

IMPORTANT

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Interview Transcript Title Page

Collection title:	AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive
Ref. no:	121

Interviewee Surname:	Feldman
Forename:	Abraham
Interviewee Sex:	Male
Interviewee DOB:	5 October 1926
Interviewee POB:	Leipzig, Germany

Date of Interview:	25 May 2006
Location of Interview:	Manchester
Name of Interviewer:	Rosalyn Livshin
Total Duration (HH:MM):	2 hours and 31 minutes

**REFUGEE VOICES:
THE AJR AUDIO-VISUAL TESTIMONY ARCHIVE**

INTERVIEW: 121

NAME: ABRAHAM FELDMAN

DATE: 25 MAY 2006

LOCATION: MANCHESTER

INTERVIEWER: ROSALYN LIVSHIN

TAPE 1

Tape 1: 0 minute 22 seconds

RL: I'm interviewing Abraham Feldman and the interview is taking place in Manchester. The date is Thursday the 25th of May 2006 and my name is Rosalyn Livshin. What is your name?

AF: Abe Feldman, Abraham Feldman, known as Abe Feldman.

RL: Do you have any other names?

AF: No.

RL: And where were you born?

AF: I was born in Leipzig, Germany October 5th, 1926.

RL: What does that make you now?

AF: Approaching 80. In another few months – 6 months – I'll be 80.

RL: If you could tell me first about your family background and, you know, starting with your parents and grandparents and take me through your family.

AF: Right. Well I was brought up in a very orthodox religious household. My father was a rabbi in Leipzig. He was originally born in 1885 in the Ukraine. And then he went to Czechoslovakia where he met my mother or arranged marriage as it was in those days. And in 19...I think it was about 1910 he was offered a situation in Leipzig to become the rabbi in the orthodox community in Leipzig in Germany.

RL: Do you know what kind of education he had had?

AF: Well the education I suppose wasn't really secular. It was mostly Jewish, Yeshiva kind of education, where they spent most of the time learning.

RL: Do you know which Yeshivas he...?

AF: Off hand no, I don't know off hand. But there is a written history of this.

Tape 1: 2 minutes 40 seconds

RL: Do you know anything about his parents?

AF: His father was a shochet in Talno in the district of Uman in the Ukraine. And it seems - and I only found this out in later years - that he had quite a large family I think about 8 siblings. And some of them went to South America. I know very little of the early history unfortunately. And...I never knew my grandparents - my Russian grandparents. I did get to know my maternal grandparents because in 1934 we left Leipzig to come to England and my...my mother and second brother went to Czechoslovakia my mother went to see her parents en route going to go to England. My father stayed behind in Leipzig and I stayed with him because there were a lot of arrangements to see to. He had a very large library and that had to be packed and so on. So we stayed behind to see those things get on - and my eldest brother, who wasn't coming with us. And we went about a week later we went also to Czechoslovakia and I stayed a week in Czechoslovakia and that was the first time I saw my maternal grandparents and how they lived and left very, very strong memories.

Tape 1: 5 minutes 5 seconds

RL: What do you remember?

AF: Well it was strange because it was they lived in a small village called Novoselice in the Czechoslovak republic. It was not modernised it was...when we arrived at a station at a nearby town we had to go in a little horse and cart to be brought to the village where my grandparents lived and they seemed to live almost a farmers life. Everything seemed to be growing. They had fruit orchards and they had melons, apples, pears, plums, hazelnuts. Had a cow and a calf...the maize they used to make their own bread. It seemed to be sort of self sufficient. It was something that left a lasting memory with me. It was almost idyllic I would say but...I was only there for a week so...

RL: Were they living on their own?

AF: Yeah there was I had an uncle there who had a little sweet grocery shop I remember in the village.

RL: What were their names?

AF: Well their family name was Fixler - that was my maternal grandparents' name - Fixler.

RL: What did he do for a living?

AF: I don't think he...well I was only 8 in those days and I don't think I would have known too much about what anybody did for their living. But I think he just tended whatever there was to see to. I suppose he had to do things you know to bring the food in. Maybe he sold some of it or...you know I suppose...

RL: What kind of people were they?

AF: Well I just very, very difficult to say. They were elderly people or quite elderly. And...We just regarded them as you know grandparents and good relationship but it's...you know it's such a short acquaintance really that...

Tape 1: 7 minutes 58 seconds

RL: What happened to them?

AF: Well they...they died there. Yeah, they weren't...yeah they died...I think my grandfather died in the late '30s and grandmother died in the '40s.

RL: How many siblings did your mother have?

AF: She had 2 sisters and a brother...Of the 2 sisters, the one sister was called Pessel and she had one boy Peter and 2 girls, Zahava and Sara. They unfortunately were taken to camps. But they fortunately they did survive. The other sister my mother had was Malka and she had a daughter. She had a daughter...She had a daughter who was also called I think Zahava and she also survived but they had siblings which perished in the camps. They came...the 3...The Peter, Sara and Zahava came to England and stayed with us for a period. The 2 girls went to Israel and Peter stayed in England. And the other cousin also went to Israel.

Tape 1: 10 minutes 27 seconds

RL: And your mother's brother – what happened to him?

