

Transcript of Interview with Norman and Nancy Karp
Small Town Jewish History Project
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Pre-interview Notes:

Norman Karp (NOK) and Nancy Karp (NAK) were the interviewees.

Transcription:

Eric Lidji: This is the Small Towns Project. Today is April 8, 2015. I'm Eric Lidji and I'm here with Norman Karp and Nancy Karp, and we're going to talk a little bit about Kittanning. So Norman, if you would start by telling me, to the best of your knowledge, how your family got to Kittanning.

Norman Karp: Well, let's see, I'm gonna start a little earlier than Kittanning. My father, Reuben, had worked alongside his father, David, my grandfather, along with his brother Elchan Karp in the town of Barnesboro, Pennsylvania. In 1938 I was three years old, my grandfather died, he was age forty-nine, and my father and uncle were then partners in that store in Barnesboro, and I think they decided their lives would be better separated. Maybe the store couldn't support the two of them, I don't know. And my father came to Kittanning which must have looked like a very promising community at the time. So in 1939, I think it's September, I think it's in the fall that he opened the jewelry store in Kittanning, Pennsylvania.

EL: And it says in the notes here that there's an interesting story about how he started the store. It looks like he had, why don't you tell it?

NOK: As I understood it, when he came to Kittanning, or at least, I don't know how the separation of finances was arranged between Elchan and Reuben but Reuben had three hundred dollars' worth of scrap gold left over from jewelry-making processes. He had three hundred dollars and as I understood a great credit rating something that he was always very proud of and careful with so he would open this store with the wholesalers' money, like wholesalers in Pittsburgh or Bulova Company would finance stores.

EL: And what was the name of the store?

NOK: Karp's Jewelry Store in Kittanning, Pennsylvania. Or, I think the sign above the store said Karp's Credit Jewelers, because at the time in the 1930s, in the mid-1930s, started the credit jewelry, the method where a dollar down, a dollar a week kind of thing. Kappel's in Pittsburgh is a notable example of that and Wilkin's in Pittsburgh. And Karp's was a much smaller type of that store using credit, rather than being cash store where the richer people of the community would go.

EL: Was your father married when he came to Kittanning?

NOK: Yes, yes I was three years old.

EL: Okay, so how many children were there?

NOK: Three, Reuben and his wife Florence, my parents, had three children, myself, Diane called Danny, and Elissa. About three years between us, each of us.

EL: What are your earliest memories of Kittanning?

NOK: Probably walking downtown with my mother and she would stop to talk to people and I would stand there dumbly as a small child while she completed her conversation.

Nancy Karp: Where did you live? Excuse me for... where did you live first in Kittanning?

NOK: The first house in Kittanning was 313, same number as the Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck's house. 313 Ridge Avenue in Applewold, a borough of Kittanning.

NAK: On the river.

NOK: In a very small house on a back street and we lived there I'm not sure how long, couldn't have been too long, and moved to a house in West Kittanning, 308 Bluff Street.

NAK: That's where you lived when I came into your life.

NOK: And then... I'm trying to remember the sequence, back to Applewold in a nicer house, all rented houses. A nicer house on Allegheny Avenue, the yellow brick house. And then my dad bought the house in West Kittanning, and the sequence is something like that.

EL: He bought the house on Bluff Street.

NOK: On Bluff Street in West Kittanning which overlooked the town. It was a frame house and not a very fancy house but a big old, it was a farm house at one time when that was a farm.

EL: How far was it from the store?

NOK: About a mile from the store, but up a big hill. West Kittanning overlooks the town of Kittanning.

EL: Would he walk to work, or drive?

NOK: No, I'm not aware of him ever walking to work, he always drove.

EL: Drove a car.

NOK: Even from Allegheny Avenue, even from the Applewold houses as far as I know he always drove even though it was less than a half a mile.

EL: Do you remember the car?

NOK: 1939 Buick.

EL: So a new, a relatively new car.

NOK: It would have been.

EL: What are your memories of the store? What was the layout?

NOK: Well the store was thirteen feet wide, I don't know how deep it was, I'm going to guess thirty, forty feet deep. It had a basement, had an upstairs. It was on the side street, it was 107 South Jefferson Street.

EL: Is the building still there?

NOK: The building is still there. There was two doors off of the main street. It always surprised me whenever I was in school that we had that store until, we were in that store from 1939 to 1966. Do you want to me to get ahead of things?

EL: You can follow the train of thought, yeah.

NOK: In 1966...

NAK: I thought you were at the corner of...

NOK: Right.

NAK: ...of, you moved before 1966.

NOK: In 1966 the drugstore that had been on the corner, Broadhead's Drugstore, and it had been there since the early, early 1900s, went out of business and we moved from 107 around the corner, from 107 South Jefferson Street, we moved to the corner store in 1966, which was the main corner of the town. I eventually, when my dad died, I bought the building. But he never would buy the building.

EL: So tell me more about this store, were there cases along the perimeter, glass cases, what did it look like on the inside?

NOK: The original store?

EL: Yeah.

NOK: Okay. So it had wall cases down left side and right side, and they were about approximately twenty inches deep with sliding glass doors and cupboards below. And then there was the floor cases which were six feet long, the wall cases were also six feet long each. But the floor cases would have been, I don't know what you call it...

NAK: Waist high? Chest high?

NOK: You know, waist high. And there were maybe three or four shelves in each.

NAK: Question. Was this the store on Jefferson Street?

NOK: Yeah, we're talking Jefferson Street. Okay so down each side were wall cases and then in front of them was a row of floor cases. Clerks were behind. There wasn't much space, the whole store that would only leave maybe eight feet from one side to the other with the cases, so it wasn't really very wide. Back in there was a safe, big six foot tall safe. And one workbench to the back on the right side looking in and the other work-bench was in a back room on the left side.

EL: Does that mean he did repairs as well?

NOK: Yes, we had a watchmaker employed. His name was Henry Klawitter, K-L-A-W-I-T-T-E-R. And he worked at the exposed workbench and my dad worked at a work-bench that wasn't visible so that everyone that come in the store didn't need to have him wait on them.

EL: How many employees generally?

NOK: Generally about five. I'm thinking of the picture that was here today. A watchmaker, Henry, at the time, the early days, Ronnie Wolf was the manager of the store. Betty Gould was an early employee and Dorothy Fox, all in the picture. There were other employees at Christmastime, my mother would work in December, and Dora Grossman would work in December.

EL: Do you have an understanding of what the business was like in the early years, where he got his supplies and things like that?

