YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz

Personal Experience

O.H. 1508

GODFREY ANDERSON

Interviewed

by

Matthew Butts

on

July 10, 1992

GODFREY ANDERSON

Mr. Godfrey Anderson was born on July 13, 1924, in London, England, the son of Rex and Hilda Anderson. He attended secondary school in London, graduating in 1942.

Shortly after high school, Anderson entered the Royal Navy, serving in the Atlantic fleet from 1943 to 1946. At Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz's, his brother-in-law's, urging, Anderson immigrated to the United States, arriving in Youngstown, Ohio in the late 1940s. He studied accounting at Youngstown University. His college career was soon abandoned after he became one of the areas leading real estate developers.

Presently, Mr. Anderson continues to be involved in real estate in the Youngstown area. He resides with his wife Bessie, at 4440 Loganway Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio. He is involved with numerous local organizations, including the Youngstown Rotary, and Temple Rodef Sholom. Mr. Anderson spends much of his free time reading and fishing.

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INTERVIEWEE: GODFREY ANDERSON

INTERVIEWER: Matthew Butts

SUBJECT: Rabbi Berkowitz, Jewish, Youngstown, religion, Rodef Sholom, Berkowitz's impact on the development of the Jewish community

DATE: July 10, 1992

B: This is an interview with Godfrey Anderson for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Rabbi Sidney Berkowitz project, regarding the Youngstown Community and the Youngstown Jewish community, by Matthew Butts, at his place of employment, 4440 Logan Way, Youngstown, Ohio, on Friday, July 10, 1992, at 10:05 a.m.

We usually start off with some biographical background. Could you tell me something about your childhood, where you grew up, your education?

A: I was born in London, England in 1924. I was a small child, three years old, when we moved to Brussels, Belgium. With my parents, [I] lived there until I was 10. [We] moved back to England in about 1938--no, we moved back to London around 1935. Things were getting pretty sticky in Europe. We moved back to London, and [I] lived in England with my family until I joined the Royal Navy when I was 18, which was World War II, which had started. Before that, I had been evacuated out of London with all the other school children to get us away from the German air assault on London. So, my education was pretty much screwed up, except Belgium and British schools. When I came to this country 10 years later, after the war, I went to the predecessor

of Youngstown University, Youngstown College, then. [I] took the ACT test, or whatever it was then, to get in. I guess what I'd learned by the age of 13 and 14 was that you have to get into an American college. In fact, I took the test down on Wood Street. It was the Board of Education run by Dr. Essig at the time. I was called up into his office, because I had the second highest score in their history. Now, this is talking about me, not Sidney Berkowitz. Anyway, I took the class. Dr. Essig called me up into his office, because I had the second highest score in memory. The funniest part was I was in the 85th percentile on American history, but what I had done was buy a paperback the night before. (Laughter). It was all about the Green Back Party and the Silver Controversy. I thought it was funny, but anyway, I got into YSU, Youngstown college at the time. It was a damn good school, by the way, because they used people who were in the fields as professors. They were part-timers. They taught law at the time, and you had some very, very astute lawyers teaching, who did it for, actually, for the prestige of it, I guess, and the pleasure of imparting their knowledge. You had excellent accountants who taught accounting. You had excellent engineers, of course, teaching engineering, because you had Sheet & Tube here, and all of that. The purpose of Youngstown College, at that time, was to feed Sheet & Tube and companies like that with good engineers.

B: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

A: Yes. I have two sisters and a brother.

B: Their names are. . . ?

A: My brother, Ronnie--I'm going to see him in a couple of months--lives on the South Coast of France. He retired [and is now living] close to Nice. I have a sister who lives in Oxford, who was over here last year; and I have a sister who is Rabbi Berkowitz's widow, which is the reason why I'm in Youngstown at all. I came to look things over. They told me to try it for six months, and that was back in 1947. (Laughter). I'm still here.

B: When you arrived in Youngstown, what was it like physically?

A: Youngstown?

B: Yes.

A: Nice community, as most of America was, I would say. It was a much nicer place than it is now. You weren't

choked so much by regulation, by government. It still is a nice place, but it was a wonderful place, then.

B: What did the city look like, compared to today?

A: Today, it' a disaster, but then, it was very, very busy downtown. You had lots of women in babushkas carrying shopping bags in each hand, waiting for a bus, all down East Federal Street and West Federal Street.