AF: I don't know...we don't know. I lost contact – no trace. I don't know what happened.

RL: Do you know what kind of education your mother had?

AF: Not really any education to speak of, no. In those days they didn't. They were educated in the home...that was their education - the family life and the usual things.

RL: So I'm just wondering you said that your father came from the Ukraine. What was his first name?

AF: David.

RL: David. And have you any idea what made him come over to Czechoslovakia or to this area?

AF: Well I don't know how things worked in those days. There must have been some communication between the Jewish communities and people travelled and you know they mentioned and they made arrangements and marriage suggestions and things like that. And it was the custom of people with daughters to look for eligible young men and particularly young men who were learned or who had a future in learning. I think that was the way it was... it was conducted.

RL: When did your parents marry?

AF: That's a good question. I think they married about 1905-ish or maybe a bit later. 19...19...round about the First World War.

Tape 1: 12 minutes 43 seconds

RL: When was your eldest brother born?

AF: Morris was born in...I'm trying to remember...I've got notes of all these things but I can't ...I can't...

RL: How many more years...How many years older...?

AF: Oh, Morris was 17 years older than...than me. My other brother was...Sam was 5 ½ years older than me, and Morris was 17 years older than me.

RL: So Morris would have been born around 1909...so they must have obviously married about...

AF: Oh 1910 – sorry, yes, he was born in 1910.

RL: And so they must have married a bit before that.

AF: 1910 wait a minute...1885. I'm trying to work out...Yeah around 1905 it must have been. They married early.

RL: Yeah. So they married before your father was appointed a Rabbi in Leipzig. They were already married.

AF: Yes.

RL: Where did they live before Leipzig?

AF: Well they lived...they lived there – in Czechoslovakia. I think it was...He learned there and I think they used to have an expression he was of kest that means the father-in-law supported the bridegroom to be whilst he was studying, and you know until the marriage.

RL: And then in 1910 they came to Leipzig?

AF: Came to Leipzig yes.

RL: Do you have any knowledge of what happened during the First World War, how it affected the family or if it affected the family?

AF: No...no.

RL: They didn't tell any stories about that?

AF: No. No, I don't know anything about that at all.

RL: Where were you living in Leipzig?

AF: We were living in...I think the first address was Gustav Adolf Strasse and then it was Humboldtstrasse. I've forgotten which one we lived first. And there was a Jewish school in Leipzig – Carlebach School – which both my brother and I attended. I wasn't there very long of course. I think my first year was 1933 when I went to that. And...

Tape 1: 15 minutes 39 seconds

RL: You know I was just asking about where you were living...

AF: Yes.

RL: What area of Leipzig were those streets in?

AF: I didn't know Leipzig as an area it was just where...I really didn't know very much about Leipzig as a large city in any sense. It must have been fairly...fairly central.

RL: Do you remember the flats themselves?

AF: A little...I do remember a little bit of the flats as they were sort of the courtyard and ... I even remember the name of the janitor – Loichel somebody or other...and...

RL: What floor were the flats on?

AF: First - we were on the first floor. I remember neighbours and people across the road – a family called Kanarick. And Friday night...well my father went to synagogue. We usually we got together with the neighbours – either they came to us or we came to them just during that period. And then of course it was the beginning of the time when... when the Nazi era... Cause even - then even as a child I do remember the stories and things that were happening in some parts, the atrocity... I remember watching from behind the curtains with the lights out watching the marching with the torches and the singing with the brown shirts. And stories about you know Jews being abused and harmed and hit and attacked. I remember the stories of it at the time even though I was only eight. Yes.

Tape 1: 18 minutes 12 seconds

RL: Which...which Shul did your father...was your father the Rabbi of...?

AF: Well he was – he used to go to the Broder shul they used to call it – the Broder shul. But it was quite a large-ish Jewish community I think in Leipzig. Many Jews...because it was a centre for fur. It was a big fur centre. And many... I think Jewish people from Poland and Russia ended up there.

RL: How big a flat did you have? Can you describe it?

AF: No, I can't – I can't describe it. I think it was quite roomy but I can't really describe it. I can't remember the flat.

RL: Did your father have a library?

AF: Yes, he had a substantial library. Quite a few thousand... Hebrew books yes. This was a job to crate them all and get them over to Manchester.

RL: How was it decided that your father would come to Manchester?

AF: Well... I think there was... my father had been to England before. He'd been to America to promote his book and he'd been to England. And he got to know a few people and a few people mentioned his name and the position was offered to him. And he decided to...to take it.

RL: What book was he promoting?

AF: He wrote the Kitzor Shulchan Oruch which was quite...quite well distributed and several editions were reprinted. And this probably also was instrumental in him getting the position.

RL: When was that book published?

AF: I have to refer to it. I think it was around 1924...speaking from memory but - yeah.

Tape 1: 21 minutes 12 seconds

RL: And staying with life in Leipzig for the moment, what are your memories of family life and life at home?

AF: Not a great deal of... my memory is very hazy really. I can't say I remember a great deal of childhood memories. I have vague memories of going out you know we had a...a maid. We used to go on outings to the parks...The shops, going to school, going to the synagogue - but very dim really. Nothing detailed. I can't really recall anything very detailed about it.