NOK: At that point I was only, I'm born in 1935, and the early years as I'm thinking is more like 1946, because I can relate to that picture. I can't say as I paid much attention as I wasn't in the store much, but from whenever I was, from seventh grade on, I worked in the store every day after school and Saturdays.

EL: What did you do?

NOK: Swept up, dumped the trash, swept outside, washed the windows, then my dad would constantly, was at some point was training me in watch making. There was few times he would send me just to go upstairs and gave me some old clocks to take apart and try to make them work and I can't say that I was ever successful and I don't suppose they were ever fixed.

NAK: Can I interrupt?

NOK: But I've not been afraid to take things apart and put things together.

NAK: One of the worst things was when you had to go to the post office.

NOK: Oh yeah.

NAK: That was a nightmare.

NOK: Well and mail was a constant thing. Every day there was, I'm thinking of outgoing mail and of course there's incoming which was delivered to the store. But outgoing as I was young, I would go to the post office and employees were always so rude.

NAK: And he just dreaded it.

NOK: Today I think post office employees are very nice, but it used to be, and I think they were famous for that in the post office.

NAK: But you had little boxes of stuff always going back and forth.

NOK: We were always sending packages, items to be repaired.

EL: Where were you sending them?

NOK: Well, my dad, watchmaking was important at one time, today it's not. Today you throw your watches away. Elchan was always the better watchmaker than my dad. My dad worked steadily at repairing watches among other things in the store. But we also contracted with, use that word, with Elchan and we would ship the watches to him.

NAK: In Barnesboro?

NOK: In Barnesboro. That needed repaired. And he would do our repair work. I think his business wasn't so good. And he would do the repair work so they were constantly going several times a week, bundles of watches, customers' watches.

EL: And when did, so when did you, for lack of a better word, take over the store?

NOK: When did I take over?

EL: Yeah.

NOK: Well I had worked as I mentioned as a child. I went to college, I worked during Christmas vacations.

NAK: Went to Pittsburgh to Pitt and Duquesne.

NOK: Yeah I went to Pitt. So even in high school when I was, let's see how old would I be? I graduated in '57, that's seventeen years old. So for three years from age thirteen or fourteen to seventeen I would do the payroll every week. Which meant figuring the taxes and putting the money in an envelope for each employee. So I was always involved as a manager even though I was just a kid. The same with my cousin in Barnesboro, they would, they lived in Barnesboro, Elchan's son, who took over. My dad always looked at me as the insurance policy, he was always, if something, if he would die prematurely I could go to work. And that seemed like a stretch, but Cousin David in Barnesboro did take over the store. He was ready to go to college, his father died, he cancelled college and took, worked with his mother, his mother was active in the store, but he was always actively involved, too. Another friend, David Miller, in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, not the jewelry business, and his father had a big farm, I would like to say a dairy farm, but the main business way buying and selling cattle. So at sixteen years old his father died and this kid who had been brought up in that business went, used to go to Wisconsin to buy cows, sixteen years old and ship them back and do whatever you do in the cow business. So it did happen that men died younger and they look at I think death, the potential of death differently.

NAK: So when did you take over the store was the question. When your dad died.

NOK: Yeah I'm trying to back to that I have to get my thoughts in order. I was always there, there were no secrets from me in the store, and I worked at the work bench dissembling and reassembling watches and doing some repairs and the more difficults I gave to my dad. I was never really trained as a fine watchmaker.

EL: This Henry Klawitter, he was trained as a...

NOK: Klawitter. Yes he was. He was a graduate of I can't remember which school but there were watchmaking schools, I think, one in Lancaster, the Hamilton School, one I think in Kansas City. And he got his training by way of the Army.

NAK: When did he start to work?

NOK: The Army used a lot of watchmakers and they needed them for bomb sites and skilled stuff, I'm not sure what, so he came to us after the war and worked for some years. And I'm still not to how did I take over. So at some point, at some point, my dad made me a partner and I can't remember when. I had a salary, and I didn't really share in the profits except maybe for a Christmas bonus that we shared together. And at a further point I was made a fifty percent partner and here again, I can't recall the years, but as my family was growing I guess. I think I might, this'll be, if I have it, it'll be a plus, I might still have the contract between the two of us.

EL: That would be great.

NOK: That'll be in the safety deposit box, if I have it. If I recall that contract right it said we will share as fifty-fifty partners but in case of a dispute he is right. [laughs]

NAK: That was his whole life.

NOK: It made perfect sense that that would solve it if there was a dispute between us.

EL: So let's shift gears a little bit and talk about religious matters. What was the family's, was the family observant? Was there synagogue life?

NOK: The family, no, we're not observant, we're I'd have to say more secular. My parents were instrumental in the building of the synagogue in Kittanning, both as donors and my dad did physical labor, for whatever. For instance, men of the community put down the tile floor. I remember he worked on that. It seems to me, I can't remember this for sure, but I think I worked on it, I'd have been old enough. When the synagogue was built they had stained glass windows manufactured by the Dlubak Company, D-L-U-B-A-K in Slatelick, Pennsylvania.

NAK: Which is probably still in business, but maybe, it's probably still in business but I don't think they make stained glass.

NOK: I don't know. And the Dlubak Company as a side note, besides being stained glass, when the Statue of Liberty was remodeled a few, well a few years ago, it's thirty years ago I suppose, I don't know that for sure, they made the special curved windows that were replaced within the Statue of Liberty. That's in a small town about fifteen miles from Kittanning. So anyways, the stained glass windows were made by the Dlubak Company and the front windows I think were installed later. But the three windows behind the ark, my dad and I installed those the afternoon before Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, it was at a critical moment to get them done, they had just got finished. So my dad and I physically put those in.

EL: How did that responsibility fall to you?

NOK: Just that I always did what my dad asked. What he told me to do.

EL: How did it fall to him as opposed to another congregant?

NOK: My dad was a very handy guy.

NAK: Handy with his hands, a jeweler. Can I say one thing here? I think both of Norman's parents were secular Jews, totally, I mean I never heard the word, I never heard "God". Did you ever hear any? Your mother taught Sunday school, I don't think she ever said the word "God".

NOK: Not in the religious sense, no.

NAK: No. So I mean we were very Jewish but very secular.

NOK: My dad was instrumental in building the shul as was my grandfather, David Karp, he was instrumental in building the synagogue in Barnesboro which I've read. But I can't recall him ever going to services.

NAK: And that's the point that he's making. This was not a religious man, this was a very, "I'm Jewish, I'm Jewish".

NOK: That's right, he had no interest in that. Bar mitzvahs maybe he'd go to, or weddings and funerals.

