

**Transcript of Interview with Sidney Shenkan**  
**Small Town Jewish History Project**  
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Transcription:

**Eric Lidji:** Today is November 13, 2015. I'm Eric Lidji with the Rauh Jewish History Program and Archives, this is the Small Towns Jewish History Project. I'm here with Sid Shenkan and we are in the office of Haney's Furniture in New Castle, Pennsylvania. So Mr. Shenkan, why don't you start by telling me where you were born.

**Sidney Shenkan:** I was born in New Castle, at Jameson Hospital in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Would you like to hear...

EL: Yeah.

SS: Okay. We lived about a half a mile from the hospital. My father worked with his father in the furniture business, and my grandfather and family were from Pittsburgh.

EL: They were from Pittsburgh originally?

SS: They were from Pittsburgh originally. And they had moved to Florida and my grandfather lost whatever fortune he had in the real estate bust in Florida.

EL: Huh.

SS: That must have been in the twenties, late twenties. 19...1927. He and members of his family bought the furniture store in New Castle, and my grandfather became the manager and part owner. The family helped him relocate and get re-established in New Castle. My father then joined him after his education at the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School. And they ran a successful business here. And there were a lot of furniture stores, and business was good. We had a population of approximately close to fifty thousand people in New Castle alone, and today we're down to about twenty thousand population. So we've lost, a lot of good people have moved or passed away over the years and I came, I also went to, attended the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School and graduated in 1959. I was in the Army. And then my father my father was not well and I felt that, I felt that if there was gonna be a business, I better come back to New Castle and help my father and see if I would want to be in the furniture business, which I did. And I've been here ever since. My dad retired in 1973, and my grandfather died when he was forty-seven. I'm sorry, my grandfather died in 1947 at the age of sixty-five. My grandparents on my father's side lived in New Castle. My other grandparents, my mother's father, died at a very early age, and her mother visited her children and resided in various communities, such as Chicago and St. Louis. And they were from St. Louis.

EL: So let's take a step back. Your father's father, what was his name?

SS: Manny.

EL: Manny Shenkan?

SS: Manny Shenkan, Emanuel Shenkan. And Emmanuel, Manny, was very active in the Reform temple here, Temple Israel. And was instrumental in helping to make that congregation Reform.

EL: Is there a story there?

SS: Well there's stories. He had a lot of good friends from Pittsburgh and in those day some of them joined the temple here in order to help him with his, with the movement for Reform Judaism. And a lot of the influences are from the Reform congregation in Pittsburgh, Rodef Shalom.

EL: I know that Marcus Feuchtwanger had close relationship with Rabbi Levy at Rodef Shalom.

SS: Yeah, yeah.

EL: And so your grandfather was also part of that early group your saying?

SS: He was part of that early group, yes.

EL: In the twenties.

SS: And he was a good friend of Marcus Feuchtwanger and his wife Nell. And they lived less than a block from my grandfather's home on Leasure Boulevard.

EL: On the north.

SS: Leasure, I'm sorry, Leasure Avenue on the North Hill.

EL: On the North Hill.

SS: And on Sundays my father would visit his parents, every, almost every Sunday that I could think of, and on occasions we would visit the Feuchtwanger because they were good friends. I would stop with my dad to see them as well.

EL: Do you remember Mr. Feuchtwanger?

SS: Vaguely. Vaguely. I mean if you showed me a picture, an old picture I might remember him.

EL: But nothing about his personality?

SS: But I don't remember a whole lot about him now. I was too young.

EL: Okay.

SS: My grandfather died when I was ten.

EL: Okay.

SS: So I have pleasant memories of the family, but I don't even know, I can't remember what they were discussing, the conversation.

EL: Right.

SS: But we would sit in the living room and everybody would be in the living room and listen, and it was very nice. And I attended Sunday school at Temple Israel, which is in the area, which is only another couple blocks away.

EL: Did you walk there?