RL: Any of Shabbos or Yomtov?

AF: Not particularly, nothing special. Nothing particularly stands out. No.

RL: What about school? Memories of school?

AF: Well for the short period I went there it was...it was all right. It was school and Cheder really, that's... those 2 things.

RL: Was Cheder separate?

AF: Yes, yes.

RL: Which Cheder did you attend?

AF: I don't know what the Cheder was there. I think the Cheder that my father started there. There was a...a, I think there was the name of some of the teachers were Potok and...who came to England actually, came to Manchester – Rabbi Potok. And there was Prinz and there was Rabbi Rogoznitsky who was also in Leipzig who later went to Cardiff. He was also a Rabbi there. Nothing very, very specific about it.

Tape 1: 24 minutes 2 seconds

RL: What were the family doing...What would you do in your spare time?

AF: I don't suppose there was that much. I mean there used to be school and then Cheder and then we used to play – we used to play with the neighbours' children. I suppose the usual things - toys and hoops and things like that.

RL: And holiday time?

AF: I can't remember every having a holiday to tell you the truth. I can't remember a holiday. I know my father used to go to...I think it was Marienbad – the spa – which was really a sort of a meeting place of many of the Rabbis at the time. It was a sort of an annual thing they used to go. But I don't think I went with him. I don't think even that my mother went with him. I suppose for me life was a holiday all the time wasn't it, at that age?

RL: Did you find that it...did you find that it was different being the Rabbi's son? Did that make things awkward or...?

AF: Well not then. I mean I was too young to know any different. There were really no external influences in Leipzig. You know I was only a child.

RL: Your brother who was 17 years older than you –

AF: Yes.

RL: What was he doing at this stage?

AF: He was teaching. He was a teacher in the school. And he was...well he taught me as well, being 17 years older than me. He was a sort of a... almost a father-figure in a sense because he also taught...taught me things or tried to help me and teach

things. And he...In fact he stayed very late. He stayed until 1938. He couldn't...he wasn't allowed to come over – couldn't come over to England. He didn't have a permit. He visited us twice – I think twice – in the years from when we left and he came over, and he went and had to come back. So it was sort of a lucky escape. We managed to – to get him over you know just before.

Tape 1: 27 minutes 3 seconds

RL: How did he come over in the end?

AF: We just got permission in the end to get him over... which was difficult in...in, in those days. In fact when we went to... when we left Leipzig we went via say Czechoslovakia. And we went through Belgium where we had some friends in Antwerp – what were they called – I just can't remember the name or what they were called. And my father wanted my brother, my other brother Sam to have a Yeshiva education and there was a good Yeshiva in Heide - a place called Heide - which was about 20 miles from Antwerp. So we decided to, or he decided - my father decided to leave my brother Sam with a family in Antwerp and that he would go to the Yeshiva in Heide. And this is what happened. And we went to England, and Sam stayed there. But he was very unhappy in the Yeshiva there and he sort of absconded or whatever and he came back to Antwerp and he didn't want to go. When it came to bringing him over at that stage he was 14 I think – about 14, yes. We wanted to bring him to join us in Manchester and we were refused. Couldn't bring him over... and it was very difficult. It was only through the good offices of Nathan Laski at the time was a sort of a macher - a public figure - and I think he had a lot of respect for my father. And he did some work to try and get the Home Office to change their mind. It was a very, very difficult thing until eventually you could get a 14 year old boy to join us, and manage to get him over. And he came over later.

Tape 1: 30 minutes 0 second

RL: What do you remember of the departure from Leipzig?

AF: Well it was a big send off I do remember. We have pictures of us leaving Leipzig. There was a huge crowd at the station - to see my father off. And that was it really. It was a mass of people.

RL: You weren't all travelling as a family were you at this stage?

AF: No, no.

RL: What had happened?

AF: Well as I say my mother and my brother Sam had gone ahead to Czechoslovakia. And I'd stayed with my father because, you know, he couldn't finish off the things that he wanted to do the packing of his library... things like that he had to see to. So he stayed behind and I stayed with him and then we followed on to Czechoslovakia, were there for a week and then we came over to England in December 1934. We stayed at Lerner's Hotel in Cheetham Hill Road.

RL: First of all, the journey. What do you remember about that?

AF: Not a lot. I remember the boat - vaguely. No I don't...It was foggy when we arrived. Never seen that before. We were met at the station and escorted to the hotel.

RL: How did you feel about leaving Leipzig?

AF: Well I suppose at the time it was an adventure for me really. It wasn't as if I'd had such deep roots or anything like that. It was just...I took it all in my stride.

Tape 1: 32 minutes 36 seconds

RL: Had other families left or were you one of the first?

AF: I think we were one of the first. Some had left but we were fairly early in the number of families that left.

RL: Had...sorry?

AF: No, I was just thinking in Manchester there was a Chazzan Kupfer who came from Leipzig. He was already here so he must have come a few years before us. Yeah, there were quite a few people from Leipzig.

RL: You said that you remembered hearing stories about what was going on in Leipzig?

AF: Yes.

RL: Had the restrictions begun to impinge on you in any way? Did you feel and change in your life?