NAK: His kids were never bar mitzvahed, bat mitzvahed. No, no, no, no.

NOK: I was not bar mitzvahed. My parents thought it was a waste of time.

NAK: So there you go, I mean that's, make it clear.

NOK: And then I sort of felt that's a loss, that I didn't, that I don't fit with the congregation very well.

NAK: You're uncomfortable because you don't know the Hebrew prayers.

NOK: I have no personal belief in God so it's...

NAK: Because it wasn't instilled.

NOK: Being Jewish was a different thing than believing in God, that's all.

EL: Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

NOK: I think we've all been proud of being Jewish, we've all had, my mother was always superintendent in Sunday school, as far as I can remember. We've always had an education in Jewish backgrounds that way. I used to know the Sunday school stories as well as any religious kid. I don't anymore, but I did. So that's, historically is one thing, religiously is another in our family.

EL: Was Kittanning large enough to have Jewish groups like a B'nai B'rith?

NOK: There was B'nai B'rith and there was Hadassah.

NAK: I was B'nai B'rith Youth Organization for a while, we had that, I was advisor to that. But we were never religious.

NOK: That's right. Sunday school was about thirty kids as I recall.

EL: Were your parents involved in those Jewish organizations at all?

NAK: Absolutely. Your mother was, absolutely.

NOK: My mother was Hadassah, I don't know about my dad.

EL: What was your parents' feelings about Israel, early, pre-Israel before it was around?

NAK: We never knew.

NOK: I don't know. Interesting question.

EL: It's always interesting to hear the generation before it was founded, what they thought.

NAK: My parents never, I never heard Israel mentioned in my life.

NOK: I never heard Israel mentioned.

NAK: I don't know, they must have had opinions, but I have no, we never...

NOK: Just as Holocaust wasn't mentioned back then. Rarely mentioned should I say.

EL: Right. Let's talk a little bit about schooling. You went to Kittanning public schools I'm guessing.

NOK: I went to, I did, I went for the first four years, no first two years I'd say, sorry, first, into my fourth grade I went to Applewold School which is in the center of that small borough. And it was a two room school with grades one to four and five to eight as I recall. So I was there for into fourth grade and then we moved to West Kittanning. And I went to the grade school there and that was a four room school I believe, if I remember. And I went to, but in grade seven my parents paid tuition so I could go to Kittanning Central School.

NAK: Junior high. That was in junior high then. It was a separate school.

NOK: It was grade seven but I can't remember if it was junior high, if it was broken down that way. But for two years they'd have had to pay tuition since I wasn't, didn't live in the borough of Kittanning.

EL: And why did they do that?

NOK: I think for better, what they might have considered a little better education than the West Kittanning school. And then I started working in the store too, but I don't think that was the reason. It was convenient, I could walk from school to the store, after school come home with my dad.

EL: Did you like school?

NOK: In those years, yeah. I did as far as I can remember.

EL: Was...continue.

NOK: So when I went to high school and lived in West Kittanning, which was a mile away up a big hill, so I liked to say I had to walk ten miles to school through three feet of snow and it was twenty degrees below every day.

NAK: There were no school buses then were there? They didn't have school buses then, you did walk.

NOK: No, there was a Penn transit bus that would just get packed. And we had tokens, I think they were three cents, and kids rode that. A bus was not a school bus at that time.

EL: Was that a city bus?

NOK: It was a city bus, yeah. Or in the nicer weather I would ride my bike down the hill with my friend, and then I would at lunch time we would peddle back up the hill. I can remember always being so exhausted I couldn't eat lunch then we would go back down the hill after lunch, or we could have eaten lunch in the gymnasium in school. And then we'd throw the bike in the back of the car and I'd go home with my dad then.

NAK: At dinner time, after the store closed.

NOK: I would drive home when I was age fifteen. Not legal at all, but my dad would always have me drive and drive back to get the experience.

NAK: He would be the passenger...

EL: Was there any time for recreation?

NOK: After school I played a lot of basketball. I never played school sports but I played a lot of basketball.

NAK: In the back street.

NOK: I played basketball from I'd say about seventh grade every night practically of the year for four hours. But there wasn't much else to do.

NAK: And ride your bike around I guess, that's before he met me and had other things to do. That was later.

NOK: Okay so that takes care somewhat of my school experience doesn't it?

NAK: You were never a great student.

NOK: I was an A student up until a certain point and then something went wrong and I don't know what changed me, but I became a B student or a C student and never put any effort into anything. And I don't know why that changed from the younger years.

EL: What was the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the town?

NOK: I never had any problems.

NAK: His best friends, Ed was...

NOK: I've always had Gentile friends, I went to Sunday school the local, one other Jew in my high school class that was Herman Finesod. And we'd run around together and then Herman and I would bump into each that way, we weren't close. But I ran around with Gentile boys, never seemed to be a problem. I'll describe it as this, I was never subjected to any overt anti-Semitism. Sometimes I wondered a little what somebody was thinking. And at one time, somehow, my friends heard my grandfather Abraham's name, and they picked up on that, and some of them called me Abie, now I don't know if there's anti-Semitism involved or just one of those things boys do and I've never given it any great worry, I never particularly liked being called Abie.

NAK: Wasn't My Abie's Irish Rose, but that was at the fraternity. That was something different.

NOK: So I'm not sure what, I was somehow unaware of what might have been anti-Semitism at the time.

NAK: But you never had like Christmas trees in the house or anything, they never had...

NOK: I never had those concerns, nobody ever called me anything unpleasant and I had Italian friends, and I never gave a lot of thought to who they were until later years, friends with Italian names, and friends with Irish or Scotch names. My best friend had a really strange name and it was French, the name was Echnoz, last name E-C-H-N-O-Z, which was a really peculiar name I thought.

NAK: But tell him about your best friend, are you interested in that? This guy's dad had a pickup truck and his mom never wore shoes and they used to haul coal and then they turned into like millionaires, so that was pretty interesting. I don't know the history.

NOK: That could be another story.

NAK: But I mean he was your best friend. Great guy.

NOK: Yeah, he grew up from a rather poor background. Never a deprived background.

EL: What was his name?

NOK: His first name? Ed.

EL: And his last name?

NOK: E-C-H-N-O-Z.

EL: Oh that's it.

NOK: Probably still alive, we were good friends for a lot of years.

NAK: And our kids were, the girls were good friends.

NOK: I haven't seen him in a good many years, but it seemed to me I could go five years without seeing him and I'd see him and we'd talk as if it was yesterday. We were on the bank board together for years.

NAK: That was late.

NOK: That was at a later time in my life.

EL: Let's talk about how the two of you met.

