

Oral History of: Irwin I. Cohn
Interviewed by: Mary Baroff
Date of Interview: July 1975
Location of Interview: Office of Irwin Cohn

Mary Baroff: [00:00:01](#) This is an interview with Irwin I. Cohn, a prominent leader in the metropolitan Detroit community. In connection with the 75th anniversary celebration of the United Jewish Charities, and the 50th anniversary of the Jewish Welfare Federation, these organizations have undertaken to record the memories and experiences of a number of community leaders, which highlight developments in the organized Jewish community.

Mary Baroff: [00:00:31](#) This interview with Mr. Cohn is being taped in his office in July of 1975. The interviewer is Mary Baroff.

Mary Baroff: [00:00:42](#) Mr. Cohn, before we begin talking about your community activities, could you tell me a little bit about yourself? Where you were born, when you were born?

Irwin Cohn: [00:00:52](#) I was born in Detroit in 1896. And lived on the lower east side of Detroit for many years. The Jewish population lived primarily south of Gratiot and north of Gratiot. South of Gratiot, I would say, the extent of three or four blocks and north of Gratiot 10 to 15 blocks. It was east of Woodward and on the west, bounded really by Russell Street.

Irwin Cohn: [00:01:37](#) At that time, there were about four, five, or 6000 Jews in the entire community. And the population of Detroit was in the low hundreds of thousands. My parents came to Detroit direct from Lithuania in the early 1880s. My father really decided to come ... to leave Lithuania because at that time there was conscription in the Army and the Jewish men who entered the Army were discriminated against and treated other than the average individual and therefore, they did not want to enter into the Army and they migrated to the United States.

- Mary Baroff: [00:02:38](#) How did they select Detroit?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:02:40](#) My father started out as a peddler of dry goods, carrying a pack on his back and traveling by train towards Monroe, Michigan. He would then go on foot from farmhouse to farmhouse and sell them his merchandise. He would stay at a farmhouse overnight. He left Detroit on a Sunday morning and would come back Friday in time for Shabbos, and would stay over Shabbos.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:03:24](#) A large number of the immigrants who came to Detroit did the same thing, peddling in other areas. There were wholesale dry goods houses in Detroit owned by Jews and they would give them credit. In this way, they made a living.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:03:45](#) As a result of all this, in the 1890s my father went into the wholesale dry goods business himself, and continued in the wholesale dry goods business until 1917, when he retired. The name of his company was the Detroit Dry Goods Wholesale Company.
- Mary Baroff: [00:04:11](#) Where was that located around?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:04:12](#) It was located on Gratiot Avenue, first east of Hastings Street and then west of Hastings Street. As a matter of fact, his first store was on Hastings Street just north of Gratiot Avenue. He employed a horse and wagon to deliver merchandise to the various retailers who bought from him. I remember this distinctly.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:04:38](#) Also, there were quite a number of Jews living in Canada, Windsor, who peddled merchandise. And they would come over on Sunday morning and buy the merchandise from my father at his store, I remember distinctly. And they would take the merchandise back to Windsor by means of the boat, which went across the Detroit River. In order to avoid paying duty they would wrap the merchandise around their bodies and in that way, they entered Canada without paying any duty.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:05:16](#) A number of the prominent names in Canadian life and in Windsor are descendants of the people who were buying this merchandise. I remember as a kid going down to the store on a Sunday morning and watching these people come and buy the merchandise.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:05:36](#) My father was quite successful in the wholesale dry goods business. And a number of people in Detroit, who later became

prominent in Jewish life, were employed by my father when they came to the United States. As a matter of fact, I know of two of them who ended up as presidents of Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

- Mary Baroff: [00:06:00](#) Who were they?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:06:01](#) Ike Shetzer and Maurice Zacheim. Ike Scherzer eventually ended up in the wholesale dry goods business himself. And this is the way life was carried on.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:06:16](#) I went to the local schools and walked quite a distance to go to grammar school and high school. I walked from High Street, which is now Vernor Highway, and Beaubien, to High and Grand River to go to school. Nobody thought of busing or anything to do with busing. Walked this distance rain, snow, or good weather. It made no difference.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:06:48](#) I graduated from the Cass High School before it was a technical school. I then proceeded to go to the University of Michigan and graduated from the law school in 1917. Upon my graduation, I went to work for a very prominent firm in Detroit. It consisted of one Jew and one non-Jew, and I worked for them for many years and got a great deal of experience, which stood me very well in my future practice.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:07:21](#) I became interested in Jewish life and in working with Jewish institutions and organizations through the fact that Mr. Ben Selling, who was my original boss, had served as president at Temple Beth El, had served as president of the United Jewish Charities, and was a very prominent Jewish worker. As a result of all this, I became interested in the charities and in the Federation, and proceeded to work along that way.
- Mary Baroff: [00:07:57](#) Could we backtrack just a little bit. I'd like to talk with you just a bit about the Jewish community, as it was during the period of your youth. We talked a little bit about the economic way of life, the peddlers, the small businessmen in the area, but was the social and cultural and religious atmosphere at the time?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:08:27](#) The social life revolved around the synagogues. We had Congregation Shaarey Zedek, we had Temple Beth El, we had Congregation Beth Jacob, we had a shul below Gratiot Avenue, known as the Mullet Street Shul. And life really revolved around the synagogues and the temples. And that's the way we carried on our life.

Mary Baroff: [00:08:59](#) Do you remember anything of what the major needs for social resources were in the Jewish communities [crosstalk 00:09:06]?

Irwin Cohn: [00:09:06](#) Yes. The major works in the Jewish communities in my early life were to assist immigrants who came into the United States and to take care of the needy. We furnished medical service for the needy. We furnished them clothing, bed clothing, and items of that nature. And that was the principal work.

Mary Baroff: [00:09:37](#) How were they furnished? What were they [crosstalk 00:09:41]?

Irwin Cohn: [00:09:40](#) Well, they finally organized the United Jewish Charities. And through this organization, it became organized charity. And they had sewing circles. The women would sew items for the poor people, would sew items for children that were born, furnish them diapers and things of that nature. And also the immigrants, they would try to get immigrants jobs and they would supply them with the wherewithal to live while they were in need. And that was the principal charity.