SS: No, my father would drop me off and then pick me up. And we had, I had a real good experience being raised in a Jewish home. My mother and father always observed Friday night Sabbath, and we always lit candles, and we always said a prayer. And we had prayers that were given to us by Jimmy Meyers, and I have a copy of that at home if you'd like to make a copy of it, I would be glad to make it, make it available. And what we would do, there were like six, maybe six paragraphs, and we would go from one person at the table to another and we would read one paragraph.

EL: Sort of round robin.

SS: We'd go around the table. And then we got to say whatever prayer we liked. We'd sometimes say the same prayer. It could happen that way, whatever. But it was very, very nice and we always ate together. My family felt that that was important, that children ate with the adults, and we always ate together.

EL: Who is Jimmy Meyers?

SS: Jimmy Meyers was a member of the congregation that was extremely active. He was president and he was the individual that made that temple hum. He just did about everything he could. He was extremely dedicated, and we're all indebted to Jimmy Meyers for his work for the Temple. Outstanding man and outstanding dedication to the community, Jewish community.

EL: Did he have a business in New Castle?

SS: He had a business. Auto parts, I think was his, he was in auto parts.

EL: Is his family still in the area?

SS: No, no. He had a son and daughter and they have moved and I lost track of them.

EL: Okay. I want to just make sure I've covered all the bases. So your grandfather Manny Shenkan, was born in Pittsburgh.

SS: Yes.

EL: And is he part of the Shenkan family that goes way back in Pittsburgh?

SS: Yes.

EL: There was a politician in the family.

SS: You know what, I don't know about a politician.

EL: He was a dry goods merchant and, politician in the days when there was a hundred people on the city council. There was a Shenkan family that was in Pittsburgh for a long time, from Amsterdam maybe?

SS: Yeah. Yeah, that's the family.

EL: Okay.

SS: Yeah, I don't know that, I don't know that much about my, my heritage, I should know more. But yes that's the family.

EL: Okay.

SS: And just a real quick story. Joe Shenkan, who was a member of Rodef Shalom years, a number of years ago, visited Amsterdam. And I remember, and wanted to look up his relatives. So he found one, and I don't know who he found or what, but he went to visit his relatives in Amsterdam and I guess he hadn't communicated with them for years. So he knocks on the door, and he says, "I'm Joe Shenkan, and I'm a relative." And they invited him in and they said, "You're not our relative." And they were thinking, they were a wealthy family in Amsterdam, and I think they just felt he was after their money.

EL: The story I heard was that the Shenkans were diamond merchants in Amsterdam. And then there was some sort of, like a lot of these countries, there was some precipitating event that had people move and when they came over here they went into a different line of business.

SS: Could be.

EL: Yeah.

SS: Could be.

EL: I will get you more information about that.

SS: Yeah, I'd like to see more information, yeah. I had the same experience in Philadelphia. I went to school and there was a Shenkan there and I said, "We must be related." He says, "No, we're not related." So that was the end of that conversation.

EL: So Manny Shenkan goes down to Florida, it doesn't work out, then comes up to New Castle. Was your father already here?

SS: Oh, well he might have been at school. He might have been in Philadelphia then. But Manny...

EL: Was he, was your father born in Pittsburgh?

SS: Manny did okay.

EL: He did.

SS: Manny did okay, but the whole industry went under in those days so he was part of that.

EL: Okay.

SS: But very well-liked individual with a wonderful personality that liked to tell jokes. And was everybody's friend. And was a good salesman. He went into different fields and enjoyed what he was doing. And he was the individual that people would go to for friendship. He just befriended everybody.

EL: That's very interesting.

SS: Yeah.

EL: Do you remember his wife, your grandmother?

SS: Oh yeah, yeah.

EL: What was her...

SS: Florence.

EL: Florence.

SS: Her name was Florence. And very sweet woman and very quiet, and maybe quiet, because she fell out of a car and lost her hearing.

EL: As an adult?

SS: Probably as a teenager. And maybe this was in the twenties, so maybe she, yeah so she wasn't a teenager, she was a young adult. But she was a quiet woman, very gracious. Always well-groomed. I can remember that, she was always well-groomed. And she was prepared for visitors to come and see her.