NOK: Well, Nancy had always had a camp background. Her parents would send her away for months.

NAK: I was a city girl, I started going away to camp when I was six for two month when my sister was ten so I went to the same camp. My mom worked in the drugstore with my dad in Mount Lebanon. And we just never thought twice about sending a six-year-old away for two months, that's what you did. And so when I was sixteen, I wanted to be a counselor and my uncle Hymie Rogal (got me this job at Laurel Y Camp, which was the Jewish camp. And that's where I met Norman. Actually I went there because my other boyfriend Norman was going to be there, then we broke up and I met a new Norman.

NOK: There used to be three Jewish camps out of the Pittsburgh area if you're not familiar. One was Laurel Y, for the YMHA which was in Pittsburgh, and one was the Emma Kaufmann Camp, and the other one was Lynnwood. Is that right?

??NAK: It wasn't, I went to Lynwood, I mean it was different.

NOK: That's basically where Jewish kids from Pittsburgh would... so anyways, I was a freshman in college and was probably looking for something to get out of the store at that point, the summer. And I don't remember how I found out about the job, but I got a job a counselor at Laurel Y. It would be the summer of my freshman year, and then the next year I went back to camp, a counselor again, a roving counselor and met Nancy at camp that summer.

NAK: Was I sixteen? Was I sixteen? I was sixteen.

NOK: Yeah. You were sixteen and I was nineteen.

EL: And when did you guys get married.

NAK: Eighteen and twenty-one.

EL: So two years later.

NOK: Two days after I graduated college, age twenty-one.

NAK: And in between freshman semesters for me.

EL: And you moved to Kittanning right away?

NOK: Yes we did, oh no, we had an apartment in Pittsburgh 'til I went to the Army.

NAK: We had an apartment on, what was the name of that in, it'll come. We had a little unfurnished apartment in Shadyside and I was still going to Pitt, I went for a year and half, and then he went to the Army and I moved back into my parents' house.

NOK: Was I still working in Tarentum?

NAK: You did work.

NOK: Back to the store business again.

NAK: Yeah, leave me out of this, he's busy talking.

NOK: I graduated in February in three and a half years of college.

EL: What was your study, what were you studying?

NOK: Just business. I ended up with a degree, a BBA, bachelors of business administration, I didn't even know that until they handed it to me.

NAK: He was really a great student.

NOK: Mostly I took economics courses basically. I took whatever got me out of college the quickest and easiest so I could go back to work in the store.

EL: So you graduated in what year?

NOK: 1957.

NAK: February.

NOK: Okay. But in my senior year, my last semester of college, which would have been the fall semester my uncle, Harry, from the Tarentum store, had a nervous breakdown.

NAK: I'm not sure he'd want that put in... okay.

NOK: And he was in Saint Francis, that's a mental hospital in Pittsburgh, I don't know if it's still today or not.

NAK: Do your cousins know about that?

NOK: What?

NAK: Does Harry's, do your cousins know about that?

NOK: I would think that's no secret, I don't, I would think they'd know that. I think I'm okay in using the word mental breakdown. And so my dad came to Pittsburgh and he says you're going to have to work in the store after school.

NAK: Harry's store.

NOK: So whenever I wasn't in class I was in Tarentum working.

NAK: He would drive from Pittsburgh to Tarentum.

NOK: I wasn't, obviously doing very well at, as a kid like that, because the store wasn't, at least it was staying open and staying in business, there was two employees besides me. And Shirley, Harry's wife would have been busy, I don't know how much she was overseeing, I don't remember her, my dad was overseeing me somehow. The store couldn't have been doing well as I recall because what do I know about selling diamonds at age, whatever it was, twenty. Okay and that must be, I can't remember this for sure, but then we had the apartment in Pittsburgh when we first got married so maybe I was still working there until Harry got better.

NAK: I don't know, I never saw him.

NOK: Harry was at Pearl Harbor. He was the first person discharged from the Pacific Theater, he was in the newspapers, on points. He had enlisted in the Army two years before Pearl Harbor and thought Pearl, Hawaii, would be a wonderful place to be which I guess it was for a while. So he was not on a ship, but he was on land during the bombings.

EL: What does it mean to be discharged on points?

NOK: I think it had to do with time in the service and maybe he had military activities you were in, not that I'm aware of him being in any battles. And I think it was fifty points got you out after so long in the service.

NAK: Did he have the jewelry store while he was in the service?

NOK: No, the store was opened with my dad's money in 1946.

NAK: You're getting away from your story.

NOK: I'm not sure how that ownership was structured at the very beginning, and then it became Harry's store. I always thought it was Harry's store even though I know my dad was the investor.

EL: Let's talk a little bit about your service. When were you, when did you enlist?

NAK: In the service, in the military?

EL: Yeah.

NOK: I was a reservist. My enlistment was for six month active duty and six years re-service.

NAK: What years was that? We were already married.

NOK: Well, we were, as I recall waiting in Kittanning, I was working at the store. We were waiting until I was called to duty so I could get that over with and we could get on with our life.

NAK: There was no war. We were right in between, we were lucky.

EL: Where were you stationed?

NOK: I didn't have a lot of ambition, I just wanted to go to war and do my thing and make some money.

NAK: Where were you stationed? Eric's asking.

NOK: I was in...

NAK: Fort Knox.

NOK: Fort Knox for basic and Fort Jackson for advanced basic and they made a clerk typist. I can really, really type fast (laughs).

EL: So you never had to leave the country.

NOK: No. In fact they let me out at the end of five months instead of six. And they let me out before my six years was out too.

NAK: There was nothing that was the time of...

NOK: What?

NAK: That was the time of no military anything. There was nothing going on.

NOK: Yeah we were peacetime that entire time.

EL: So after that you, you guys moved to Kittanning.

NOK: We had already...

NAK: I was, when he was in the service for five months at Fort Jackson, I moved in with my parents in Squirrel Hill for that period of time. And then we moved.

NOK: You went to Pitt.

NAK: Okay, we're not getting into me, we're talking about you. I think.

NOK: Okay. So what's your question?

NAK: What did we do after you got out?

EL: Did you go to Kittanning after the service?

NOK: Yeah, as soon as we got back, as soon as I was out, we were back in Kittanning.

EL: And at this point do you guys go down to Florida?

NOK: So we're back and I'm going to have to guess it's something like six months I'm working at the store in Kittanning and preparing. Oh we took a driving trip. My dad, Lissa, Nancy and me. And we drove to Florida, and we drove around from town to town looking for a place to open a jewelry store in Florida.

EL: What precipitated the trip?