Mary Baroff: [00:10:25](#) Do you remember the facilities themselves that furnished ... for example, do you remember the High Street [crosstalk 00:10:34]?

Irwin Cohn: [00:10:33](#) Oh yeah. I remember the beginning on High Street when they erected the Hannah Schloss Building. The Schloss family were a wealthy family, comparatively speaking, and they built this beautiful brick building and I think that the total cost was \$12,500. And we had gymnasium there, and I played basketball with the Adriatic Team there. I played baseball with the Adriatic Team. And we were able to get showers. I remember, I think a towel used to cost us a penny or two pennies. And that was the center of activities for the average Jewish boy. That was on High, just west of Hastings Street.

Irwin Cohn: [00:11:20](#) All the kids had one good time. We had manual training there. And we had an athletic director. We had wonderful basketball teams, different ages, and it became the entire center of the Jewish youth.

Mary Baroff: [00:11:37](#) So that actually probably many of the people that you know today were people that you knew through your activities at the High Street Center.

Irwin Cohn: [00:11:44](#) Oh yes, very much so, yes. It was really a beehive of activity.

Mary Baroff: [00:11:52](#) Let me ask you this: Who were some of the leaders of the Jewish community at the time of-

Irwin Cohn: [00:12:01](#) The leaders of the Jewish community were David W. Simons, who was a wealthy man; as a matter of fact, controlled the bank in Hamtramck which was a little village then, or area. He was president of Shaarey Zedek shul for many years. He was elected an alderman in the city of Detroit, and was a man of good heart, and a man who used his money to help everybody. Period.

Irwin Cohn: [00:12:36](#) There was a man named Bernard Ginsburg, who at that time was a wealthy man, whose name was uppermost in the minds of all Jews because of the good he did. His daughter still lives in the city of Detroit, Mrs. Julian Krolik. And Bernard Ginsburg was really one of the outstanding Jews at that time. There were the Sломans, Adolph Sломan was a very prominent lawyer and an outstanding individual. He has grandchildren in the community.

Mary Baroff: [00:13:18](#) Was he active in community activities?

Irwin Cohn: [00:13:25](#) Not to a great extent. There was Monroe Rosenfeld. I remember him distinctly. His son is, I think, the choir leader in Temple Beth El now. And he was an outstanding man.

Irwin Cohn: [00:13:42](#) There was the Krolik family, who were outstanding Jews in the community, did a lot of good. They were in the wholesale dry goods business. And you could go along, there were a large number of people who really lent their time, effort, and attention to the welfare of the Jewish community.

Mary Baroff: [00:14:04](#) Did they mostly contribute through the United Jewish Charities?

Irwin Cohn: [00:14:09](#) Yes. Yes, they did.

Mary Baroff: [00:14:11](#) In other words-

Irwin Cohn: [00:14:12](#) And they contributed through the shuls, the congregations. We had rabbis who were very active and worked very hard.

Mary Baroff: [00:14:21](#) Who were the rabbis that were-

Irwin Cohn: [00:14:28](#) The cantors were outstanding. We had one cantor called [inaudible 00:14:33]. He was known all over. The rabbis, Rabbi Hershman later, was one of the community leaders. Rabbi Leo Franklin of Temple Beth El was a community leader back from the days of my childhood. He did a good job, worked with the

United Jewish Charities, and was outstanding. I just can't call to mind-

- Mary Baroff: [00:15:01](#) Rabbi Leo Franklin was one of the very early [crosstalk 00:15:04]-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:15:04](#) I just mentioned Leo. Yeah.
- Mary Baroff: [00:15:08](#) Yeah. Let me ask you this: From what elements in the Jewish community did most of the people come? Were they mostly related to the synagogues?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:15:19](#) I would say most of them were related to the synagogue and the temple, see. And they functioned mainly through that source.
- Mary Baroff: [00:15:30](#) Would you say that your own influence to participate in the community activities-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:15:36](#) I think my participation in the community came from the shul, the congregation. I think I got my basis and foundation. Peculiarly, I had never eaten non-kosher meat until my junior year at the University of Michigan, because I couldn't get it there. Subsequently, after I got out of school, there was a shul called the Taylor Street Shul, which I attended. They had a rabbi whose name was Rabbi Ashinsky. Originally he came from Pittsburgh. My father was a vice-president of that shul at one time. I attended the services once and I heard a sermon delivered by Rabbi Ashinsky on kosher, non-kosher. That sermon impressed me so much that I've never knowingly since that time eaten non-kosher food. Not that I'm strictly kosher but I've never eaten non-kosher meat or food by that sermon.
- Mary Baroff: [00:16:50](#) Is that so?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:16:50](#) Yes.
- Mary Baroff: [00:16:53](#) Your parents were very involved [crosstalk 00:16:54]-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:16:54](#) My parents were very pious, religious, strictly kosher. My mother wouldn't answer a telephone on Shabbos. And my mother, when Shaarey Zedek put seating of men and women together, she wouldn't sit with the men. She sat alone on the side. My mother was 100% religious.
- Mary Baroff: [00:17:20](#) Were you actually as a youth active in your synagogue?

Irwin Cohn: [00:17:23](#) Yes. I was active all the time in my synagogue.

Mary Baroff: [00:17:27](#) That was really your first [crosstalk 00:17:27] involvement.

Irwin Cohn: [00:17:27](#) Yes. That's right. Yes.

Mary Baroff: [00:17:31](#) How did you become involved in the organized Jewish community on a leadership level? And what organizations did you become involved-

Irwin Cohn: [00:17:39](#) To become involved on a so-called leadership level in a Jewish organization, first, one must love his fellow man. And one must feel that he cannot live alone, that he's a part of the community and must by assisting in the community, help himself. So it just comes naturally and you just go on from one organization to another.

Mary Baroff: [00:18:04](#) What was the first organized group that you became involved in?

Irwin Cohn: [00:18:08](#) I think it was in the Hannah Schloss Building, as a president of one of the clubs. And today we have an old-timers organization in Detroit, which I have been president, whose membership has consisted of boys who played and lived, really, in the old Hannah Schloss Building. We call it the Hannah Schloss Old Timers.

Mary Baroff: [00:18:32](#) Who are some of the people in that group?