EL: How many kids did they have?

SS: They had two.

EL: Your father and?

SS: My father and his sister.

EL: And what were their names?

SS: Doris and Alvin.

EL: Alvin was your father.

SS: Alvin was my father.

EL: So does your father come to New Castle first or does your grandfather?

SS: My grandfather was here.

EL: Okay. He came first and he started the furniture, he got into the furniture business.

SS: He got into the furniture business, my father came and helped.

EL: Did your grandfather start it from scratch or did he buy a business?

SS: No, he bought the business. There was a large building in New Castle downtown, right a block away here. And a group of men from New Castle bought the building, didn't know what to do with it exactly so they put a furniture store in. And the manager's name was Haney. So that's how they got the name Haney, they said well the manager's Haney, we'll make the store Haney's. So my father and his associates came in 1927 and kept the name.

EL: And was the bear something that was there originally?

SS: Was what?

EL: The bear mascot, was that...?

SS: No that's something we did later on, yeah.

EL: So you were born in 1937, is that right?

SS: 1937.

EL: Okay. How did your parents meet?

SS: My mother, whose name is Sally, and her family, the Solomons, lived in Pittsburgh. My father was a merchandise manager for the May Company, and he had been in St. Louis and Pittsburgh, and they met in Pittsburgh.

EL: The May Department Store, not the drug company.

SS: May Department Store.

EL: That bought Kauffman's.

SS: Yes.

EL: Okay. So he came to Pittsburgh through St. Louis, from...

SS: Yes, yeah. He may, they may have been in other towns as well, but they were in St. Louis predominantly, St. Louis, and they were in Pittsburgh.

EL: Did your parents meet in Pittsburgh?

SS: Yes.

EL: Just through cultural activities?

SS: I guess, yes.

EL: What was your mother like?

SS: My mother was a well-known regional artist.

EL: Huh.

SS: She loved to paint and she also, I mean she was a little bit like her mother-in-law, a little on the quiet side. Gracious person and was very much in love with my father all her life.

EL: What were her paintings like?

SS: She did oils, mostly oils. And some abstract and some scenery.



EL: Did she exhibit?

SS: Yes, she exhibited in Pittsburgh and she exhibited in Youngstown. She had a one, I guess one-woman-show in Pittsburgh at Butler Art Institute.

EL: In Youngstown.

SS: And the Pittsburgh ...

EL: Associated Artists?

SS: The Associated Artists, which she was, I think she was a member.

EL: Huh.

SS: Associated Artists, years ago.

EL: Do you still have some of her paintings?

SS: I have, we have her paintings. There's one there, that little one, yeah, that one. And she just enjoyed painting and of course, being in retail my father was away a lot and so she spent a lot of her time painting and raising a family.

EL: How many kids were there?

SS: Two children. A sister, Carol, who passed away last year and myself. My sister would be eighty-three this year.

EL: You said your father was away a lot, was this for...

SS: Well, he worked at night, and he went to furniture shows in Chicago and elsewhere.

EL: How did they business run then? You would go to, you would buy a line for the year or twice a year?

SS: Well, it changed. It evolved into what it is today. But in those days you'd take a train from New Castle to Chicago, and you might be there close to a week. And you would see furniture that you would want to buy, and they'd buy a lot of furniture and take the train home. So one day out and one day back and maybe three or four days there. And it was in Chicago. And then, I used to attend with my dad, the Chicago Market, then it, then it changed to High Point, North Carolina, or the Carolinas and Chicago then was closed.

EL: Huh.

SS: So it's no longer a furniture center for buyers.

EL: Is High Point near Lenore?

SS: Not too far.

EL: Lenore was a big furniture...

SS: Well yeah. Lenore is one of the top manufacturers, Broyhill, they were from Lenore, North Carolina.

EL: Did your father have an eye for design? How would he chose what he was going to buy?