NOK: My father's idea. He wanted to own a jewelry store in Florida because then he could go to Florida in the winter and sort of be retired or however that was gonna work. But that was the basic idea. And Nancy and I seemed to like the idea, I guess, at that time, do you remember? I suppose. And it was exciting to have such a project and so the inventory at the Kittanning store had expanded too much at that time and we split off a

lot of the inventory and we... well, first off, we went to Florida, we looked around at different towns that might look appealing. And that's sort of a peculiar thing, but that's the way we did it. And it must have been the way the generation before travelled across Pennsylvania as they were connected one way or another with landsmen, may be.

Or just, for instance, whenever I can recall Nancy and I were familiar with the Laurel Hill state park area where we met, so we had our romantic idea about the idea in Somerset, Pennsylvania, on the turnpike, it's over that way. And that always appeared like a very nice town to us, and I told my dad let's, why don't we consider Somerset, Pennsylvania. And he says, "No, that won't be a good place to be because it's a farming area and farmers are set it," I'm quoting him, "farmers are set in their ways and they'll be hard to take away their business from another store." So he had a thing about Somerset, Pennsylvania.

NAK: He wanted to be in Florida for himself.

NOK: So anyways this idea of Florida came around and we did the same thing, suggested different places in Florida, I had written to lots of chambers of commerce and had all kinds of folders and information on different communities there.

EL: So you were only down in Florida for two years though, is that right?

NOK: Yes.

EL: And then...

NOK: From '58 to '60.

EL: And then from that point you...

NAK: We closed the store because we weren't doing any business.

NOK: At that point, at that point. And that store that we opened...

NAK: We worked hard.

NOK: We made this trip, we decided Orlando, downtown city of about 100,000.

NAK: It was very tiny then.

NOK: Downtown would be hard for us to finance to be in downtown. But there was a neighborhood shopping area called College Park in the town of Orlando and there was an empty room and I remember we looked at that and we decided this would be good and then my dad went back to Florida after we had come home and made these decisions and he went back to Florida and he rented a store room in the colonial area that we went into.

NAK: I don't know, we never had seen it.

NOK: He didn't rent that room, I don't know why, maybe he couldn't make the right deal, I can't remember. And he rented in a different area and it was, didn't seem right from the beginning.

NAK: It was bad.

NOK: It was too much street, highway traffic, right in front of the store and no place to park.

NAK: Tell him how we moved down, tell him how we moved down, that's much more interesting.

NOK: Anyways he rented the room, took the measurements, ordered the cases...

NAK: This is our store.

NOK: The cases, custom built in the Bowery in New York, must have been an area, the Bowery must be where they made cases in those days. And he had all these custom made cases and so Nancy and I loaded up. We rented a U-Haul trailer and we loaded up everything the two of us owned, which wasn't much, and merchandise from the store. And we sold luggage at that time so we used the Samsonite luggage and we stuffed it full of merchandise, and we had all this in a trailer.

NAK: In a U-Haul trailer attached to...

NOK: It was a Nationwide actually, not a U-Haul, it's the same idea. And this was hooked on to the back of the car. So we have everything we own and then some and we're hauling it to Florida. And we pull up in front of the store and we...

NAK: We drove straight through, we never stopped, did we? We didn't stop!

NOK: I can't remember.

NAK: We slept in the car, we drove the whole way, twenty-two hours or something straight through. I was eighteen.

NOK: I remember. So we unload all that in the store and it's pretty exciting because then a few days later or a week later the cases show up on the truck and we have to go to the black area of the town and the truck driver knew what to do and he helped hire a few guys to unload. And we bought a safe and we set up the store. Okay, the store didn't do so well. And Ronny Wolf, my dad's manager for some years worked as an employee for many years, resigned. And he went to work for a better job in a company in the town.

NAK: And I had already had one miscarriage and was pregnant again.

NOK: Okay.

NAK: Down in Florida.

NOK: And so I'm about twenty-three, or maybe even twenty-four, I'm not sure, and Nancy, of course, corresponding.

NAK: I was twenty.

NOK: And we're sort of homesick, I mean it just didn't, it all fell together as to just forgetting it and coming back to Kittanning. Ronny resigned and dad says I need a manager back here and so we folded it pretty quickly and packed everything up. And then we hired, I had a friend in Florida, Alan Altschuller, and we needed a way to get all this stuff back and a moving van would have been expensive, so he found a watermelon truck and took all the watermelons, and the watermelons weren't quite ripe and the truck wanted to haul, wanted to move, so we hired this truck, I think it was four hundred bucks.

NAK: And then we were just hoping we'd ever see it again.

NOK: And then we loaded everything into the truck and of course by then Nancy and I had furniture then, too, to haul back and we had all these cases to haul back, we had a safe that we bought in Florida to haul back, so we put this all in this truck. It was really crudely loaded. Our little furniture got damaged.

NAK: Yeah, it was junk.

NOK: So I was gonna drive, they were driving, the truck driver and his helper, were driving this truck. And I was gonna follow behind and it was gonna be a straight through drive. And I got sleepy it was a twenty-two hour drive and I slept beside the road and I figured I'd catch up to the truck, well I never did catch up to the truck and it's got everything we own and I don't think I even knew the truck's license plate, I'm not sure I knew the guys' names and so I'm really getting scared.

NAK: I had flown home because I was pregnant.

NOK: What?

NAK: I guess I had flown home because I was pregnant.

NOK: You flew home and I was driving by myself and the truck has disappeared because I took a nap along the road, which was necessary. I get home and the truck wasn't there, I thought maybe it was ahead of me, but then it didn't show up and I told my, I told my dad, it'll be along, it'll be another day or so.

NAK: You must have been terrified to tell him.

NOK: And so it did, in a couple days it showed up. But I was really, really scared. I thought everything was gone and I didn't have any idea where it was.

NAK: Can I tell you a little bit about where we lived in Florida? I mean we were, everything was really on a shoestring.

NOK: Hm?

NAK: We were living on a shoestring in Florida.

NOK: Oh yeah, yeah.

NAK: But it was fun. We didn't have, the first place we rented, this little place.

NOK: Never in my life was I worried about making a living, it just, it would happen. I don't think a kid today can look at life that way, it's gonna happen.