Two things I did not like about Youngstown: one--there was good reason for it probably--men spat on the sidewalk, because they had to. They probably had a lot of dust in their lungs and stuff, and of course, smoking was much more prevalent. So, you always found spit on the sidewalk, which was horrible. If you left your car out at night, the next morning there would be, like graphite, flecks of graphite all over it, shiny graphite from the mills. But, other than that, it was a nice community. It was much more structured, and these were the days when women wore corsets and white gloves, you know. (Laughter). The country's changed quite a bit. [There was] much less obscenity, then.

B: When you arrived here, or the time that you've been living in Youngstown, would you describe it as an ethnic community? Was there ethnic neighborhoods, Italian, Polish? When you arrived, was that still very strong?

A: Yes, much stronger than now. But, I think it was much more peaceful and such. Now, you find that the ethnic groups are much more mixed than they were.

I would say that the one ethnic group which has been hurt the most is the Black community. At that time, you had Black men and Black women, American, from America. They had good jobs. They were working very hard to put their kids through school, to give their kids a good education; and the kids had great hopes. But, now you've taken away the job opportunities. And so, when the young Blacks graduate, there's nowhere to go, maybe in Chicago, New York, or places like that, but not here. Although, that's a separate subject. But, it's a shame to see the breakdown, and it's because of the loss of jobs. That's a whole other subject, but I would say that that's the community that's been hurt the most.

The expansion of Youngstown University destroyed a tremendous amount of low income homes on the North hill. When those people had to move, they would get $8,000 [or] $9,000 for their house from the Urban Renewal Program, and then, they would have to go and try and find a house. Many of them were in their 60s

and 70s, and they couldn't find a similar house for the same price; and they couldn't get a mortgage. So, it put them in a bind, and many had to move into Kimmel Brook Housing and Westlake on Griffith Street and things like that, which are failed social experiments. You take people out of their own home--which is one of the reasons, I feel, for the problems in the community. Although, Youngstown community is still a very stable one. There is very little racial strife, I feel.

B: How about the Jewish community? Was it centered in any part of the city?

A: Mainly, the North Side, but then you had the South Side temple, and you had a group developing there. I would say mainly the North Hill. Then, they moved out to Liberty and scattered.

B: How about the South Side Jewish population and the North Side Jewish population? Was there any difference? Was the South Side possibly from, say Eastern Europe, while the North Side was German Jews?

A: No.

B: No?

A: The main problem with the South Side community was the young kids would have to go to the Jewish Center, which is up on Gypsy Lane, and that created an inconvenience for the Southsiders, but they survived. Then--this was before I became very much aware of the Jewish community--when I came over here, when the Rabbi came in, the leaders of the Jewish community were mainly of German background. And, they looked down--and this they inherited from Germany--upon the Eastern Jews from the Ukraine, Russia, and Poland.

Then, of course, earning your living is the great leveler, and inter-marriage between different groups, that sort of leveled itself out, too. I think Sidney Berkowitz had a great deal to do with that. He opened up the temple membership. He slapped down the ones who felt that the Germans were better. (Laughter). Plain and simple, he had a beautiful way of handling it. I would say he did a great deal to meld the Jewish community. Well, he was the catalyst of the Jewish Community.

B: Were there all three sects of Judaism present in Youngstown when you arrived? Were Orthodox and conservative here?

A: Oh, yes. There was Anshe Emeth, which merged with Emanuel and is now El Emeth Temple in Liberty. You had

The Children of Israel. They had closed the temple down on Summit Street. . . . Boy, I'm reaching back! They created a new temple on Fifth Avenue in about the 1800 block. They took an old house there. Then, we had Temple Emanuel, which was conservative, which was a break away from Anshe Emeth. That's sort of a meeting place for older citizens now, I think. Emanuel rejoined Anshe Emeth when they moved to Liberty.

B: Do you remember the first time you met Dr. Berkowitz?

A: About 1938 in Hove, which is next to Brighton, on the South Coast of England. We lived there. We belonged to a reform temple, which is called Liberal in England. And, there were no rabbis to service that branch of Judaism. It was relatively new. Your rabbi either came from Germany, the Liberal branch of Germany, or from Cincinnati, in America. Our minister left suddenly, and we needed someone to fill in. Sidney Berkowitz was a student at Cambridge, and so, he came down to handle Friday night services until we came up with a replacement. That's when he met my sister, and they lived happily ever after. (Laughter). He was very smart. He knew to be very nice to his bride-to-be's little brother, so. . . . (Laughter).