SS: I think, I think it's pretty basic. I think the manufacturers come out with certain groups that they think are popular and I think you evaluate whether you think that particular group is suitable for your area. Not everything is suitable for Western Pennsylvania. But if you thought it was suitable. Then you have to look at the, your customer base, whether you have an ethnic population, which we had, or more basic, and maybe you have to have a little bit of both. And then once you experiment by putting that line in your store, you would see what your customers really like, and hopefully they like what you've selected. Then I think you see what your competitors are doing, you see what the manufacturers are doing, and you look at price points for your customers. So as far as decorating, in those days when I got into the furniture business, we would have a sofa and it would be in brown, in green, maybe in red, and that might be the only colors available. They'd make two or three colors, and that's it. And everything was pretty much the same. And it was a little, it wasn't very stylish in my way of thinking, you know what I mean?

EL: Yeah.

SS: But that's what people bought. And then it was interesting. People still like something for nothing. And they would have roomfuls of furniture and you would ask about design in, in those days we weren't into a lot of design it was pretty much basic furniture. And then design came, design developed. And we were more of a basic furniture store for the working class.

EL: So how did the business change when New Castle started to shrink?

SS: Well, we had a staff of fifty full-time employees and, I think, twenty, twenty-some part-time employees at one time and we just had to shrink everything. And now we're in our warehouse, part of this was, we had an old warehouse where this warehouse is now, and we consolidated in the main store, and we got out of certain areas. We got out of, we were in drapery, we had appliances, we had TVs and we had a soft goods departments that had sheets, pillows, everything for bath and for the bed, the top of the bed, bedspreads. And we got out of that. We got out of those areas, and we had a fire in 1987, and business started to slide in the early eighties so it was, it was pretty tough. And

then we tried, we tried to make it a go even though we had a fire in the old building. But when you have a fire there's always the sense that furniture is from that fire. People don't realize that we sell furniture every day, but it had a blemish where there's a fire, you never really get that out of the, out of your system. So we moved over here in the warehouse, this was a warehouse just for the store. It supplied all the goods and we had one other warehouse. And we got out of the appliances, we got out of drapery and soft goods and everything else. And we became extremely basic for New Castle. And today I would say that my success is that I'm a survivor if that's a success. I don't know what a success is, but there aren't, there's only a couple furniture stores left in this area. And most of the smaller towns don't have any furniture stores, some maybe one. And that's, that's a story of this whole area in retailing.

EL: Tell me what it was like to grow up Jewish in New Castle in the forties and fifties.

SS: Uh, well, every Sunday we would go to Sunday school, and it was extremely important that we were there, and extremely important that we learned about Judaism and the teachers we had were excellent. They were members of the congregation. One of the superintendents of the Sunday school was Katherine Levine and she had married into the faith and she was more Jewish than many of the Jewish members that we had which was really nice. I enjoyed the Sunday school but I was always glad to leave once Sunday school was over, which was always over around twelve o'clock, we would go, around ten for two hours.

EL: Did you have a lot of Jewish friends growing up?

SS: Oh yeah. A lot of Jewish, a lot of Jewish friends. I enjoyed AZA, was important to me, I was an Aleph Gadol and I thought that was really great, really outstanding that we could have a little organization and we would go to other towns and play in sports. And we would go to Beaver Falls, Aliquippa, Sharon, Butler, and we would play our hearts out no matter what it was. And I always looked forward to that and as a Jewish team we participated in the church league in the Y, the Y had a church league and the Jewish team was always well thought out and respected.

EL: This is basketball?

SS: In basketball, yeah, in basketball. And we had some winning teams. I enjoyed that a lot.

EL: Did you ever feel different growing up?

SS: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah. But I think we accepted it, I think it wasn't a matter of being angry. There was no anger. My parents taught me love and to be loved. And so I really didn't, I knew I was different and I really didn't resent it. And I knew that some people may not like me because I'm Jewish and I would just move on, find friends that would accept me. And I think in a small town it is different than being raised in a larger community like Pittsburgh or Philadelphia.