AF: Well... I mean from a point of view of an 8 year old boy I mean it's not... I can't say restrictions. It's just that there was an atmosphere of fear and this...that. I did feel that. And the incidents that were being talked about did make us sort of a little bit you know - nervous. Yeah.

RL: And what was your first impression of England of Manchester?

AF: Well it was all very strange of course. Not being able to speak the language... and then going to school where I couldn't speak any English. And of course there were quite a lot of incidents and fights and you know this sort of thing happened because I was the new boy and I couldn't speak. They tried to make fun of me. There was a bit of bullying and there were challenges and...You know as kids do but I survived them and it was all right in the end.

Tape 1: 35 minutes 26 seconds

RL: Which school did you go to?

AF: I went to Grecian Street in Salford originally and then....It was... after the first probably 5 or 6 months which were a little bit difficult because as I say, you had to prove yourself in that period. You know that you could take it, you could do it - It was all right. The first few months were a bit difficult but after that it was all right because after 5 or 6 months I could speak English reasonably well mixing with them all the time so you know that was...

RL: What percentage of the class was Jewish?

AF: I think there were...well I don't know about percentage but I think there must have been quite a number. I guess maybe a 5th or a 6th of the class might have been Jewish. No, a bit less than that maybe.

RL: How did you pick up the language?

AF: Well I don't know. It's the easiest thing to do I suppose if you're just amongst other children who don't speak your language. You don't speak English. It's quite easy. It's you know it's a sort of - you don't have to learn it you don't have to sit down and study it. Now my eldest brother Morris you know he knew English and grammatically perfect. Living in Germany you know he was...he could well, maybe not speak but certainly he knew 7 or 8 languages. Never lost his accent. When he came here he was already a mature man but he could never lose his accent. Now my bother Sam who came when he was 14 lost his accent 96-7%. There only certain occasions maybe when he got excited or something that there was a little slip of a 'th' a lisp or something like that. So I mean it depends at what age you come over. So...that wasn't...After the first few months it was not a problem for me. Yeah.

Tape 1: 38 minutes 32 seconds

RL: Can you just tell me about your first few days in Manchester. So you say you arrived in Lerner's Hotel. What do you remember about the very initial beginnings here?

AF: Well it was all very strange. I just remember arriving at the hotel and being introduced to the Lerner family who ran the hotel and there was Morris Lerner Moishe Lerner who was my age actually so he became a friend. That was all right. And it was just... It was just a matter of going along with a strange situation, but it didn't cause me any hardship. I mean it was... you just took it all in your stride.

RL: How big a hotel was it?

AF: Well it wasn't a big hotel. It was only...I don't know how many rooms - might have had accommodation for 4 or 5, a boarding house really in that sense. But it was right in the area, there were - I think there were 3 synagogues there and there was the... I think the old home was there - yes the old home was there. The Jewish Aged home was there.

RL: And who was it that had brought your father over? Which shul was it?

Tape 1: 40 minutes 23 seconds

AF: Well it was a community that was the Machsikei Hadass in name but...they were a sort of a very small community and...of course over the years they've become a very, very big organisation.

RL: Where are they davening at that point?

AF: Well the members originally davened...we used to call it the Polish...the Polish shul, which was in the... on Bury New Road...Bury New Road, not far near the bottom of Waterloo Road. It was called the Polish – the Polish shul. And...That's where the people who used to - who were the mainstay of that community – the Halperns, the Reichs, Gorneys and so on. They all stemmed from there.

RL: What kind of a building was that?

AF: Oh it was a sort of shops all around. It was a narrow entrance and there was a sort of Beis Hamedrash on the bottom and then there was a slightly larger shul upstairs – small but it was all right it was regular. They had a regular minyan all the time and most of the community lived round there. It was very near Strangeways – Waterloo Road – you know all...

Tape 1: 42 minutes 36 seconds

RL: What responsibilities did your father have?

AF: Well, I suppose just the normal responsibilities but he... he...He set about making it more of an independent organisation. He instituted their own bakery. They got Needoff...it was Needoff in Waterloo Road who was enlisted as the Machzikei Hadass baker. So they were supervised by the Machzikei Hadass and there was the Mikvah which was in Tenerife Street. That's right, yes, that was the Mikvah.

RL: Did he initiate that or was...?

AF: I can't quite remember what happened there, but that was the one that was accepted as the, you know the kosher one, the OK one, and everything else - and that's where most people went. I went there as a youngster and I used to enjoy, not so much the mikveh I used to enjoy the schvitz which was the Sauna – primitive but it was very effective. It was a wooden room with steps and... full of steam, and you the temperature varied according to the height of the steam. You could lie down on the bottom step it was cooler and as you went up the steps it became hotter and hotter. And also they had we used to call a bezem, a brush, but it was not a brush it was a leaves – a what do you call it – a sort of bunch of leaves got together and we used to swish each other with it.