B: Could you tell me a little bit about how they got you to come to Youngstown?

A: It wasn't that he got me to come to Youngstown. The war ended when I was in England, and I was pretty much at a loose end. I had a job and everything, but they were difficult times. I had a job at the West end of London. And, my sister came over. She wanted her family around her, some members of the family, and she felt I could do better here than. . . . And, there was a great love between us. Our mother died when I was about 14. I was always very close to my sister. I still am. She said, "Why don't you try?" I didn't want to leave England. I wasn't a refugee of England or anything. I mean, I wasn't thrown out of England. I felt I was well treated. They said, "Give it a try." Sidney said, "Okay, if he could pay his own fare over. . . ." He was only earning about $6,000 a year then. He was a rabbi. He never earned much. Money wasn't very important to him. That's another thing. He said, "If you could pay your own way over, we'll see that you're taken care of once you're here. You can come live with us." I had to be vouched for, and Sidney's Berkowitz's father, Harrison Berkowitz, from Terre Haute, Indiana, sponsored me. He was a wonderful, just a sweet, loving guy.

Funny thing. I went to the American Embassy with a letter from him that was to vouch for me for 12 months.

That was what was legal in those days. And, the guy there read it through and said, "This letter tells me--" the letter from Harrison Berkowitz's bank manager--"that Harrison Berkowitz is a wonderful man, but no where does it say that he'll vouch for you." I said, "Well, I'll get another letter." He said, "No. It's not necessary. I know the intent." (Laughter).

So, when I came to the States, I went to Terre Haute, Indiana. Well, I came here first. But, when I went to Terre Haute, Indiana and met Harry Berkowitz, he said, "I'm going to make an American out of you." So, he took me downtown and got me a good shoe shine and a shave. He said, "Okay, now you're ready to go." (Laughter).

B: When you first met Dr. Berkowitz, could you--well, I guess he wasn't Dr. Berkowitz because he was still technically at Cambridge.

A: He had his doctorate then. I mean, he was working on his thesis, a biblical commentary on the life of Amos. He didn't have his doctorate yet, but I understand he graduated from high school at the age of 16.

B: Yes.

A: Could be that he would have been a rabbi when he was 21, but his parents held him back, rightfully so. Then, they held him back with intent, with reason. They didn't just want him pressured beyond his years.

B: Okay. Did anybody have a copy of his thesis or his dissertation?

A: My sister might. I remember I read it once. I just paged through, but I wanted to know what his thesis was. I'm sure I did look at it. It's around. Check with Pauline Berkowitz. I don't think she would have thrown it away.

B: Getting back to the subject. We were side tracked a little bit here. What did he look like?

A: His features. . . . He had a scar on his upper left lip from the repair of a cleft palate, but strictly by practice, he became a fantastic orator. He could project. He could speak in a low voice, and you could hear it a long way away, if he wanted you to. He had complete control over his vocal cords. I think it was just due to practice and intent. When you say what did he look like, I don't think you knew one minute after you met him, because his personality invalidated it.

It sounds strange. He was not a big man, physically, but he dwarfed men twice his size. He had very tiny hands, very soft, like a woman's hand. But, you didn't see him. [He was] a very introverted person.

B: When he arrived in Youngstown, did he immediately revolve into the plethora of organizations and causes?

A: No. Dr. Philo, whom he came here to replace, must have been in the military, because he retreated inch by inch. He gave up ground with great difficulty. Berkowitz had to earn every single bit of recognition. Nothing was handed to him on a silver platter, no. That's all I can say. Is that satisfactory?

B: Yes. That's fine.

A: And he had to fight, don't forget. You're talking 1946, right after World War II. There was still--you mentioned ethnics.

B: Right.

A: The WASPS--he is the one who broke down most of the barriers when he came. The WASPS didn't particularly--they spoke down to the Jews. The Italians acted like Italians, and the Poles acted like Poles, you know. There was still separate communities. That may be counter to what I said originally, but you did have more--the ethnic groups were more clearly defined.

B: Speaking about how he broke down the bounds in Youngstown, how did you perceive his role within the Youngstown community?