Irwin Cohn: [00:18:37](#) Oh, there's Abe Schmeer. He's active in the group. Large number of boys are in the group.

Mary Baroff: [00:18:44](#) And you kept your contact with them?

Irwin Cohn: [00:18:45](#) Oh yes.

Mary Baroff: [00:18:45](#) It's almost like a [crosstalk 00:18:47]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:18:46](#) Yes. And we have raised money. We raised money and gave it to the Federation for the Center Building on Curtis. We have a room, the Hannah Schloss Old Timers Room, there and they're raising money to give additional money to the Federation towards a new center.

Mary Baroff: [00:19:08](#) Could you tell me a little about your involvement in the Jewish Welfare Federation? During what period have you served?

Irwin Cohn: [00:19:17](#) Oh, well, I have served in the Federation so long, I can't remember how far it goes back. I've been chairman of the campaigns. I received the Butzel Award. I was chairman of the emergency campaign in the Israel War. And I was Secretary of Sinai Hospital from the day it was organized, for 25 years. As a matter of fact, I was one of the original organizers of Sinai Hospital. I've been interested in the Hebrew schools. I was interested in the Hillel at the University of Michigan, was president of the Hillel for a number of years. As a matter of fact, the congregation, the Hillel at the University of Michigan is named after my father and mother-in-law, the [inaudible 00:20:06]. Hebrew school on Seven Mile Road is named after my father and mother, [inaudible 00:20:09]. And I've been interested vitally in B'nai B'rith and the Hillel movement. I've gotten an honorary degree from Bar-Ilan University of Israel, J.D. from the University of Michigan, and I've worked with all of the Jewish organizations. As a matter of fact, with the non-Jewish organization. I've been president of the Urban League of Detroit twice. I've been president of the Detroit House of Correction twice. Been president of the city Planning Commission. Been president of other organizations, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Mary Baroff: [00:20:52](#) That's quite a record.

Irwin Cohn: [00:20:53](#) Well, I feel since you love your fellow man, religion doesn't make a bit of difference, or race, or creed. You must love everybody.

Mary Baroff: [00:21:02](#) Let me ask you this: In relationship to the Jewish Welfare Federation itself, what are some of your outstanding memories of some of the projects that the Federation has been involved in, some of the needs that it has had to meet through the years?

Irwin Cohn: [00:21:25](#) The Federation, before Israel came into existence, did a great deal of work in the community. They serviced the teaching of children. They provided welfare organizations in Detroit with money. They had a Jewish center. They were instrumental in the hospital. And on a national basis, they furnished money to the national organizations because of the need of the Jews in Europe and all over the world. Now, of course, since Israel has come into being, they are, as other Federations are, really the backbone of Israel. Without the Federations, I don't think we could have had an Israel. And they are the place where money is gathered for Israel, not for arms, but for projects in Israel, for the welfare of the people in Israel.

Mary Baroff: [00:22:37](#) So that, through these last years, the Federation has really had two-way responsibility, local and Israeli.

Irwin Cohn: [00:22:50](#) Oh, there's no question about it. And they've helped national institutions. They contribute something to the B'nai B'rith and other organizations.

Mary Baroff: [00:22:58](#) Let me ask you this: You've known many among the leaders of Federation through the years, tell me something about some of the leader both professional and the volunteer leaders?

Irwin Cohn: [00:23:15](#) Well, I recall Sobeloff very well. I think he did a terrific job as a director of the Federation.

Mary Baroff: [00:23:23](#) What years was he Federation [crosstalk 00:23:28]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:23:28](#) Well, before Avrunin. He probably has been out, I don't know, five, six, seven years. Soby did a terrific job. He really-

Mary Baroff: [00:23:34](#) What was he like?

Irwin Cohn: [00:23:36](#) Well, he was a hard worker, used good judgment, and people liked him. When you like somebody, you work for them. In the past we've had presidents of the Federation who've been very earnest in their work. Lately we've had outstanding international, if you may call that, Jews who've been president of the Federation. Take Max Fisher, as far as Israel is concerned. Paul Zuckerman, as far as Israel is concerned. We've really brought up some very fine Jews in the Federation.

Mary Baroff: [00:24:19](#) Max Fischer has really become a real national [crosstalk 00:24:22]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:24:22](#) Well, to me, Max Fisher is the nation, international Jew of the world. That's what I think of him. Paul Zuckerman has done a job second to none as far as Israel is concerned. Devoted most of his time to Israel. Outstanding. And we have Jews in Detroit who've come out of the Federation that are interested in Bar-Ilan University, Yeshiva University, Zionist Organization, Tel Aviv University, and Hebrew University, The Technion, and all these institutions. And the people of Detroit who have devoted their time to these institutions all came out of the Federation.

Mary Baroff: [00:25:19](#) Let me ask you this: Specifically in relationship to the Jewish Welfare Federation, what has been your role? I know that you have been campaign director.

Irwin Cohn: [00:25:30](#) Yes. I've been a worker. I've worked in the vineyards primarily to raise money. And I have gone in the highways and byways to get the money to keep the Federation going and keep the institutions throughout the world going. That's been my role.

Mary Baroff: [00:25:57](#) That has been your major role.

Irwin Cohn: [00:25:57](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:25:59](#) Let me ask you this: You have had some involvement with the Hebrew Free Loan.

Irwin Cohn: [00:26:06](#) Oh, yeah. I was president of the Hebrew Free Loan. I was very active in the Hebrew Free Loan for many, many years.

Mary Baroff: [00:26:13](#) When did you start?

Irwin Cohn: [00:26:15](#) Oh, I don't know. 25 years or more ago. And they've always done a good job furnishing the poor money without interest. We furnished money to poor people to bring their relatives from Europe to get, what we call Ships Tickets, and the Hebrew Free Loan Association has done a terrific job.

Irwin Cohn: [00:26:41](#) The Ehrlich's were very much interested in the Hebrew Free Loan. Dora was an outstanding woman in the city of Detroit. She was really a national figure. Wonderful.

Mary Baroff: [00:26:55](#) Tell me about [crosstalk 00:26:56] her.

Irwin Cohn: [00:26:56](#) Now, if you go and look at the various buildings in Israel of institutions, you will find the names on plaques of many, many Detroit Jews.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:07](#) Is that right?