Tape 1: 45 minutes 17 seconds

No, not hit each other but as you just wave this - what do you call it this gathering of leaves - it was sort of a brush thing. It created a tremendous heat on you and this was supposed to be very good for you and I remember that was quite something we used to enjoy to a degree. And then we used to go in the Mikvah with the cold water. It was

very rudimentary but it was common practice. Every Friday you used to go before Shabbos we used to do that. And... what else was there? As I say he started the...the butcher, the baker - Halberstadt was the butcher who was originally used as the Machzikei Hadass butcher. Well this was...it was a matter of building the community. And... of course we had the...and then the synagogue moved from the small shul to Northumberland Street where... Pfeffer – AJ Pfeffer was instrumental. He bought the building. Actually I think it was mostly his headquarters in Northumberland Street. He bought that building for the synagogue. And they made a synagogue there. It moved there and a larger synagogue bigger community.

RL: When did that happen?

Tape 1: 47 minutes 41 seconds

AF: Now I'm not sure about that. That must have been 1934...Must have been towards...early '40s I would say. Early '40s. And...and then he got very busy in starting the first Jewish Day School in Manchester which was the Prestwich Jewish Day School in Sedgley Mount. And that was the one that really occupied him greatly and he put a lot of effort into this to try to raise the money, sponsors to try to get it recognised which he did.

RL: Of course there was the Jewish School in Manchester...

AF: Yes, in...

RL: Derby Street

AF: In Derby Street, yeah. But I don't know when that finished.

RL: There was no talk of you going to that school?

AF: No...no. No. No.

RL: When did the Jewish Day School come about? When was this going from?

AF: That would be around ...could be '39...'40 also around that period. Yes, around that period.

RL: Who was acting with him? Did he have people helping him?

Tape 1: 50 minutes 2 seconds

AF: Yes. Oh yes there was ...Yossel Halpern, Moishe Grosskopf, Herschel Reich – those were the families, the Halperns, the Reichs and the Grosskopfs were all contributors and helped. And they got a headmaster over as – Ehrentreu, Ehrentreu - to be the headmaster.

RL: Where did he come from?

AF: He came from Germany.

RL: Was that before the war?

AF: That was... Yes I think it was before the war, yes.

RL: Where were you living? I mean you'd arrived at Lerner's.

AF: We'd arrived at Lerner's and we got a house in 303 Bury New Road which was near the Rialto - as it was in those days. Yes 303 Bury New Road, and then...we moved from there to Waterpark Road.

RL: When did you move?

AF: When did we move? Round about '45 I think it would have been.

Tape 1: 52 minutes 32 seconds

RL: So the house on Bury New Road, can you just sort of describe what that was like?

AF: Yes, it was quite a large house. It had a cellar, an attic, 4 bedroomed house, cellar and attics... a bit of a garden at the back...yes, I can remember that quite well.

RL: How busy a house was it?

AF: Well it was busy in the sense that my father had quite a lot of visitors as I suppose in the community there were problems whether it was with people wanting to get divorced, people wanting to get married, synagogue matters, other things in the community that were maybe some problems and there was also the.. Which is something that's gone now - is that they used to examine the hens. You know now it's sort of a...it's extinct. Because in those days you used to have a... you used to buy a hen and when you opened it up well you're not sure whether something is all right. You used to bring it to my father and he used to - well - dissect it to a degree. Because there are certain things which you know a hen isn't kosher. It may have a diseased lung, or it may have a broken leg or something or other and he would as I say Pasken a shayle and you know it would be treyfe or not or sometimes even brought an egg it used to have a blood spot in it - is it or is it not? You know maybe these things; these were daily things that happened. And sometimes you know people came - Rabbis from another town may have come - and get together and discussing things and so on.

Tape 1: 55 minutes 36 seconds

RL: Did you have people staying over?

AF: No I don't remember very much of anybody actually staying with us. Meals yes, but not actually staying with us. I don't think we had room so, but I don't remember anybody really over night but...

RL: And...tell us more about your mother.

AF: Well mother was a...well she was a...a very gentle woman. Unfortunately she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis fairly soon after we arrived in England and that was on an increasing severity all the time. But...She was I suppose a bit of a hausfrau in the sense that she'd, you know living in Leipzig she'd become a bit – what – 'Germanised' – in that she always kept the house very, very...always kept it meticulously clean and everything had to be cleaned and so on and so forth. You know as they say she was supportive of my father – of course that was the thing as it was.

RL: This tape's about to end, so we'll just stop here.

AF: Ok. Right.

Tape 1: 57 minutes 36 seconds.

End of Tape One

TAPE 2

Tape 2: 0 minute 10 seconds

RL: This is the interview with Abe Feldman and it's Tape Two. So we were just talking about your mother and family. But also we've just looked at the date when the Northumberland Street property was bought for Machzikei Hadass. What was the date that you saw?

AF: 1937 I think it was.

RL: 1937. Ok. How did you find life in Manchester as a child? Was it different to the life that you'd experienced in Leipzig?

AF: Well, yes, it was different. Of course I mean I was growing up, everything was different. Schooling was different, friends were different. It was...Well I had nothing to compare it with really if you think about it. You're growing up and you take all these things in your stride. As I say, school was school. And you know you had friendships at school or after school and...

RL: Who did you become friendly with?

AF: Well I had a friend who...at Grecian Street I had a friend David Reich, who I was friendly with and spent a lot of time with the Reich or the Reich family who lived in Wellington Street. And also - that was the main friend at that time. I was still friendly with Lerner the hotel friend, as I said Moishe Lerner. We remained friends at that time. And then also became very friendly with Haffner - Moishe Haffner - who lived on Bury New Road - not far away. We just got into a lot of mischief together as is normal I suppose.