NAK: We lived in a place that had no kitchen, I mean it had a kitchen but no appliances. So we had, there were no microwaves, we had a toaster oven and something else that we had gotten as wedding gifts and, oh and an electric frying pan. And once a week, because I worked in the store six days a week with him, once a week I would make a big frying pan full of chili, which we ate every day for a week, and then the next week I would make a big frying pan full of stew, which I still can't eat. And that, I mean we didn't know we were living, and that's the way we did it. And we had a weird, I mean I'm sure my parents were appalled. When we were getting engaged and first going together, he didn't tell you all this, my parents had a drugstore, his parents had a jewelry store. So my parents figured his parents had a lot of money and his parents figured my parents had a lot of money, so there I was just eighteen and he was just about turning twenty-one and we never had, neither of our parents ever told us we were too young, we shouldn't get married. They really, we never had any impediments, we were just gonna, I was the first one of any of my friends to get married and you probably were too, first to get married.

NOK: People got married younger then.

NAK: Yeah, but we were the first.

EL: So what happened with the business after you get back from Florida?

NAK: Okay, I just wanted to get you a little bit about the way we lived.

NOK: Back to Kittanning business.

EL: Yeah, does it expand after?

NOK: I came back, the gross on the store was so low, and I never worried about it, that's my dad's worry. I don't know how it supported, I don't know how the store supported his family and my minimal family at that point. But somehow we both took a living out of it. Part of that thing in Florida, I remember I knew the store wasn't doing well, and I had told him I had to have more money, and it just wasn't there, I suppose, and the manager quitting so we retrenched. From the moment I got to Kittanning though I'd say the business started going up from that point. So I was trained as a watch maker and in jewelry, like fixing rings, making rings the right size, adjusting watchbands, jewelry repairs in general. But my dad early on removed me from working on watches after about a year or two, just he could see the talent wasn't really in repairing watches. And so he said you'll be the salesman and he'll stay in the back more and maybe that made a difference.

NAK: You were a good salesman.

NOK: I probably was a very good salesman. So there became a split of duties, he stayed in the back more. Even though if it was a really tough customer, or a diamond sale that was critical to our making a profit that day or that week, he would take it, not me. But in general I was the salesman.

EL: What did being a salesman entail? Were you always at the counter, did you have to leave the store?

NOK: I was out in the front more. I would work in the back, I would pace my day. I would work at the workbench when it was slower and I would be out front as needed.

NAK: But you made, you weren't just out there, you were making a career out of selling.

NOK: It was a career, it was not a job. Over the years I became a graduate of the gemological course of the Gemological Institute of America, a mail order course. I was a graduate of the diamond course. I **took** a mail order course in retailing from the Gemological Institute. I took a mail order course in bird photography, too.

NAK: No that's, that's my part. My story some day.

EL: Was it always just the Kittanning store or were there ever other stores?

NOK: I never, I never thought of expanding. I couldn't. I never knew how to delegate in that way.

NAK: And it was before computers, it was before...

NOK: So no, we never thought of expanding. The Kittanning store expanded to Tarentum with my uncle when he came back from the war, then tried to expand to Florida but didn't, and I never tried to expand. My, I worked long hours.

EL: How long was the store open until?

NOK: In day hours?

EL: In years.

NAK: What year did we close the store?

NOK: Oh, uh, 1939 to, I'm gonna break this down a little bit, to 1966 when we moved into the bigger store on the corner, and then until I closed it in 1994.

EL: And was that because you were retiring, or was it due to business?

NOK: I retired.

NAK: That was because business was bad.

NOK: Always made a profit, I'd like to make that clear. But business was, it's rust belt, and business was going down and I just didn't know how to stop it from continuing down.

NAK: The town was dying.

EL: What was the big industry in Kittanning?

NOK: Well, Kittanning itself was not an industrial town like, you're from Texas, I don't know how familiar you are with...

EL: I know like Aliquippa had a mill.

NOK: The steel mills.

EL: Yeah, and Clairton.

NOK: And Ford City is three miles away from Kittanning, and Ford City had the biggest Pittsburgh, the biggest plate glass factory in the world which employed, during the war, 3,500 people. And the biggest toilet factory in the world, Eljer Toilet factory. So that's three miles away from Kittanning. And the whole county is based on what we'll call extraction industries, coal mining, limestone, sand, gravel.

NAK: Farming, and farming. You had a lot of farmers that come in.

NOK: Oh yeah, and then there's farming. The town itself's the county seat, and that's the strength of why the town continues to exist. County seats are much more stable than non-county seats.

EL: So did those, did the plate glass factory close and the toilet factory close?

NOK: Yes.

NAK: The plate glass factory the union refused, what was it called? They did close for reason.

NOK: First off I, I'm not sure about the Eljer factory, I sort of think it's gone but I'm not sure about that. But the plate glass factory shrunk, and it shrunk from at one high point of 3,500 to more like 3,000 to 600 to maybe 200. What happened was the process of making glass was they would pour the glass out in big sheets and then it was cut into great big squares and then it was polished, ground and polished. It went through big buffing machines to finish the glass and then along came along a process called the Pilkington process.

NAK: Was that float glass, float glass?

NOK: Invented in England. It was, yeah, float glass. And they poured the molten glass onto molten **lead** some way and it was a finished sheet of glass and cut out the grinding and polishing that was necessary, and it cut out an awful lot of employees and so the union refused to accept it coming into that plant and that was pretty much death.

NAK: That was the end.

EL: When was that?

NAK: It was before, that was...

NOK: Into the late fifties, or more likely in the sixties, I'm not sure.

NAK: I think it was sixties.

EL: But you managed to stay in business for thirty more years after that.

NOK: Here's sort of an interesting thing, we worry about five or six unemployment rate in the country. I don't think I ever had less than an eleven or twelve percent unemployment rate in Armstrong County.

EL: Wow.

NOK: I'm sure during the war it was one thing, but it seems to me it was always, yet, yet the store functioned and as did two other jewelry stores in the town.

EL: Why do you think that is?

NAK: Because they had been there a long time and people trusted them, and I think that was it. And people didn't go off to Pittsburgh shopping. They stayed in the small town.

NOK: I guess eighty-eight percent employment is a worthwhile number to consider. [laughter] Rather than the twelve percent unemployment, maybe that's it.

NAK: Remember when you used to, well you don't know this, there used to be stories that you take your diamond and don't leave it in that jewelry store because they'll sell it and put in a glass piece. They worked very hard, the small town jewelry stores, to be honest and people trusted them. I mean it was important, it was all on trust. He really worked hard on it.

NOK: Well that actually was the whole jewelry industry was very trustworthy I think in those days.

EL: Can you describe a little bit how the business worked, did you have to go to New York or overseas?

NAK: I want you to tell him about how the salesmen came in their cars and you had a relationship, your dad had a very good relationship. That's important, because that's what small town retail...

NOK: That's good you mentioned it.