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:08](#) Yeah. Dora Ehrlich was sweetheart. Her sister was my Sunday school teacher many, many years ago.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:21](#) Who was her sister?

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:25](#) I just don't remember. I'm trying to recall her name.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:28](#) Okay, I was just curious, because Dora Ehrlich's name to me is kind of long-time memory.

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:30](#) Yeah. We had wonderful Jewish women who assisted their husbands and went, in my opinion, beyond their husbands in the work they've done.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:41](#) I did not realize that Dora Ehrlich was involved with the Hebrew Free Loan also.

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:47](#) Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:48](#) Tell me, was the Hebrew Free Loan formed in very early [crosstalk 00:27:54]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:53](#) Oh, in the early years. Many, many years ago [crosstalk 00:27:57], yeah. They call it Gmilith Chasudim.

Mary Baroff: [00:27:58](#) Uh-huh (affirmative).

Irwin Cohn: [00:27:59](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:28:00](#) Who were some of the other leaders in that group besides Dora Ehrlich [crosstalk 00:28:04]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:28:03](#) Well, Maurice Landau, who's widow is in Detroit, whose son and daughter are in Detroit. Played a terrific role in the Hebrew Free Loan Association. Oh, there were many.

Mary Baroff: [00:28:15](#) What role does the group play now?

Irwin Cohn: [00:28:18](#) What?

Mary Baroff: [00:28:18](#) What role does the Hebrew Free Loan play-

Irwin Cohn: [00:28:20](#) The Hebrew Free Loan Association is still in existence and it helps people who do not have a lump-sum to send to their relatives in Europe, or to try to bring them out of Europe, or to assist relatives in Israel, and they pay back on a monthly or weekly basis all without interest and all without cost. They're still functioning.

Mary Baroff: [00:28:48](#) So, in other words, throughout the years there's always a need in the community and-

Irwin Cohn: [00:28:53](#) The Zieman family was an outstanding family in the Jewish community. The Wetsman family whose children are still here and grandchildren, see. Sally Davidson was a Wetsman girl. Billy

Davidson is a Wetsman grandson. They played a terrific role in the community.

- Mary Baroff: [00:29:19](#) Let me ask you this: In connection with the Hebrew Free Loan, what seems to be a rising group among the Jews with economic needs today, do you foresee that the Hebrew Free Loan might take on even added significance-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:29:38](#) The way things are going now, with conditions as they are, a large number of Jews who had acquired enough to live on their balance of their life through owning real estate, have found that the real estate was located in the wrong spots and has deteriorated and they're going to need money. And I feel that the Hebrew Free Loan will play a much bigger role in the near future than it has in the last 10, 15, or 20 years. I really do.
- Mary Baroff: [00:30:19](#) How is it administered now? Does it have a separate-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:30:22](#) It's a separate institution and it gets part of it up-keep from the Federation to maintain itself, yes.
- Mary Baroff: [00:30:33](#) I see. Is it located in the-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:30:35](#) In the Federation building.
- Mary Baroff: [00:30:36](#) I see.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:30:36](#) Yeah. Years ago, we had a separate office. Yeah.
- Mary Baroff: [00:30:41](#) So, throughout the years, this is a group that has really played a role in meeting the needs [crosstalk 00:30:45]-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:30:45](#) No question about it, it has.
- Mary Baroff: [00:30:47](#) -of the community members. Now, how about United Hebrew Schools? I know that you have had-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:30:51](#) Well, I went to the first United Hebrew School in Detroit on Division Street, between Beaubien and Antoine. Maurice Zacheim, who I mentioned before, was one of the Hebrew teachers in this school. Dr. Baruch. And we really got a wonderful Hebrew education, but along with our Hebrew education, we got a religious education, which seems to be somewhat lacking today in the Hebrew schools. We not learned to pray and to read and write, but we learned what prayer was for and what the religion was about. It was run strictly on a, I

would say, an orthodox basis at that time, and then it branched out.

- Irwin Cohn: [00:31:47](#) We got an education, the kids that went to this Hebrew school on Division Street, second to none. That's where we got our religious inspiration.
- Mary Baroff: [00:31:57](#) Was that under the auspices of Federation?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:32:00](#) At first it wasn't, but it later came into the Federation, yes.
- Mary Baroff: [00:32:03](#) I see.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:32:05](#) Then, they had a Hebrew school on Farnsworth, I remember. They branched out in the various localities. They had one out in the Oakland division, where the Jews were living out ... As the Jews moved out from the lower inner city. See, Jews traveled very fast. They'd live in an area for maybe 10 years and then they moved to another area.
- Mary Baroff: [00:32:26](#) And the resources followed [crosstalk 00:32:28] the Jewish population.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:32:30](#) That is right.
- Mary Baroff: [00:32:30](#) Did you move with the ... What was your-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:32:34](#) Well, we lived in the original area where the Jews were congregated north of Gratiot Avenue while I was going to the University of Michigan. Then, we moved to Warren Avenue out further, and we lived on Bathoon, two blocks north of where the General Motors building was erected when I graduated at the University of Michigan.
- Mary Baroff: [00:33:04](#) So then, you followed and moved around, too. Okay, now, back to the United Hebrew Schools. When did you become active as a ... not as a student, but your involvement with the United Hebrew Schools as a leader?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:33:20](#) I became involved with Jewish institutions in Detroit, I would say, within five years after I graduated at the University of Michigan.
- Mary Baroff: [00:33:28](#) And your involvement with the Hebrew schools, was that [crosstalk 00:33:31]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:33:31](#) And the Hebrew schools, all of them.

Mary Baroff: [00:33:33](#) I see.

Irwin Cohn: [00:33:34](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:33:34](#) What special needs do you feel the United Hebrew Schools were called upon to meet during the time of your involvement?

Irwin Cohn: [00:33:45](#) Well, they were called upon to teach the children Hebrew and to read and write and to learn prayers, and they gave them the Hebrew education which you did not get in the Grammar school or in the regular grade schools. And that is where the kids got their Hebrew education. Then, later years, of course, some of the congregations opened their own Hebrew schools, which were operated under the direction of the United Hebrew Schools, and were really part of the United Hebrew Schools.