A: It was as if every group was made of wax. You put them on the stove, and you just lose them to each other. In certain ways, the Jewish community made people realize the Jews didn't have horns. It wasn't that he brought Jews together with Catholics so much as he made people get to know people. Underneath it all, it has nothing to do with him, but I understood when they showed--where they had Fiddler on the Roof playing in Japan--one Japanese leans over to this person and said, "You know Tevia, that's my father." In other words, people are people everywhere. These artificial barriers of nationality and race and everything is phony. It's strictly put up--it's not real. And, when you get an opportunity for one group to meet another group, they realize there is no difference to speak of. . . . He was, I would say more than anyone I've ever known, able to bring one group together with another to see each other. He became President of Rotary. It was unbelievable, at the time, that a Jew would ever become

the President of Rotary. And for a rabbi, it would have been unheard of. But, he did it strictly by his innate intelligence, decency, and humaneness. What does a genius look like? Looks like anybody else. Just happens to have a quality that's unique. The American Red Cross was like the Cancer Society, a bastion of WASP-ism. He became not just the Chairman of the local American Red Cross, which alone was unheard of, but he was put on the National Committee in Washington. There he was, sitting next to Avrill Harriman, listening to a personal address by Nixon, President of the United States. Here's a little Jewish rabbi from Terre Haute, Indiana, sitting at the fountainhead of the American Red Cross in Washington. They didn't do it because he had brown eyes. They did it because of his competence. He had tremendous competence in strategy and organization and his humanity. Any time there was a meeting and he chaired it, you walked away from that meeting saying, "Okay, we've achieved something." He didn't waste time. But, he sort of got things moving in the right direction, followed an agenda, and made every minute count.

B: Okay. You mentioned Rotary and the American Red Cross. Do you know of any other organizations he got involved in?

A: (Laughter) He went one day with a fez on! He was an honorary member of the Buckeye Elks. (Laughter) The community made him chaplain. He came home in a pair of fireman's boots. He was also the chaplain to the Youngstown Fire Department, fireman's hat and all. I mean, if there was a full alarm fire, they'd call him. (Laughter) He'd go out. He loved it. I mean, can you imagine being the rabbi for the fire department with a bunch of Italians! (Laughter). He loved them and they loved him!

The president of Youngstown University called on him to arbitrate a dispute between a fired professor who was suing the university. He accepted on the condition that his findings would be accepted by both sides without question, which was agreed upon. Another unpaid community project that took days of research.

B: I've done some work with a couple of movements, like he Civil Rights Movement. Was he very active with it in Youngstown?

A: He wasn't the kind of a person--Charlie Chaplin, in the movie Modern Times, you know, at the head of the crowd waving a red flag--he wasn't that kind of a person. He just quietly followed his beliefs. He wasn't a waffler. He took a position, and there was no question in anybody's mind when it came to civil rights.

When Pope John had his--whatever it was--and permitted nuns and priests to communicate with Jews or something. . . . It's not my field, but Bishop Malone. . . . Rodef Sholom was the first temple in the country where the nuns came to find out about Judaism. I was present at the time. All the nuns in those days wore black habits, which made them stand out. They would listen to the service, and then, he would take them around to the altar and show them the sacred objects, which dispelled many of their previous impressions. Rodef Sholom, from what I understand, was the first temple in the country [and] first in the world where--which, at that time, the Catholic church was much more polarized than it is now--they came and saw for themselves. They realized when they Anglecized--they no longer did their services in Latin--if you translate from Hebrew into English and Latin into English, they were very similar. Before then, it was as if there was a great chasm in between. I don't know if I'm answering your question or not.

B: Yes. This is perfect. I had a seminar class on war, and his name came up a lot with the Vietnam anti-war movement.

A: I don't have an answer there. I don't remember his position. Isn't it funny? I don't remember his position on it. He did not belong to the "hell no we won't go" group.

B: Right.

A: That I can tell you. I know that, as a veteran and a patriot, he did not approve. And, I'm saying that without hearing a statement from him. Based on his general attitude, he did not approve of Vietnam. Did he actively go out, waving the flag? No.

B: Okay. Can you think of any other activities within the Youngstown community which he was very active in?

A: It's easy to say everything. Let me give you an idea how he operated. It started in a very quiet way. I mean, he had tremendous influence, all over. How can I put it? Supposing you had a son who was 22 years old, or 18 years old, and he was picked up in some little southern town on some charge. Today it would be drugs, I guess. He was jailed on some charge, and he spent the night in some little cracker town in Georgia. And you were frantic, and you were the head of a large corporation here in Youngstown--I don't really have names. You call the police, and nobody can do anything for you. You call your lawyer, and the lawyer says, "Why not give Berky a call. You met him in Rotary.