NAK: I'm looking at my watch.

EL: What time is it?

NAK: Okay, it's eleven and we, we're...

NOK: It's twelve.

NAK: I mean it's twelve, I'm still in Mexico. It's twelve and we're meeting Jordan at one so...

NOK: Salesmen came to the store all the time, salesmen...

NAK: From Pittsburgh, New York...

NOK: They were very important.

EL: These were wholesale salesmen? From wholesalers?

NOK: Or from manufacturers.

EL: Okay.

NOK: And they'd bring their samples, or if it's, for instance, rings, often the rings they were bringing sold directly from what they were carrying. We would pick them out and they would write up and we'd pay them later. And so let's see, so we've had salesmen like Bulova. Bulova was an important product.

NAK: They came to us.

NOK: The salesmen would come with, I don't know, eight, ten great big rolling cases that somehow they got back into their car and they'd bring these in and they'd spread out this whole spread of watches on top of our counters. Hopefully we weren't busy with customers at the time, and we'd pick one of this and two of that and one of this and one of that and we'd buy, we'd buy hundreds of watches at a crack.

NAK: And stay overnight at your dad's house.

NOK: And they would come in the, I can't remember the exact schedule, twice a year.

NAK: And they were good friends, they became very good friends.

NOK: What we bought in the spring was due for payment July 10th, and what we bought in the fall, which is the important time and we bought heavier was not due until January the tenth. So twice a year you paid.

EL: Where were these wholesalers coming from?

NOK: The Bulova...

NAK: I know some of them came from Pittsburgh.

NOK: Yeah, I'm not sure I can answer that completely but the Bulova salesman could have lived in Pittsburgh and made trips all around. Actually their territory would be Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York or something like that, it would be more than one state as a rule. There was a wholesaler in Pittsburgh named Edel Katz. And he would come a couple times a year.

NAK: You went out with his daughter.

NOK: And he would spread, and he would show us different products, he would be selling various jewelry products, necklaces, earrings, different stuff. And that was not for delivery as I recall, but he would ship it later.

NAK: But your dad became friends with him. And he would come and have dinner with your family.

NOK: That was Edelstein.

NAK: Oh. That was a different, Al Edelstein.

NOK: Al Edelstein from New York City. And this man had, from his name he had a watch company, Delmark watches, part of his name. I don't know if that's important. And we would use that watch line as our private line because we'd make a bigger markup on it than we would on a name brand watch.

EL: Was there, no keep going.

NOK: Let's see.

NAK: It's just that they became friends, you know his dad did...

NOK: So the diamond salesmen would come and they would come with not big cases, but they would come with a folder that was about so big right here, and they would pull this out.

EL: They could keep it all in their pockets.

NAK: I don't think you can do that anymore, it's too dangerous.

NOK: And we would say we need some half carat diamonds and they would show us a packet of half carat and we would examine them and say this one's good, and this one we don't like, and for whatever reasons we would decide one diamond over another diamond.

EL: And you would use those for making jewelry, or for repairing?

NOK: Yes. A lot of times we would buy finished mountings, we would buy finished mountings, we would buy diamonds, we'd have them assembled, we might assemble some ourselves, but for the most part we would have that done in a shop that's still in business here in Pittsburgh, Helfer's.

EL: At some point in the later years was there competition from a new type of business, like these discounts or...

NOK: There was always competition and somehow we survived it. There would be the...

NAK: David Weiss.

NOK: The David Weiss Company.

NAK: Like wholesalers, not wholesalers, big box, not big box...

NOK: They were sort of, sort of a hybrid. But they were very, very big for some years, the Dahlkempers that were out of Erie, but mostly in this area was the David Weiss Company, which was something to do with Wilkin's Jewelers. Wilkin's was a big chain in Pittsburgh at one time.

EL: Yeah.

NAK: And they had a catalog too.

NOK: And they had a catalog, and they also had storerooms. And if you went in the storeroom you'd look at the catalog and you'd get, you know a big box method sort of a hybrid system that was potent competition at discounted prices. And then of course you got Walmarts.

NAK: But you didn't have, the local jewelry stores, the three local jewelry stores managed to serve everybody. You know, we, the credit was an important part of our business.

NOK: We were a credit store, the other two in the town promote the credit the same way we did so we had many, we had...

NAK: Accounts, many accounts.

NOK: Yeah.

NAK: People that would buy a diamond for ten dollars down.

NOK: We would charge, we would fill a credit application. A customer would buy an item, they'd buy a watch, just to give you an example, let's say the watch was sixty dollars, and we would pay a... you okay?

EL: Yeah.

NOK: We would pay, they would pay, we would advertise a dollar down or five dollars down, but usually we required a third down and most people had no problem with a third down and the rest were on, balance was on payments over a period of a year.

EL: Is there anything else we should talk about?

NAK: Well he used to collect, you, tell, I don't know if that's important, I'm bored to death but... I don't know, do you want to know that his dad had him go out as a bill collector for bad accounts?

EL: Yeah, tell me about that.

NOK: Um, alright. So when I was in high school and I had a driver's license at that point. And I would go through the book of accounts, there were three different books, but they must have totaled about this thick.

EL: About a foot?

NOK: Let's say six inches maybe, thick. So there was a lot of paper that was each page was a different person. And I would, I was in high school, I would send the statements, monthly statements to people that were in arrears and then I would go through those books and determine who was really in arrears, you know, and it's not looking good. And I would make lists of these, and then I would prepare a route, and then I would travel around to all the addresses, which could be all over the county and attempt to collect payments.

EL: Were you successful?

NOK: Uh, it was pretty tough to be successful at that, I think I was as successful as anyone.

NAK: Scary!

NOK: I found the best thing, and this sounds rather harsh, but I'd go to the door and knock on the door and the lady of the house would come to the door and I'd say, "I'm from Karp's Jewelry Store, I'm here for your wedding ring." [laughter] That sounds pretty horrible and it really it's about, it seemed to work much better than saying you're two months, three months behind and I'd like a payment.

NAK: Let me interrupt here for a second.

NOK: So sometimes I'd get the merchandise and that was good because even if it was something like, we sold all kinds of products, even if it was a phonograph that didn't even work anymore, I was happier to take it back that belonged to us because we owned it at that point and they weren't making the payments and throw it away, it was just more satisfying for the job I was doing at the time.

NAK: But let me just say something, Norman. I don't think, we don't know, but I don't think that, maybe they did say, "Oh my God, here comes the Jew." And I don't know...

NOK: Okay and absolutely, I was always aware nobody ever said anything, what are they gonna say to me, but I was always aware of this and I didn't like it. At some point as I got older and more mature in the community, I really didn't care to be associated with that type of work.