EL: What's the difference?

SS: I think the difference is that you're, we're thrown in more with the non-Jewish community, and we integrate a lot easier. That's, now, because I would sometimes see Jewish friends in Pittsburgh and, of course, their whole life was with Jewish friends. And here it wasn't that way at all, we were accepted. For the most part, we were very much accepted. And respected.

EL: That's very interesting. Did the congregation do a lot of work to make friends with the larger community or to improve its reputation or gain a reputation with the larger community?

SS: From an individual point of view, the members, the Jewish members of the community were very much involved in community activities. They were presidents of the Y, Red Cross, extremely active in the hospital board. A lot of, a lot of leadership came from the Jewish community. And I would say that percentage-wise we had more, a large percent of the Jewish community were extremely active and leaders in nonprofit activities. So we were proud of what we accomplished.

EL: What was the relationship between the two congregations like when you were growing up?

SS: They were pretty much separate except for the youth. The youth was the melting pot where the youth from the Conservative congregation would associate with the rest of, a Jew is a Jew. But the adults, growing up, pretty much kept to themselves, which now I don't understand. And when I was a youngster I really didn't question it. I really didn't know why or why that is, and I still don't know why that is, but there was very little effort to combine and have socials together. They just, it just didn't happen. I don't know about other communities. I'd like to know about other communities whether that was true or not.

EL: When you were growing up was there still a community in the south side of town?

SS: Yeah, yeah.

EL: So everyone hadn't moved over to the North Hill and Neshannock Township yet.

SS: No, no.

EL: Huh.

SS: No they were in the south side. And we, we didn't really associate with their group.

EL: That's interesting.

SS: Yeah it is, it really is.

EL: Do you think that, you say it doesn't make sense to you now, do you think that that's why it was possible to merge them eventually? Because people of your generation didn't understand why it needed to be separate?

SS: No, no. The reason they merged was strictly economics.

EL: Okay.

SS: In my opinion.

EL: Okay.

SS: Strictly economics.

EL: And it was a gradual process, right? Didn't the religious schools merge first, and then there was an attempt to merge, and then there was the successful merger. Is that right?

SS: Right.

EL: Okay.

SS: And then by the time you had a successful merger you still had a, you had a population that was very small. But it, but they merged.

EL: Was the merger hard on the congregations?

SS: Yeah, I think it was. I think there was the feeling that there would be a competitive situation between how services were going to be conducted, whether it was going to be a compromise with a Conservative instead of Orthodox, or where did the Reform fit in? And where is the power to be, are they the Orthodox, Reform, or Conservative congregants? And the Reform group wanted to maintain their Reform identity, and so, and I'm sure the Orthodox group wanted to do the same, and so that was where the problem existed.

EL: And the point of discussion, was it things like yarmulkes, how much Hebrew, what prayer service, were those the kinds of conversations that were going on?

SS: The yarmulke was accepted. I think the yarmulke was one of the first things that was probably accepted, if you want to wear it, okay, but if you don't want to wear it, it's okay. And I think the service was how do we conduct the service and how much Hebrew are we going to have and what, what is the service going to be like?

EL: Because people are used to certain things.

SS: They're used to certain things, yeah. And that's, so it worked out because of a shrinking population. If there wasn't a shrinking population we wouldn't have had one congregation, we'd still have two.

EL: Yeah. When the merger happened, why did they decide to go into the current building and sell the Temple Israel building as opposed to the reverse?

SS: The Conservative group had a new, newer building, and it just seemed like that would be okay.

EL: It would be less expensive to take care of things like that?

SS: Everything, yeah. The whole nine yards, I think it was a newer building would be okay. But let me tell you, I spent many Sunday afternoons playing basketball at the old Temple on Highland Avenue. I just loved to go there and the ceilings weren't, it was, it was obviously the first floor, ceilings weren't real high, and it wasn't a full scale basketball court.

EL: There was an indoor court?