Tape 2: 2 minutes 44 seconds

RL: Where were these boys from? Were they English born?

AF: Yes, yes they were all English born. Yes - yeah. Yes. I suppose we were just like...whatever kids do – we did. And then from Grecian Street I went to Salford Grammar School and... I did attend... I did attend Manchester Yeshiva for a short period – not as a full time - just part-time I went. And I went to the Manchester Yeshiva which was at that time in Seymour Grove I think, no - Seymour Road is it? Off Cheetham Hill Road.

RL: When would you attend?

AF: Evenings and weekends.

RL: Had you had any Hebrew education in this country before you went to the Yeshiva?

AF: Well yes, I was taught at home by my father and my brother Morris, who...who spent quite some time with me. Morris was you know very learned both in, in...secular and Jewish studies. So he gave me a lot of help. And he was interested in seeing that I got higher education. And I think it was through him really that he engineered that I should continue my education.

Tape 2: 5 minutes 8 seconds

My father's intention ideal would have been more direct – you know to go to Yeshiva full time or something like that. But I really wasn't really that way inclined and he persuaded my father that it...you know it would be good if I would continue my education and to a degree I did. Actually I always wanted to do medicine. Now I tried to get... I finished '43. I finished Salford Grammar in '43 – I think it was '43 - and I tried to get into university – Manchester University - and I couldn't get in. It was big demand for places in the university and I was very keen to do medicine. And I applied to I think it was 22 universities in the British Isles, I didn't know there were that many, but I did. And I wrote to all of them and... I still couldn't get a place. I was not British at that time. The thing is I...I was stateless. In...in Germany you take your nationality according to your parents. In England it depends where you were born. If you happened to be in China and you were born there, you would be Chinese. But there it goes after your parentage, and my father was stateless. And I had no nationality so to speak so I was also counted as stateless.

Tape 2: 7 minutes 40 seconds

I don't know if that had much to do with it but anyway I couldn't get in. And... I had an interview at Manchester University Medical School I think it was Professor Raper. And said I wanted to do medicine and he said 'Well you know it's very difficult to get a place. If I were you I would try and get into the Faculty of Science because Doctors these days are not so scientific and it would be very helpful for your career if you were to do that first and then take medicine'. So I tried to get into the science faculty and I did manage to get into Manchester University Faculty of Science. And I enrolled in 1944 I think I got in – yes. And I...I tried to change over after the first year - because the courses were very similar the first year – to go into that and I thought even dentistry but I still couldn't do it. So I finished my degree. I got my

degree in Chemistry and Physiology – a BSc. I got my degree and then I went back to have an interview with Professor Raper. I said ‘Well I’ve got my degree as you suggested...’and so on and so forth. He said ‘Well you’ve got a degree now. You can go out and earn a living!’ and that was...that was that. So I...I didn’t go any further with it. And I joined my brothers in business because they said ‘In the meantime while you’re thinking about what to do you might as well come into the textile business’ - which I did. So there we are. That’s how these things work out.

Tape 2: 10 minutes 7 seconds

RL: Why do you think he was like that, Professor Raper?

AF: I don’t know. I mean it was a sort of strange period. It was the end of the war. There were a lot of ex-servicemen of course then coming out. And so even when I got my degree there were not many places readily available. There were a lot of grants for ex-servicemen. So...

RL: Coming back to – to your childhood...

AF: Yes.

RL: What happened with your Bar Mitzvah?

AF: Well, it took place. It was very nice as... from what I remember. I had to do the usual preparations, which is a bit more than one...well generally than they do these days. Besides being prepared to do the reading of the Sedra at that time and the Maftir and Haftorah I also had to give a little discourse – a Pilpul as they call it. And I learned that, and delivered it at the appropriate time. And we had a...a - well a ‘do’ or whatever they say - in the house. There was no big hall or you know as is the fashion these days, a ballroom and all that sort of thing. It was just a... you know, a prepared meal at home for I don’t know 30 people maybe or something like that and...

RL: Which Shul did you...?

AF: That was in the Northumberland Street, yes. Yes.

RL: Who taught you all the different parts?

AF: Well that was done – my brother did it – my father, my brother.

RL: Did you not attend any kind of Cheder?

Tape 2: 12 minutes 32 seconds

AF: Well I did yes; there was a Cheder in Northumberland Street as well which I also attended. Yes.

RL: Who was running that?

AF: It was Rosenbaum. Rosenbaum.

RL: How often did you go there?

AF: I'm trying to remember. On a Sunday, and I think it was a few times a week – yeah. It's a few hours during the week yes.

RL: Was that up till Bar Mitzvah?

AF: Oh it was after Bar Mitzvah as well. Yeah.

RL: How old were you when you started going to Yeshiva?

AF: I think I was about 16 – 15, 16.

RL: This Rosenbaum Cheder – how many boys would attend there?

AF: There were several classes, and I think in the class I was in there must have been about a dozen or so.

RL: Was this held in the shul or...?