NAK: I mean I don't know that anybody, 'cause you don't know what other people are saying behind...

NOK: And there's, this goes another step. You see in a lot of stores, jewelry stores or just free standing places, we buy old gold. Well we bought old gold and we bought coins. I bought, my dad really wasn't that active and this was more after he was, he was less active in the store, and it was very profitable to buy the scrap gold and you can see that in some of these places around. My price must have been fair what I offered because rarely did anyone not want to sell to me once I gave them, told them what I would pay. But it was still very profitable, but I was concerned about the idea of the Jew buying, and it just was, it because, I'd say it's one of the reasons I went out of business. It was profitable, I don't know how the store, it might not have continued to exist without that bit of profit and yet I couldn't continue doing that.

EL: Huh.

NAK: You were never comfortable.

NOK: Nothing illegal. In fact, every single item that I, every single item I sent, the customer had to fill out a paper...

NAK: Yeah I worked at the courthouse.

NOK: And every, after every day or so we'd send these reports to the sheriff's department in the county so that they could review and see the merchandise.

NAK: The county detective's office, not the sheriff's office.

NOK: And I don't know that the other stores did that at all. I think there was a law requiring it, but I was more comfortable, and it did turn up a couple thefts.

NAK: And my colleague would say I got a piece of paper from your husband today, remember?

NOK: Yup.

NAK: What was his name? The county detective?

NOK: I was always afraid of how this reflected on Jews in general.

NAK: We just, we were aware of it whether other people were or not, but we didn't, he just didn't like buying somebody's old stuff that maybe, I was very active in the battered women's movement and every once and while he'd come home and say somebody came in and wanted to sell a wedding ring and I knew what was going on and she had a black eye and he said, "I was so uncomfortable." You know, so it was a lot of that, but that's another time with me.

EL: That's very interesting. You had mentioned a mystery earlier.

NAK: Oh yeah, it was a mystery why Norman's father and his Aunt Lily took Norman when we was ten years old, and off they went for two or three months to Mexico. Nobody spoke Spanish and they drove the whole way and nobody who's alive now can explain what was going on.

NOK: We go to Mexico all the time.

NAK: That he's left, that Norman's dad took him, left Florence, his wife, at home with two little girls and the store, and took his sister and Norman and off. They drove to Mexico before anybody went to Mexico. Driving on dirt roads, didn't speak Spanish, and he never found out why, whether they were having marital problems?

NOK: I never think of him adventurous that way.

NAK: No, he was not...

NOK: Except that he could be a bit of a gambler, the Tarentum store, the Florida store.

NAK: Yeah but why would he, nobody knows, none of his sisters know, nobody seems to know, and nobody asks the questions because now they're all gone. I mean this was before you went to Mexico, this was... so that was just the mystery and there's no point in pursuing it because nobody knows anything.

EL: So the last thing I'd like to ask you guys is, if you could compare your childhood to your children's childhood in Kittanning. To just get a sense of how life would have changed.

NAK: Well that, I can tell you, give me a chance. Our children were pretty much the only Jewish kids in the schools. Whereas when Norman was growing up, I lived in Pittsburgh, when Norman was growing up they had Sunday school, they had synagogue, they had Jewish merchants. When my kids were growing up they were the only, and I don't think they ever felt any anti-Semitism either, I've never heard the kids say anything.

NOK: Lissa told me a story.

NAK: I'm talking about Sue, Mike, and Jordan, our children.

NOK: Oh, our children.

NAK: And our children, Jordan went to Shadyside Academy and Michael went to St. Joseph's High School, so it was, they weren't as, as localized and as isolated. So I don't think they ever felt any difference. I'll have to ask them someday but I don't think. I can remember when Michael was in kindergarten, I think, and we lived across from the Methodist church and it was Christmas time and we were walking past and there was a manger scene out and Michael said, "Oh, there's our little Lord Jesus." Because in school, I mean, there was no separation. Christmas was a big time in the public school, so he said,

“There’s our little Lord Jesus.” [laughter] And alright, how do I deal with this, I just said, “He’s really not our little Lord Jesus.” And I don’t think he ever asked me any questions. We just kind of skidded over a lot of those things. We never had any anti-Semitism. Our kids never seemed to suffer from any problems and they were the only Jews in school.

NOK: He had Christian friends.

NAK: Well they all did. They wouldn’t have had any friends.

EL: Was the synagogue still around then?

NAK: No, we took our kids to Butler, Pennsylvania, every...

EL: To Beth...

NOK: To Sunday school.

NAK: To Sunday school, I can’t remember the name of it. Beth...

NOK: I would drive them every Sunday...

NAK: You would go to Eat’n Park.

NOK: Go to Eat’n Park for breakfast and take them home. And we used to go to a few events over there.

NAK: And I will tell you this quickly about, because we do have to leave. Jordan, our youngest who’s a psychiatrist down in Pittsburgh, came to us when he was about twelve and he said, “I would like to learn a foreign language.” And in schools those days they didn’t have it until high school. And I said, we talked about it and said, “The only way you’re going to learn a foreign language in Kittanning now is if you want to be bar mitzvahed and learn Hebrew.” He said, “Okay.” That’s about as religious as we were. So we took him, Norman...

NOK: Backing up, our daughter Susan, our oldest was not bat mitzvahed, our second, Michael, was not bar mitzvahed.

NAK: He was when he was forty years old.

NOK: With our background it just seemed hypocritical. Jordan was. And Michael became bar mitzvahed when he was forty-two.

NOK: Because he wanted to.

NOK: So he felt he was missing something.

NAK: And Jordan is active in his...

NOK: And Jordan is active, they're both active.

NAK: He belongs to, what's the name of, Bet Tikvah, do you know? That's where Jordan and Paul go, at Rodef. That's where they go and Jordan conducts the...

NOK: So religion has come around on the family in a strange way.

NAK: I don't know about their believing, I don't know about their beliefs.

NOK: I don't know what goes through their minds.

NAK: Sue's kids were all bar mitzvah, bat mitzvahed.

NOK: But they wanted to be part of the religion more.

NAK: All three of our children either married Jews or, I mean our daughter...

NOK: Yeah and our grandchildren are all...

NAK: All bat mitzvahed and bar mitzvahed.

NOK: All six.

NAK: It's interesting.

EL: Alright, well thank you very much!

NAK: Can I ask, are you Jewish?

EL: I am.

NAK: Oh okay so you know, you know Bet Tikvah.

[Recording cuts off]

END OF RECORDING