Mary Baroff: [00:34:29](#) Let me ask you this: Who were some of the lay and professional leaders that you remember as playing a real role in the United Hebrew Schools?

Irwin Cohn: [00:34:39](#) I'll tell you, it's hard to remember who they were, see. But you go back years ago, you found practically every prominent Jew was interested in United Hebrew Schools.

Mary Baroff: [00:34:57](#) Because they felt the need for-

Irwin Cohn: [00:34:58](#) Yeah, because they felt the need for the education. See, originally, when I was a kid, we had cheders - little private teachers who ran their own little schools, and when I first started to go to Hebrew school, I was maybe six, seven years of age, I was back at the shul at Montcalm and Hastings Street, and the Rabbi who ran it, we called him the Royte Melamut (ph), Red Whiskers, because he had long, red whiskers. And let me tell you, he gave us an education that was out of the world. When we didn't learn, it was beaten into us, but we got it.

Irwin Cohn: [00:35:38](#) Now, you find people like the Srones, who were prominent in the city of Detroit. The Sreer boys went to the Royte Melamut (ph). Shifman. A lot of people who became prominent. Hamburgers, in Jewish life, all got their foundation from Red Whiskers.

Mary Baroff: [00:36:00](#) Is that so?

- Irwin Cohn: [00:36:01](#) Oh, yes. We really got it. Both ways.
- Mary Baroff: [00:36:06](#) In relationship to the United Hebrew Schools, what role did you play? I know that there is a building that is named after your-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:36:13](#) Well, I was on the board of the United Hebrew Schools for many years. I contributed substantial sums to the United Hebrew Schools for the erection of a Hebrew school and to sustain them. And I've been mightily interested in the United Hebrew Schools, because I believe that Hebrew education is very essential to preserving Jews and Judaism.
- Mary Baroff: [00:36:47](#) In the past, in terms of community planning, not everyone was always that sure that the languages of the past should be maintained, or is that not true?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:37:04](#) Well, yes, but I have found in the last 10, 15 years that to preserve Jews and Judaism you must have religion and you must have religion in the schools. It's very essential. And I think more people are beginning to recognize this. We have independent schools in Detroit where children are taught to read, write Hebrew and also religion, and I think they're very essential to the welfare of the future of Jews and Jewry, because I feel to save Jews just because they're Jews does not mean anything. To save them without their religion, in my opinion, is meaningless.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:37:54](#) I think the religion is the thing that made the Jews, is an integral part of the Jews, and should be preserved and maintained. And that is the way the Jews really can accomplish things and make themselves worthwhile in the world.
- Mary Baroff: [00:38:12](#) So that, in other words, you don't feel that there is this question anymore today that-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:38:17](#) As far as I'm concerned, I'm 100% for Jewish religious education. Not 100%, 1000%. And I'm backing it and I'm in love with it, and I think it's very essential to the welfare of Jews and Judaism.
- Mary Baroff: [00:38:37](#) Let's talk a little also about Sinai Hospital. You've had contact there for many years also, have you not?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:38:43](#) I remember Sinai Hospital. Israel Davidson, Max Osnos, and myself, sat down in a hotel room in downtown Detroit and we helped to start, from that little session, Sinai Hospital. Years before they had started to promote a Jewish hospital in Detroit,

had collected a sum of money, but never went any further. I really feel that because of that meeting of the three of us, it was the beginning of Sinai Hospital.

- Irwin Cohn: [00:39:18](#) Later, we interested a number of people, including Morrie Aronson and others, and we promoted the hospital. I also remember when we bought the land on Curtis where the hospital is. There was some 30 acres, I believe, to be bought. Some of the people connected with the hospital thought that was too much land, they only wanted 11 acres, or 10 acres. And a number of us talked to the board, we convinced them to buy the 38 acres and if later they didn't want or need the land, we would take the remainder off their hands. Well, we never go that opportunity. As a matter of fact, the 38 acres isn't sufficient. And it was very fortunate that we bought the 38 acres instead of buying a much smaller parcel.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:40:14](#) I spent a great deal of time, effort in helping to build Sinai Hospital and I'm proud of the hospital. I think it is a wonderful institution, well conducted and run very efficiently, and doing a wonderful medical job in research and otherwise.
- Mary Baroff: [00:40:38](#) It's really growing, isn't it?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:40:39](#) It's a credit to everybody. Well, it's grown beyond our belief.
- Mary Baroff: [00:40:47](#) It was real foresight on the part of those who felt that the land ... that there should be more land. Let me ask you this: What special needs to you feel that the hospital has played in this community?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:41:00](#) I think the hospital has helped, not only Jews, the entire community, by giving them wonderful medical care. I think that the doctors in our community have gotten a great deal as a result of the founding of Sinai Hospital. I think the other hospitals in the community have gotten a great deal from Sinai Hospital. So, I think the entire area, including Jew and non-Jew, has benefited materially from the research in Sinai, from the doctors who have function in Sinai, who have become better doctors as a result of Sinai Hospital. It has played an integral part in the great medical operations that we have in the city of Detroit.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:42:01](#) I remember distinctly, we have strictly kosher kitchen in Sinai Hospital. Fred Butzel, who is one of the great leaders in our

community, the Butzel Award is named after him. The Butzel family-

- Mary Baroff: [00:42:15](#) Please turn this tape on to side two.
- Mary Baroff: [00:42:22](#) This is side two on this first tape.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:42:27](#) -has been outstanding in our community. With reference to Sinai Hospital, Fred Butzel, who was a reformed Jew, who did not observe kosher, was the first man to make the statement, "We must have a strictly kosher kitchen in Sinai hospital for those who desire it." Fred Butzel, as a matter of fact, his name is synonymous with Detroit Jewry. I know that when I went to lunch with him, he would say to me, "Irwin, do you have any object if I eat non-kosher meat? Do you have any objection if I have milk with my meat?" Always would say that to me before he would eat anything.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:43:07](#) He played a big role in the Jewish orphan home we had, the Jewish Children's Home. [crosstalk 00:43:13] I was president of the Jewish Children's Home.
- Mary Baroff: [00:43:14](#) Were you?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:43:14](#) Yes. And we did a terrific job. There was a Herman Cohn in Detroit, who did a terrific job in the Jewish Children's Home. And we functioned well until the question of foster homes came up and that did away with the necessity for the Jewish Children's Home.
- Mary Baroff: [00:43:35](#) Did you feel that it was valid to close the home at that time?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:43:38](#) Well, at first, I didn't think it was, but I finally felt that to put a child into a home with foster parents was better than keeping them in a children home.
- Mary Baroff: [00:43:49](#) You know, I worked at First Year Camp as a counselor the year that the home was closing and some of the children were at camp awaiting the plan for foster homes. I remember that very, very well.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:44:01](#) As a matter of fact, where the camp is today, in Oakland County ... Is it Oakland County?
- Mary Baroff: [00:44:10](#) Tamarack.