See what he can do." So, the guy calls Berky. Berky says, "Well, I'll see what I can do." So, he gets on the phone. He probably knows the rabbi nearest the community, and that rabbi probably knew the police chief or the local sheriff and said, "He's a good kid. He just made a mistake. Why don't you let him go? We'll control him." The kid's let out, and he's on his way.

You are the father, here in Youngstown. You can't believe your good luck, you know; you're happy. You're going to beat the shit out of the kid. (Laughter). So, you go back to Berkowitz and say, "How can I thank you? What can I do for you?" And Berkowitz says, "Nothing. Happy to do it for you. Some day, you can do me a favor." So, maybe six months later, or maybe three months later, or the next day, a guy comes into his office, crying. He lost his job. He's got a wife and three kids. He may not even be Jewish, but he's heard of Dr. Berkowitz. Dr. Berkowitz can do miracles. He comes in crying. He needs a job, and he needs a job badly. So, Berkowitz picks up the phone, calls the guy and says, "Will you do me a favor? I have a man here, a good man, good reputation, family man. [He] lost his job. Could you place him somewhere?" The guy says, "Sure. I would be delighted to." He's repaying Berkowitz. So, the guy has a job, and the father still owes Berkowitz, because Berkowitz took nothing for himself; and that was the key to his influence on people. He never took anything for himself. He would never take fees for marriages, for funerals. [He] never took a fee. Never wanted it, that's why we had more cufflinks than you could shake a stick at and ties, because people had to find something for him. But then, you had this guy who was unemployed. When the rabbi found him a job, he got him out of a mess. He is obligated to Berkowitz. This other guy, the father, still thinks Berkowitz was a wonderful man. I mean, it's permutation. He had this network. That's the only way I can put it. People thought he was God, because he did these things for them. The thread through the whole thing was he never took one thing for himself. He struggled financially. He was a very, very frugal person. Even his children--both his children are very well educated; they had a natural--well, it's easy to be smart when your father insists on you getting the grades. He was the best father in the world. He came from a big family and he loved everybody in his family. His kids did very well. I wish mine were doing so well. (Laughter). One became the curator of the Toledo Museum.

B: What was the name?

A: Roger Berkowitz. He looks very much like him, very gentle person. Then, there's Larry Berkowitz, who is a plastic surgeon, who has done extremely well because of his skills, his artistic skills. And, God knows where that came from. The love of the father came through to the kids. They were very fortunate.

B: What were some of the personality traits? Everybody usually mentions his sense of humor.

A: Oh, yes.

B: What were some of his other personality traits?

A: He was immaculate about his body. The way I remember it, he bought two summer suits a year and two winter suits a year and gave away the other ones, so that, he was always a fashion plate. People always gave him ties. So, he always had a crisp shirt, a crisp collar, a crisp tie; and that's a personality trait. In each raincoat and overcoat, he had a pair of gloves in the pocket to get out when it was cold. He had gloves in the pocket so that he didn't have to fish around. He was well organized. Personality trait? He was probably the best organized person I've ever known. He knew where every minute of his day was going to be. If a meeting was to start at 11:00, that meeting started at 11:00, period. That was it. He was extremely well organized. Had to be, or he would have gone crazy. . . .

B: How about with his free time, which I don't think there was much. Did he have any hobbies or anything?

A: No hobbies whatsoever. I suggested to him once, "Since you never, never take gifts from people--you always help people, and you never accept anything." It was common with our ministers, our rabbis that they get paid for a wedding, they get paid for a funeral, they accept gratuities, whatever it is. He wouldn't take anything like that. That's why he got ties from congregants. I used to say to him, "Why don't you tell people that you save coins; that's your hobby. Perhaps when you retire, you'll have a beautiful coin collection that you can retire on." Well, he thought it might be fun, but he never did anything like that. I wish he had. I wish he had money. My sister might have a beautiful condo in Vail, Colorado, and I could go and visit her. But, he had no hobbies. I think I can say that categorically. He had no time for social reading, if that's the word, because he used to do wonderful book reviews. He would read very quickly, and he'd absorb very quickly. I'm sure he enjoyed what he read, but he didn't read to pass the time. He had no hobbies whatsoever, but he liked gadgets.