AF: Yes, yes. Yes. Well they had various rooms in the building in Northumberland Street, yes.

RL: Did you belong to any clubs or any societies?

AF: I did belong to the Aguda, where we did have outings and we did have a holiday camp somewhere in Gloucester. We did go in the summer, fruit picking and things like that.

RL: Who was in charge of those groups?

AF: Who was in charge? There was somebody called Moses...that was his family name -surname...Moses. He did quite a lot of that. Yeah. Moses...I still have some photographs I think of the camp. And...I think one year Doctor Rotenberg came as well – there was a Doctor Rotenberg. And the Aguda had some premises also in Northumberland Street. We used to play table tennis and football – yeah.

Tape 2: 15 minutes 59 seconds

RL: Was there any interest in Zionism?

AF: Well there was but I wasn't part of it because I think the...the Orthodox community were not the sort of the Zionists. The...the... Moische Haffner who I was friendly with his family were quite sort of interested in...in that side because they used to attend classes for learning Hebrew and that sort of thing and they used to have meetings which I interrupted sometimes...a get-together.

RL: In what way?

AF: Oh I was a bit of a...a lobus I suppose in those days and even now when I see some of the ancient members of the family they remind me and they say 'Oh yeah, Abe Feldman with the stink bombs!' I used to do chemistry. I had chemistry sets. I used to do all sorts of things like little explosions and I used to make stink bombs. And one day I went to the Heffner's as usual with a few of these stink bombs and they were having a meeting. And so I pierced them and I squirted it through the keyhole. And everybody was in tears. Tear gas actually - I'm sorry I didn't mean stink bombs - tear gas. I made tear gas - bromacetone I think it was. And sort of squirted it through the keyhole and everybody ended up in tears. And I escaped through the bathroom window. Yeah that was one of my pranks which I was...Mind you the next time I appeared at the house, one of the Haffners was married to somebody called Potash - Sam Potash who was a teacher. When he saw me the next time he gave me what they called a frask - a slap across my face. Teach me a lesson. But well that was... childhood pranks.

Tape 2: 18 minutes 50 seconds

RL: What did you do sort of in your spare time?

AF: Well I used to enjoy playing with my chemistry set. And then later on, well we played cricket and we played football. I played a lot of table tennis. Yeah I used to play table tennis quite a lot and I was a member of a few of the clubs - Waterpark and what's it called...another club I was a member of. And we had teams and we played matches and at the YMHA - That's right, the YMHA in Bury New Road in Cambria - we used to play there quite often.

RL: What does that stand for?

AF: Young Men's Hebrew Association. Like the YMCA it was YMHA. Yeah they had a well we had a place called Cambria opposite the Park Lane police station. There used to be a big old house and that's what they occupied, they had it there. We had a table tennis table and played quite often.

Tape 2: 20 minutes 30 seconds

RL: Who ran that?

AF: I don't know. I don't know who. I only remember the people I used to play with.

RL: Who else went there?

AF: I played with Tony Myers. He's still around. Tony Myers...who else was around in those days? I guess he's the main one I'm thinking of I used to practice with.

RL: You played in Leeds.

AF: Yes we played in Leeds, we played in inter-club matches, went in for tournaments. And I carried on with table tennis at university so we had a university team who played.

RL: How did your father feel about that?

AF: About that? He was fine, you know. Table tennis was all right as long as I did my sort of - duty of the time, things I'm supposed to do, he was all right. It was only when I didn't do what I should have done then of course that was...spending too much time on nonsense.

RL: Did he expect you to do a certain amount of study?

AF: Yes, yes he did. Yes he did expect me to do certain things and...yes, to keep up with my Jewish studies which sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't so...It was a childhood I suppose or growing up was...was quite...no hang-ups about it – quite pleasant, yeah.

RL: Was the religious way of life within the family recreated in Manchester as it had been or did it change?

AF: Yeah the family was still very religious you know in every sense. Not that I was always that way inclined but I behaved myself in that sense you know in that sort of... out of respect for my parents and people of that sort. Even though there might be mental conflicts but outwardly... we tried to appear to be on the right path.

Tape 2: 24 minutes 4 seconds

RL: When did the mental conflicts begin?

AF: Well I suppose it's you know as you meet more people and your outlook widens... education communications and that sort of thing...you're more open to other ideas and things like that. I'd always been more inclined towards the science side.

RL: Coming on to – the war, really – you were in Salford Grammar School?

AF: Yes.

RL: Yes. So you know what effect did...?

AF: Well I was in – yes – those were the years I was, yes. ‘Nothing - I don't think there was...well personally I don't think there was any... I had any problems. You know, I had no, no problems.

RL: Did you have to register with the Police or anything?

AF: Well my father did - had to register, and you know as an alien had to register. And I wasn't under that umbrella really you know I was too young. And in 1948 I was naturalised. And my father was also naturalised I think a year or so before that.

RL: What about bombing?

AF: Well we...yes whilst we were in Bury New Road we did have...you know we saw the fires and we saw bombs you know at night and... we got an incendiary in the garden – incendiary bomb in the garden. Yeah well you know like everybody else we went through the war in the same way as everybody else. There were bombings and there were...we had an air raid shelter made downstairs in the cellar with beams we had to strengthen and reinforce. We did all that. Yeah well...