Irwin Cohn: [00:44:11](#) Tamarack. I found that property.

Mary Baroff: [00:44:13](#) Is that so.

Irwin Cohn: [00:44:16](#) A man came to me and wanted to sell me that property, and I went out and looked at it, my wife and I. We fell in love with it. My wife says, "You know, this would be the ideal location for a Jewish camp. I communicated with mon, and Sobeloff and Shaw, who is still with the Federation, and myself, we went out there and looked at the land and as a result, the Federation bought the property. The man who owned it was a non-Jew, and we found the Federation wanted to buy it, he gave them a better price than he wanted to give to a private individual.

Irwin Cohn: [00:44:55](#) And the camp, to me, the location for this operation is ideal.

Mary Baroff: [00:44:59](#) Beautiful.

Irwin Cohn: [00:45:00](#) Yes.

Mary Baroff: [00:45:01](#) I keep finding out more things that you've been involved in. I did not know that you were involved in the Jewish Children's Home.

Irwin Cohn: [00:45:08](#) Oh, yeah. I was president.

Mary Baroff: [00:45:11](#) Yeah. Tell me a little bit about that, because I have talked with no one who's discussed that Jewish [crosstalk 00:45:16] Children's Home-

Irwin Cohn: [00:45:16](#) Well, the Jewish Children's Home ended up with a gymnasium. How did they get the gymnasium furnished? My income tax one year was examined and as a result, I got a considerable rebate from the government. So, I used the money to furnish the gymnasium of the Jewish Children's Camp with money that I didn't expect to get back. It was an interesting operation. We taught the kids Hebrew in the Jewish Children's Home. We had services and they were really given everything that they missed in life, except parents.

Mary Baroff: [00:45:57](#) Were most of these youngsters children who were away from their parents temporarily or-

Irwin Cohn: [00:46:01](#) Some of them were away from their parents temporarily and some of them who had lost their parents, or technically had been abandoned by their parents. And we made mention out of them. I think to take a child and do good for a child is probably

as good a mitzvah as there is in the world, because the child can't do it for itself, it doesn't have the ability and needs that helped. So, the Jewish Children's Home functioned for many years and did a real fine job.

- Mary Baroff: [00:46:30](#) Were you involved when it was [inaudible 00:46:32] [crosstalk 00:46:33]-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:46:32](#) Oh, yes.
- Mary Baroff: [00:46:33](#) -that was the period.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:46:34](#) That's right.
- Mary Baroff: [00:46:35](#) Was there a home before that?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:46:38](#) Yes. There was. I don't remember where, but I think it was near Brush Street. Now, take the old folks home, was on Brush. I think, corner of Erskine, and I was interested in that.
- Mary Baroff: [00:46:52](#) Were you at that time-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:46:53](#) To take care of aged is a wonderful mention, yeah. We had a big brick house.
- Mary Baroff: [00:46:59](#) So that, no matter which service I talk about, perhaps I would find that you have had some involvement.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:47:07](#) Well, you see, I remember for the late Joe Holtzman, who was very active. These names are coming back to me now in the community. I remember when Joe Holtzman's mother stood on the street corner with a handkerchief collecting quarters, dimes and nickels, to build up the Yeshiva Beth Yehudah, which was named after Rabbi Yehuda Levin, who was the outstanding orthodox rabbi in Detroit. The Srere family was outstanding. As you talk, these names start coming back to you. Morrie Aronson was active in promoting the Sinai hospital.
- Mary Baroff: [00:47:52](#) Let me ask you this: You've been in the hub of the Jewish community for such a long time. Are there many families where the younger generations have involved themselves also [crosstalk 00:48:15] in the community activities?
- Irwin Cohn: [00:48:15](#) Yes, lots of them. You find a lot of the workers today, the men who are vitally interested in the community, come from the parents who were active years ago. Of course, we have a large

number of Jews active in the community and its affairs who were not born in Detroit who have come from elsewhere. The number of native-born who are active, I would say, are in the minority.

- Mary Baroff: [00:48:44](#) In other words, they came, became active and involved themselves.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:48:49](#) That's right.
- Mary Baroff: [00:48:49](#) I see. Who are some of the families ... It would be so interesting to almost have a family tree of relationships. Who are some of the people who are very involved today who-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:49:03](#) Well, you take Mandell Berman. Mandell Berman comes from the Berman family that was in Detroit when I was a kid. His grandfather was J Berman who had a wholesale clothing store in Gratiot Avenue, not far from where my father was in business. Mandell comes from that family. The Satovsky boys, their father was an old-timer in Detroit, and there are quite a number. But most of them today ... Well, you take Dr. Harry August, is related. His wife is a Shetzer girl. Jacob Keidan, his wife is Shetzer girl, came from the Shetzer family from way back who were prominent. The Keidans were prominent in the growth of the city, Detroit.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:50:01](#) The grandfather originally was in the wholesale dry goods business on Hastings, near Gratiot. And they played a very vital role in the growth of the city, Detroit. I just can't remember, but as you go on, they come back to me.
- Mary Baroff: [00:50:16](#) I think you mentioned when we talked that Judge Rubiner is-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:50:21](#) Charlie Rubner is a cousin of mine. His mother was the sister of Ike Shetzer, who was one of the leaders of Detroit. But Charlie was born in northern Michigan, not Detroit, but came here as a young chap and a large number of people are interwoven. Abe Jacobs was a very prominent Jew in Detroit. President of Shaarey Zedek and a hard worker. He still has a son. Royal Oppenheim is married to a granddaughter of Abe Jacobs. Now, the Oppenheim family was prominent. David Oppenheim, who was Royal's father, was as fine a Jewish worker and individual as ever lived in Detroit.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:51:11](#) You go way back and these families, the names come back to you.