At the time, when American cars had planned obsolecense built in, he sold his car every two years. The only reason that changed, by the way, was because they extended the financing to four years. They wanted the cars to last longer than the financing. He would trade his car in every two years. He liked all the latest gimmicks on his car. How he did these things on his low income. . . . I mean, he was an extremely good manager of money, too. No hobbies. That was your question.

B: How about his sense of humor? What was it like?

A: It wasn't slapstick. I can't remember anything. I remember driving up Fifth Avenue once, coming back from Rotary. I was spouting I was positive. He said, "Are you positive?" I said, "Sure, I'm positive." He said, "Are you 100 percent positive?" I said, "Yes!" He said, "What about 96 percent positive? Isn't it possible?" I said, "All right, 96 percent." He said, "Well, if you're 96 percent positive, you're not really positive, are you?" I said, "I guess you're right." (Laughter). Now, is that humor?

B: Yes.

A: It is humor, but it isn't humor like a guy standing up and saying, "I've been told to make a funny joke when I make a speech." It was pure humor that came from a high intelligence. (changed the tape).

You asked me about humor. You know the ads we've seen lately from Volkswagen about Fahrgenigan or something?

B: Yes.

A: He loved this ad. He grabbed on that expression. He thought it was so funny. And he'd use it in conjunction with other things, because the words sounded so funny to his ear, and it was funny.

When you talk about him, you laugh [and] you smile, because the aura, the ray, that came from his personality. You felt good even when you saw him. Some people make you feel good even when you think about them. It's most unusual.

B: Moving to the temple at Rodef Sholom, could you describe it to me?

A: What, the temple?

B: The temple. Yes, please.

A: When I first saw it, it was drab. It had theatre seats that flipped up--very, very ordinary. It had sort of a musty smell. Within a few years, he whipped things together, raised the money to improve things. He raised $30,000. At that time, it was an unbelievable amount. He raised $30,000 to redo the social hall, which was a dingy basement, which is still being used. And, he raised the money to redo the inside of the temple, which is beautiful to this day.

I used to have a seat covering business, and I'd repair some of the seats. When there was a rip in it, I'd tear it out and put it back. Again, coming back to Berkowitz, he made you feel that it was a privilege to do things for the temple. Not just me, I mean, everybody does. He let them do it. That was his expression. "I'll let you do it." For instance--I know I'm getting off your question--I always raised my dues before people would ask me, because he would come to me and say, "You know the dues committee is meeting. I think they will be asking for more. "Why don't you do something about it before they ask?" So, I'm sure, if he did it with me, he did it with a lot of other people. He was always directly involved in the finances of the temple. Other rabbis say, "We don't handle money." It's below their dignity. He was a super salesman, had to be. He went after dues increases from people. He saw that the temple was well funded. Again, he never asked anything for himself, which I feel was a fault. But, this is the man, and who am I to criticize that kind of a man.

Also, I was in the real estate business, still am. If somebody came into town with a name that you knew could only be Jewish, I would tell him, or he would hear it from other sources. He would go out and meet the family and invite them to join the congregation. That's why his congregation went from--when he came to Youngstown, it was probably 100 families. He went up to probably 750 families, not individuals, families. [It] became the biggest temple in the area. Now, it isn't, because the previous rabbi and the present rabbi--this isn't any criticism of them. They considered themselves ministers. They don't consider increasing membership their job. He knew the value of creating a strong base, I guess. He went after every single, human lead. He followed every lead, and I think he would have signed up Bishop Malone if he could have. (Laughter)

B: (Laughter) How about, what did it look like from where he would give a sermon in the temple? What would it physically look like?

A: He'd just stand behind the lectern and start talking, and sometimes he'd move from one side or the other. Invariably, he'd check the air conditioning or the heat. He did that systematically. He would tap the furnace switch, but I feel that was just to let his mind--thought process work. [It] gave himself a . . . who knows? Every single sermon--this I know, because I originally lived in his home. When I came to this country, I moved in with him and my sister. The brother-in-law moved in.

Okay, here's an example. Every sermon was worked on many hours, much research. Present day ministers and all of them, I'm sure, get these books of sermons, change a few words, and spout them out. And you can tell the difference. Everything he had was a jewel, a polished jewel. It would create a great deal of discussion. Same with the people who didn't show up. That's their problem. They missed it; that's tough. But, it was a good one, because he changed patterns and things. So, he ended up with much better attendance. His sermons were brief, saying that a soul could not be saved after the first 20 minutes.