SS: Indoor. It was you walk into the Temple, the main assembly room was open and if you wanted to have a meeting or whatever you'd have folding chairs, then you'd take them out and around the assembly room were little rooms where they would have Sunday school classes around. I think there might have been four, six, maybe four. Then they had a little addition that they had, another room, maybe four or six rooms at the most. And then they had a stage and we had two basketball hoops.

EL: Permanent, or they wheeled them in?

SS: No, they were permanent.

EL: And what was the surface of the floor?

SS: Wood.

EL: Huh.

SS: A wood floor.

EL: Were there lines on it?

SS: I don't think so, there might have been. If there were lines they might have worn off. Yeah, but no, I think it was just a plain floor. And we had so much fun there. And that's how we really practiced, and we would have one of the parents, or a couple of the parents

would be our coaches. And they enjoyed it as much as we did. And they were not necessarily Reform or Orthodox, they were just individuals that enjoyed the sport.

EL: Yeah.

SS: And one of them, I can remember his name was Eph (?) Solomon. And he was from the old synagogue on the south side and he just, he really enjoyed it. And another one years ago was Gus Slavonsky.

EL: I've heard about this Slavonskys.

SS: And he was active and would help us. And we had some outstanding, young Jewish players that made the high school team and played on the, were stars on the high school team.

EL: Who were the best players?

SS: Oh, Howie Meyers was a starter for New Castle.

EL: Was he related to Jimmy?

SS: No, I don't think so. Howie Meyers. Larry Haims, a little bit older, was an excellent player. I'm trying to think who else played, well some of the good players, Harvey Nixon was a good athlete and Allen Greenberg. I think he played high school. And there might have been a few that maybe I might have missed, but we had some really good athletes.

EL: Huh.

SS: And Howie played quarterback for the high school, for New Castle High School.

EL: He was an all-around.

SS: An all-around and a good student, and president of the class, so I mean, he was voted president and that was pretty nice.

EL: Was that a big deal for a Jewish kid to be president of the class?

SS: Yeah, I would think so, yeah. I mean there were other elements of the class and not everybody wanted Howie to be president of the class. And of course we only had maybe, I don't know, eleven, seven or eleven members of the class that were Jewish. And my class we had like five hundred and fifty or you know, around five hundred or five hundred and fifty students in that class. So you didn't even know everybody. So yeah, I think that was outstanding.

EL: You said that you went to the Army and then you went to the Wharton School, and what made you decide to come back to New Castle?

SS: I came back primarily because my father was not a well man, and I felt that if I didn't come back at that point in time there might not have been a business to come back to.

EL: And you knew you wanted to come back at some point

SS: Well, I knew that I may want to come back, I didn't know that I would want to come back. But I didn't go into another, into another field. So I did come back because at the time it was better to come back if you wanted to see what business was like, yes, I felt I needed to come back. And otherwise I probably would have gone into finance or into a different occupation.

EL: Did other Jewish kids your age come back after they went to school?

SS: Yeah. Yeah, some of them. Some of them did, sure. Yeah there was Jack Haims, his father had a ladies' store in town, I don't know if you know that name?

EL: No.

SS: He went to Michigan. Lynn Slavonsky went to Northwestern and came back into the area, taught at one of the universities, I think Illinois, and then he came, he worked for the Youngstown *Vindicator*, which is in the area, and then retired. Let's see, who else? Harvey Nixon worked, came back to New Castle, worked for his family. They had a meat slaughtering plant, a processing plant I would say. He came back, then he finally, he left the area. And you know some others. I don't know that coming back was so important. I think it was a matter of the family that you were associated with, whether you wanted to come back and that type of thing. I don't think you had to come back. I think it was a matter of whether you wanted to come back versus coming back without a job and saying I'd better come back excuse, than I can't find a job so I better go back and my parents will take me in. I don't think that was the case.

EL: Okay.

SS: If that's what you're...?

EL: I was just wondering if there was an expectation that children would come back and run the businesses or if, you know we've heard from a lot of people that at a certain point children just didn't want to, didn't see opportunities in New Castle anymore.