Mary Baroff: [00:51:17](#) Yes. It's very interesting that there are so many [crosstalk 00:51:22]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:51:22](#) Oh, there are a lot of descendants here.

Mary Baroff: [00:51:23](#) Yes.

Irwin Cohn: [00:51:25](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:51:25](#) Regina Oppenheim, who I believe worked at, what was the Jewish Social Service Bureau at the time, and she was an adoption worker and took that [crosstalk 00:51:35]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:51:35](#) As a matter of fact, Royal Oppenheim's grandfather, David Oppenheim's father, Jacob Oppenheim, I remember he had a little beard and worked for my father. He drove the horse and delivery wagon for my father. Little Jewish fellow with a little beard, 100% pious. What a sweet man.

Mary Baroff: [00:51:56](#) Interesting. Let me ask you this: In reviewing your many years of activity in the Jewish community, what would you say have been some of the highlights in relationship to the community?

Irwin Cohn: [00:52:10](#) The Frank family, whose children are here, Sam Frank, Harry Frank, were prominent good workers in the Jewish community. The highlights in the Jewish community, well, of course, the highlight was when I got the Butzel Award and I got an honorary degree from Bar-Ilan University, and I've gotten the humanities award from B'nai B'rith, and I've gotten a lot of different awards. You get a kick out of all of them, because you have a little bit to show for it. Or the chairmanships, the dinners I've presided at. Golda Meir dinner in Detroit, formal, dinner, before she was the head of Israel. And you go all the way back to all these. People who later became big leaders. We had dinners for them before they reached their heights.

Irwin Cohn: [00:52:59](#) Then, I've been active in the non-Jewish community. And I get a kick out of all this. I enjoy people, love people, and I enjoy helping them. That's my religion. As a matter of fact, somebody asked me the other day, "What is my definition of religion?" I said, "My definition of religion is 'Love thy fellow man.'" That includes everybody, women too, by the way.

Mary Baroff: [00:53:21](#) Great.

Irwin Cohn: [00:53:25](#) Yeah. [crosstalk 00:53:25] Now I'm vitally interested in the Lubavitcher movement. I love them. I think they're the most sincere Jews in the world and I think they're doing a terrific job to preserve Jewry and its religion. I love these people.

Mary Baroff: [00:53:40](#) I just got a note from Pearl Biber, because she is collecting for a rummage....

Irwin Cohn: [00:53:44](#) Oh. Pearl Biber is a wonderful [crosstalk 00:53:46] ... she's a wonderful worker, a wonderful sincere woman.

Mary Baroff: [00:53:49](#) She is.

Irwin Cohn: [00:53:49](#) She's interested in the Lubavitcher movement.

Mary Baroff: [00:53:51](#) Yes, she is.

Irwin Cohn: [00:53:51](#) Of course, I've been vitally interested in Israel and its welfare. I would like to see more religion over there, but I'm an American, not an Israeli, so I can't criticize.

Mary Baroff: [00:54:02](#) You can't enforce that part, right?

Irwin Cohn: [00:54:04](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [00:54:05](#) What specifically have you done in relationship to Israel? What work have you done?

Irwin Cohn: [00:54:11](#) Well, I've been chairman of the campaigns for Israel. I've been to Israel nine or 10 times. I've supported every institution in Israel. I've been fortunate enough to be able to contribute to them and have done so. And I just had a meeting recently with President Katzir of Israel where I presented the Lubavitcher Rebbe to him. And Israel is part of my life.

Mary Baroff: [00:54:45](#) Do you go there frequently?

Irwin Cohn: [00:54:47](#) I've been there nine or 10 times.

Mary Baroff: [00:54:49](#) Is that right?

Irwin Cohn: [00:54:49](#) I expect to go again in September, yes.

Mary Baroff: [00:54:51](#) That's wonderful. Let me ask you this: How do you see the Jewish community today with regard to with needs, problems and goals?

Irwin Cohn: [00:55:00](#) Well, I see in the city of Detroit today a number of younger men in their 40s and 50s who are working with the Federation and working with other Jewish organizations in the community that are going to outdo, in my opinion, what has been done in the past. I like two Hebrew words ani ma'amin, "I have faith." And I have faith that the Jewish community is going to go to much greater heights that it has and the welfare of the Jews, the Jewish people, the welfare of our community, is in mighty good hands when I see the number of fine men we have that are really doing a job.

Mary Baroff: [00:55:50](#) Who are some of these people that you are referring to?

Irwin Cohn: [00:55:52](#) Well, you have David Hermelin, you have Richard Sloan, you have Billy Wetsman, you have, than God, my own son, and a large number of ... David Pollock. And these people ... Morrie Aronson's son. I didn't mention Nate Shapero's name, who has done a terrific job in the community, who's been backbone of Sinai Hospital just as Max Osnos has been. And Milt Maddin is doing a good job as President of Sinai hospital. You have some of the younger people that are coming up and let me tell you, they are terrific. They're outstanding. Harold Barry, Lou Berry has done a wonderful job in the community. George Seaburn, who is one of the finest men in the community, has quietly done a terrific job in the community.

Irwin Cohn: [00:56:56](#) And you go over a list of all these people, you must have faith that the Jewish community in Detroit is going to greater heights. You've got Alan Schwartz, who happens to be law partner of mine, has done a terrific job in the community. Jack Miller, another partner of mine, is doing a terrific job. These people-

Mary Baroff: [00:57:19](#) You must encourage them-

Irwin Cohn: [00:57:19](#) What?

Mary Baroff: [00:57:21](#) You must [crosstalk 00:57:22]-

Irwin Cohn: [00:57:22](#) Well, they're terrific. They're coming up the ladder and doing wonderful work, wonderful work.

Mary Baroff: [00:57:29](#) Where do you think the community needs to go?

Irwin Cohn: [00:57:31](#) Where's ... What?