B: Are there any specific sermons that you remember [that] were very important for you?

A: No. No. I'm not a very. . . . I believe in God, but I'm not a go-to-church-every-Sunday type of person, or a go-to-temple-every-Friday [person].

B: What do you think Rabbi Berkowitz's impact was on the Youngstown Jewish community? Is it along lines of acceptance with. . . ?

A: He was accepted. They knew he was there. People told us after he died that they felt more secure when he was in town. Just knowing he was there. . . . There was a little bit of rivalry because he represented Rodef Sholom and he was reform, and they were conservative or they were orthodox. He was the spokesman for the community. It was difficult for rabbis, especially good ones who shined in their community normally, to be compared to someone who definitely was not the norm. It was somewhat unfair to them. He had many opportunities, I think, of being rabbi in much larger communities; but he was happy being what he was, where he was, doing what he was doing.

The inside of his robe was crimson. It came from Cambridge; he was a Cambridge man. Once, Bishop Malone was wearing his red robe, and they were talking together, and he said, "I wear mine on the inside."

I have a great deal of respect for Bishop Malone. Bishop Malone came from a background which had not exposed him to the Jewish people. All he knew about Jews was learned from his faith and his background, which was somewhat distorted. I'm choosing my words here, because I have tremendous respect for the British. I think meeting Sidney Berkowitz and being as close as they were helped Malone become the unprejudiced person that he is. I know it gave him an entirely different picture of Judaism and a very favorable one. It probably eliminated the tremendous amount of potential bigotry from upbringing. It was all eliminated because he knew it wasn't true. Am I expressing this all properly?

B: Right.

A: I don't want to make it sound as if I'm criticizing Malone, because it certainly wouldn't be fair. But, Dr. Berkowitz exposed Malone to Judaism, and that may have given him the strength to permit the nuns to come to Rodef Sholom. Pope John was very radical and brave in authorizing this in the Vatican II document on interfaith relations.

B: You spoke about Bishop Malone coming to Rodef Sholom. Did Dr. Berkowitz take the opportunity to give a sermon or. . . ?

A: All of the churches did, yes.

B: Was there any churches in particular. . . ? I spoke to Attorney Bob Hammond. The First Christian Church of Youngstown, Reverend Eugene C. Beech. . . ?

A: Beech? Yes. That was downtown, I think, where the Mahoning Bank is. Yes, the Church of Friendly Bells. I'm sure he spoke in all of them. That's a given. He was called upon to speak everywhere. In fact, all organizations. . . . They knew that when he spoke, people would walk out happy and laughing. They had a good time, but it wasn't slap stick humor. He didn't come out with a banjo under his arm. He made his point in a very intelligent way. He just wrapped it in humor.

B: Is there anything we haven't touched on? Do you think we need to add or. . . ?

A: From a personal viewpoint, his father had given him a little bit of stock in a company, a public company, which gradually had actually grown and grown. He never sold it, because his dad gave it to him. His father wasn't a wealthy man. He started a family during the Depression. I was in the real estate business, and I

thought I saw an opportunity out on Mahoning Avenue. I asked him to join me in it, and we became partners. He had a very good mind. He didn't involve himself in business projects in any way at all, but I was his brother-in-law and he wanted to help me. So, he put up the stock, as collateral for me to get a loan to borrow the money to buy the land, and we went 50-50. So, I bought the property, and I leased the land out. A supermarket was put on it and some other things. [I] paid back the loan to the bank and released his collateral. He had a share in the property, because the mortgage and everything had to be paid out, but he did it strictly to get me started. While he didn't put up any cash, the collateral does get called upon if the things don't go right. It showed tremendous faith in me. He put his money where his mouth was, and I think he always did. He always put his money where his mouth was. It was a wonderful thing for me. It got me started. Eventually, we sold the property. He took his, and I took mine. His part of it is what his widow is living on now.

One thing, he was my brother-in-law. He was my closest friend.

B: Yes.

A: But, he was also many, many, many other people's closest friend, which was because it was his ability to make you feel that you could trust him implicitly, and he was your closest friend. And if you met him today, you would walk away with a warm feeling that you'd won something that day. That you weren't alone anymore. This man was genuine, that's all.

B: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time. It was very good.

A: Well, you got it all. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW