs. The stairs let out to the backyard of this house. Immediately to the right, there was a wedding going on of an African-American couple. As the minyan was breaking up, these Jews of all stripes just flowed right into this wedding. There was no exit. You were immediately in the wedding. The couple happened to be people that I knew. The wonderful thing was that, what could you do? You wished mazel tov . . . . The wedding stopped, and they came over. Preparations stopped, and it was just a moment of great human sympathy. A wedding
is a wedding. If there had been an escape route, I would guess that people would have taken it. But fortune did not allow it, and there was this meeting of human beings over the fence.

EARL SCHWARTZ

Reflections on the North Side’s Legacy

My kids never experienced the North Side, and I am sorry for that. It was a wonderful community to grow up in because it was a community. There are very few communities that were as cohesive, even though Jews fight all the time. The sense was that everybody cared about everybody else and that people were aware. You knew that people were watching you, and you had to behave in a certain way because it was expected.

IRV NUDELL

I think it was the whole milieu of the North Side. I definitely think that left an impression on me, the fact that we were all one community. It was instilled in us from the time we were kids that we were responsible for one another. As I got older, I realized what it meant more. I also remember when we were kids that we had to be better than other people. . . . [My] dad used to tell us that as Jews, we had to be better. We had to excel in school. We had to take piano lessons and all of that, and also that we had to have integrity. That was drilled into us. As I say, we were left a wonderful legacy.

NAOMI KASTENBAUM

It was such a nice neighborhood. First of all, you knew practically all your neighbors, and the children knew everybody, and they could comfortably walk to school and walk to Talmud Torah and not have any fears. When there was a Jewish holiday, with all the shuls in the neighborhood, you knew that it was a holiday because you saw people walking to and from shul. Even people that maybe weren’t so observant, nevertheless, were walking. John Hay [Elementary School] couldn’t conduct classes not only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur but even on Sukkoth and Pesach. The children stayed out both days.

HELEN ZIFF

Well, we’ve lost something, but on the other hand, we’re much healthier, psychologically and socially, than we used to be. When we were isolated, we really didn’t feel comfortable in non-Jewish environments.

Pacey Beers

I never thought in terms of “what ifs.” I would say that if I were as politically informed then as I am now, I might look at what was happening in the schools and try to apply pressure through the board of education. I would have looked at real estate and banks and seen what was happening. That’s a sophistication that grew up after 1967. The die was cast already by then, and that’s when the whole thing changed, when the element of fear and panic hit the Jewish community, and the game was over. It was gone, and we were then looking not toward saving the North Side but toward relocating.

Rabbi Kassel Arelson

I think there are a few factors [destabilizing the neighborhood] that came into play before the 1960s. One is that the G.I. experience was terrifically disruptive and had a profound impact everywhere on the attitude of Jewish men towards the traditional world they had left behind. In addition . . . synagogues in North Minneapolis were relatively weak, especially the Orthodox synagogues, as compared with, say, the Talmud Torah as
a civic institution. The rapid decline of genuine Orthodoxy, and the fact that Orthodoxy became, by and large, a missionary presence in North Minneapolis pretty early—something that had to be constantly replenished from the outside—meant that... the desperate need to establish walking communities really wasn't an important part of Jewish life on the North Side, certainly after the war. There wasn't a strong rabbinic presence. I mean, there were prominent figures. But in the end, I think they were weak spokespeople for community and were much more accomplices or facilitators of comfort than challengers to community.

There was this huge upward mobility, an enormous influx of wealth and expectation of wealth and the allure of broader horizons. The flip side of it is class divisions. The North Side was, by no means, the homogenized Jewish community. I remember when I spoke at Adath Jeshurun [synagogue] a couple years ago about this, I was taken to task by one person who said, "It wasn't true. It wasn't true. There were no class divisions." Finally, I said, "What did your parents do for a living." She said, "My father was a lawyer."

Then there was the rise of [Hubert H.] Humphrey liberalism, which made the possibility of living outside of the Jewish womb all the more enticing. It wasn't quite so frightening. It was still a bit of an effort. It had its challenges, but it wasn't as stark a choice as would have confronted somebody before the war.

I think that, perhaps, the distinctly Jewish dimension of life on the North Side is sometimes overestimated and remembered in inaccurate or distorted ways. But what one can say about life on the North Side was that the density of the Jewish population, the fact that it was an urban setting, that people lived in a culture of walking and sidewalks and public gathering spaces, has as much to do with fond memories as Jewish life, [and] if not as much, at least a significant role to play in the way people remember the place. That's perhaps more to the credit of unknown civil engineers and the like [than] it is to any great spiritual richness...

It would have taken enormous presence of mind and courage, in the face of the fears and misgivings that people had about the place after 1967, to say, "This is where we live, and we're going to make it work here!" But it could have been done. It was done in other places [in the country]. There is the charge one hears of active blockbusting by real estate [agents] and encouragement of those fears. I suppose an outstanding leadership could have said, "No!" But it really did not happen.

EARL SCHWARTZ

When I was out playing with the guys on Plymouth Avenue, we were all Plymouth Avenue kids. Our families' cultures had very little, if anything, to do with anything. Then we went home, and Harold [Swatek] lived in a kosher home, and I lived in a French-Canadian home, and our food would be different. My grandfather and grandmother, uncles, would be speaking French. His would be speaking Yiddish. But then we walked outside, and we were in our own milieu. I think you can maintain the culture, but it depends upon the family, not on the community. I think that religious organizations have always served to help the families maintain their identity—the French church, the synagogue, whatever. I don't think in my youth that they were as divisive as a lot of organizations are now...

[There was a lot of push on the part of Jewish families, more so than the non-Jewish families, to overcome an economic impasse by education. The parents pushed and got their kids educated, and the kids did the same to their kids. Whereas, in my family, that had never been the case. I was supposed to be a truck driver because my dad was a truck driver.
Everyone's a winner! Left to right: Buddy Shapiro, Bucky Berg, and Phil Levin showing off trophies on Plymouth Avenue, 1933.

... I think that [push] just carried on, and I think that affected me a whole lot. I think without the [neighboring] Japanese family and my Jewish friends, I probably would have been a truck driver.

I think a lot of times a Jewish audience of today, thinking about the Jewish neighborhood of then, forget how important their attitudes toward life and advancement were to the non-Jews in the neighborhood as well as to themselves. I think they fail to take credit for that. I think it certainly is important that they do—and how much they added to the diversity and the whole richness of the community. We had a little bit of everything in our community, and it really made it an interesting one. You could never get bored in our neighborhood... I keep thinking of growing up on the North Side in the 1930s and 1940s as being a rich cultural advantage, really.

RONALD BEAUCHANE

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