- Mary Baroff: [00:57:32](#) Where do you think the Jewish community needs to go? What do you think-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:57:36](#) I think the Jewish community of Detroit needs one thing more than anything else, more Jewish religion. And I want to say this: I think the rabbis ... generally speaking, in Detroit, the rabbis of reformed temples to me are sincere, fine men doing a good job. I think Rabbi Siegel, Rabbi Groner, the orthodox rabbis, Rabbi Levin, Rabbi Grubner, are wonderful men, doing a good, good job in the community. And I have faith in the majority of the rabbis. Some of them I do not agree with, but that's par for the course.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:58:25](#) I like cohesion. I like people who work together. I do not like controversy. And I think that, generally speaking, the reform, the conservative and the orthodox rabbis, are getting along very well in the community, thank the lord, and are fine people, sincere and honest in what they're doing.
- Mary Baroff: [00:58:52](#) What about in relationship to some of the other social needs? Where do you see the community needing-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:58:59](#) Well, right now, you need to help the large number of poor Jews in the community. I think there are a larger number of poor Jews now than there have been for years, because of general conditions. I think we need to establish more apartment buildings like the one we have. I think it's a mistake to have only built one. I think the Jews have to build more retirement homes for people who do not want just charity, but need assistance in living and I think we've been lacking in that. I think we've been lacking in religious education. We need more.
- Irwin Cohn: [00:59:42](#) And generally speaking, though, the community has done a very fine job.
- Mary Baroff: [00:59:48](#) What about in relationship to our young people? Do you-
- Irwin Cohn: [00:59:53](#) Well, we must try to furnish a service for young people that will attract them. I think the difficulty we have with young children is in the home. I think the community has the wherewithal to work with them, but I don't think the parents are doing their job. I think parents are neglecting, generally speaking, the welfare of their children. You would be surprised how many young children in the community that I've heard of recently who are bringing their parents to religion, bringing their parents forward, bring their parents to real religion.

Irwin Cohn: [01:00:43](#) I was talking with a woman the other day, very well off, they're retired. Their son is bringing them to kosher in the house, to religion observance. I know another one from a very prominent family whose young kid has gotten the touch of religion and is bringing them into religion. By the way, we have the Nederlander family in Detroit, that is well known. Their grandfather was Joe Nederlander. I remember him when I was a kid. Fine man, fine worker. Did a good job in the community.

Irwin Cohn: [01:01:23](#) Now, you've got to get some of these people who are descendants to get more involved in a Jewish way of life, religious way of life. I don't care whether it's conservative, orthodox or reform, but to do it sincerely and to become active.

Mary Baroff: [01:01:45](#) And to keep the identity in this-

Irwin Cohn: [01:01:47](#) That's right.

Mary Baroff: [01:01:49](#) Mr. Cohn, I appreciate the time you've given and what we've talked about has, I'm sure, added to memories of the Jewish community in this city and your role in it, which has been an important one. Thank you.

Irwin Cohn: [01:02:04](#) Can [crosstalk 01:02:04] I say one more statement?

Mary Baroff: [01:02:04](#) Of course.

Irwin Cohn: [01:02:07](#) I get a kick of the first organized United Jewish Charities and their first annual meeting, which was in 1899 or 1900, the year 1899 to 1900, and I know that in the list of contributions, my father gave \$7.

Mary Baroff: [01:02:28](#) Is that right? Which was probably a very good-

Irwin Cohn: [01:02:30](#) I could name you people who gave money, who have descendants in our community, are listed in here, \$5, \$10, \$7, \$3, and that was the beginning of the organized charity in Detroit. And I get a kick out of this list and noting the descendants who are still active in the community, some of whom have become very wealthy. And I also want to call attention that Rabbi Leo Franklin, who I've mentioned, he was the chairman.

Mary Baroff: [01:03:09](#) Of the United Jewish Charities.

Irwin Cohn: [01:03:09](#) Yeah.

Mary Baroff: [01:03:09](#) Which was how it all began [crosstalk 01:03:11].

Irwin Cohn: [01:03:12](#) That's right.

Mary Baroff: [01:03:13](#) It's been an interesting history, hasn't it?

Irwin Cohn: [01:03:16](#) Oh, yeah. It's really been wonderful. There's the old Rosenthal family that were outstanding Jews and workers of the community. They have descendants. There's a number of the girls in Detroit-

Mary Baroff: [01:03:31](#) Who-

Irwin Cohn: [01:03:32](#) Well, there's one whose husband is called ... his name is Samar, S-A-M-A-R, I believe. Her father was called the religious Isaac. He was 100% religious, a hard worker, wonderful man who promoted the welfare of the city of Detroit. Another daughter is named Eisenberg, E-I-S-E-N-B-E-R-G, Florence Eisenberg. They have a son who is Detroit. Mandell Berman was a descendant of them.

Irwin Cohn: [01:04:00](#) And you go down the list and you find these Jews were terrific, terrific. And they built the city of Detroit and Detroit can be very, very thankful for having these people and type ... The Angus's were good workers in the community. George Blumenthal, who's in the community, has a sister, a descendant of Blumenthal, who was active in the welfare of the community. The Agashevitzes (ph) whose descendants are now called Shevitzes (ph) or Shaw family, and August family, they were a big part in the building of the city of Detroit Jewish community.

Mary Baroff: [01:04:46](#) And you probably knew many of these people from your past-

Irwin Cohn: [01:04:49](#) I knew all the old-timers, every one of them. And I knew them all, because I went to shul and I met them in the shuls. And on Yom Kipper, I used to walk from one shul to the other, I probably ended up the four or five shuls we had in the community, walking from one to the other.

Mary Baroff: [01:05:07](#) And we weren't as spread out as we are now, so that [crosstalk 01:05:10]-

Irwin Cohn: [01:05:10](#) No, of course, today we're all over Wayne, Oakland County, Genesee County. You have them all over. All over. But we really had a fine Jewish community. Did wonderful work.

Irwin Cohn: [01:05:25](#) The Weideman played a terrific part in the building of the city of Detroit. The Schwartz family, I do not know whether there are any descendants now, but they played a big part. The Sloman family played a big part. You go through the list and you'll meet them all.

Mary Baroff: [01:05:48](#) That's great. Anything else we should be talking about?

Irwin Cohn: [01:05:54](#) [inaudible 01:05:54].

Mary Baroff: [01:05:54](#) Okay. I thank you a great deal.