SS: Right.

EL: So we're trying to get a sense of when that...



SS: Yeah. I think, I think that was true. I think there, I look and say well, some come back in a professional field, but the opportunities were not here.

EL: When did that start to change?

SS: I think in the late seventies, in the seventies. I think before that, I think it looked like New Castle was still going to be okay. It might turn around, it might have these ups and downs but it would turn around. Now I think, now looking ahead, I don't see the opportunity unless you have a very creative type person that's coming to town, the professional field is limited now, just the population isn't there. So you go where you're going to find a larger population and you're going to find where you have more in common with associates in your field to stimulate your thinking and stimulate your education.

EL: Yeah.

SS: So that's how I see it right now.

EL: Did you ever marry?

SS: Oh yeah, I'm married, yeah. I have four children.

EL: Did you meet your wife in New Castle?

SS: I met my wife in Pittsburgh.

EL: How'd you meet her?

SS: A friend, through a friend.

EL: Was it hard to meet someone in New Castle, did you have to go to the city?

SS: It's limited, yeah it was very limited here. If you wanted to marry a Jewish woman the selection was limited in New Castle. Yeah, I would, yeah I think it was very, very limited. And I think that, you know, that's a reason not to live here too, there just aren't opportunities to find people you want to associate with or marry.

EL: Yeah. Was it different for your children growing up here than for you?

SS: I think they saw the limitations much sooner than I did in that in that regard. The opportunities weren't here for them. Business was... [phone rings] let me get that. Okay. I have, I have a daughter that is a principal of a school in San Francisco. I have a son that's a lawyer. One son's a lawyer who's in Detroit, outside of Detroit. He could probably live anywhere, but the opportunities and everything are much better, much greater elsewhere. And I have a son who has his own business, he's a financial analyst consultant. And he consults for a lot of different companies in the medical device field,

so he's niched. And he's also in San Francisco. So he's not going to do that here. He just loves it, and it's an exciting town and belongs to a congregation, maybe thirty-five hundred members.

EL: Wow.

SS: The largest congregation in that area.

EL: That's huge.

SS: It is. It is. And they do a great job. It's very stimulating to be there and see it. To see the growth in the area, it keeps growing.

EL: It must be remarkable coming from a small congregation like Temple Israel to see a big congregation like that.

SS: Oh, I'm sure, I'm sure yeah. You're not stimulated here, only in your capacity to self-stimulate, to stimulate yourself. You can't, you don't feel that.

EL: What do you think the future will be for the Jewish community in New Castle?

SS: I think it's going to continue to decline. I don't see, I don't see professional people wanting to come to New Castle. I see with the medical field, if there are Jewish doctors, they're going to live in Pittsburgh and be affiliated with the Pittsburgh community and maybe come here on a more outsourcing type of basis where the hospital would send them to New Castle twice a week, or three times a week, or whatever. I see that. I see colleges around here, the smaller ones, not attracting Jewish students. I see retail as almost extinct for small businesses, I don't see a future there at all. Manufacturing is nonexistent, and Jews aren't really into manufacturing too much, so we're not going to get manufacturing plants here, per say. I don't see that happening, so they're not going to be attracted or come to New Castle. I don't, don't see New Castle as being a separate community in the future. I see it being absorbed into the region. So if the region would grow then there might be some growth here, but I don't see that as attracting Jewish individuals to come, to come here. They may come because of, the region may push them in here, but other than that I don't see that they'll come.

EL: Yeah.

SS: It's just not, intellectually it's not gonna happen in the educational field. There's no stimulation here with a big university, we don't have that and that's what they want. So it's a shame, but that's the demise not only of the Jewish community in a small town, but it's certainly affecting the smaller community.

EL: Well, thank you so much for your time and your memories, this has been a really nice.

SS: Did you get any ideas, or just get some...

EL: Yes, this was a very good one.

SS: How, how- [recording cuts out]

END OF INTERVIEW