Tape 2: 27 minutes 1 second

RL: Would you go down in that during the raids?

AF: Yes we did. It wasn't so often we did. We had one of those tin things in the back garden. Was it Anderson shelter, was it? Yeah.

RL: Were there any near-misses?

AF: Well not...as I said we had an incendiary bomb in the garden. And one or two neighbours got one or two in the roof but the actual area that we lived, no. We could see the flames of buildings burning not too far away but I suppose we got used to it.

RL: Were there blackouts?

AF: Yes we had the blackouts, blackout curtains and the blackouts and the ration books and the usual things. Yes.

RL: Gas mask?

AF: Gas masks, yes, gas masks. Yeah.

RL: Did your school have to move at all? Was the school affected in any way?

AF: Not in my day, no.

RL: Where was the school?

AF: Leaf Square off Broad Street.

RL: So the building and the classes went on as normal?

AF: Yes. Yes.

RL: Did you have to do air raid drills at school?

AF: I'm trying to remember about the...I think we did. I can't remember too much about them really, but I think we did. Probably took everything as a joke I suppose you know...kids of that age.

RL: Was there talk of evacuation at all?

AF: Yes, oh yes. Yes. But we were not...we were not evacuated or anything – yeah.

RL: And were you aware what was going on in Europe?

AF: Well to a degree. We weren't I think in those years also we were aware of it but not to the degree that it was - not to the extent that it actually was.

Tape 2: 29 minutes 51 seconds

RL: I was just wondering how much your father you know, got to know.

AF: Well I don't know if we were...There was not too much information coming out... from the mass of things that took place. Not in the early years.

RL: When would you say the news did filter through?

AF: Well afterwards when it filtered through was more towards the latter end. And of course the aftermath.

RL: Did you have...I'm just thinking – your father's parents – what happened to them?

AF: Well they died... my father's parents they died early on – much earlier on. My mother's parents also died in Czechoslovakia – yeah. So the next generation really that suffered.

RL: So during...so you were still in Bury New Road during the war?

AF: Yes. Yes. Yes.

RL: And do you remember the end of the war?

AF: Well I remember 1945 – that was V...VJ I think wasn't it at the end of the war?

RL: VE and VJ in May...

AF: In August. Because it was my brother's wedding, which took place in London and that was on that day. So the celebrations were very evident and I remember those.

RL: Who did your brother marry? Which brother was this?

AF: There was only one...my eldest brother didn't get married. And my brother Sam he got married...he married Mimi – or Miriam - Mimi Swimer. S-W-I-M-E-R Swimer.

Tape 2: 32 minutes 43 seconds

RL: How did he meet her?

AF: Well...Our parents and the Swimer family from London used to go to Harrogate. There was a Jewish boarding house in Harrogate called Hofstetters. And we used to summer holidays used to go there you know the places were like Buxton or Harrogate we used to go to – or Southport. And there was a...I'm trying to remember - a match was being suggested between Mimi and my brother. My father and her father knew each other from Harrogate. Her father was also not a rabbi but a very, very learned man who also wrote books and was always studying all the time. So it was suggested – I've forgotten where the suggestion was - maybe this would be a good match. Now I used to go to Southport...to Harrogate with my parents being a youngster. And one year I was in Harrogate and the Swimers were in Harrogate and they had 2 daughters with them and I got to know her. And in fact I even went out on an outing in a foursome – not me with her...Me with her sister I think and another chappy. We went out boating or something like that, so I got to know her! And then when the suggestion was made of some sort of meeting between them my brother was not very keen. He thought you know she comes from this family in London who are very Orthodox and are very...you know maybe she wouldn't be right for him. And I said, well you know actually she's very nice and this and that and the other and so on. And I think that was the – maybe the - catalyst that made him agree to meet her. So she came to Manchester cause there were sort of families in Manchester related, that they should meet together and we had some neighbours - Barclays – who said they would put her up. And they met and after that it was all right, so...that's how it happened.

Tape 2: 36 minutes 0 second

RL: So did he go to live in London? Where did they live after they married?

AF: Yes, yes they went to live in London. I'm trying to remember now... they went to live in London round about '58, '59...yeah.

RL: They started off married life in Manchester?

AF: Oh yes. Yes.

RL: Right, where did they go to live?

AF: They lived in Hilton Lane.

RL: Right. And what made them move to London?

AF: Well business here was no good. It was getting very, very difficult. And he started travelling down to do business in London, sort of going down on a Monday and coming back for the weekend and so on. And he started making a connection in London and... decided that he would open up a business there. And that's what he did. He moved down there and he stayed down there.

RL: What family did he have?

AF: He had a boy and three daughters. A son and three daughters. The son still lives in London. And 3 daughters all live in Israel. And they have a large family you know children, children, children and so on - a big family. And Mimi lives there as well now – his widow...lives...yeah.

RL: Now in your time in university did you belong to any clubs or societies? You mentioned table tennis.

AF: There was a Jewish Society. But it wasn't very active. I don't remember much about it. And...that was it really.

Tape 2: 38 minutes 46 seconds

RL: Did you ever come across either at school or at university or wherever any anti-Semitism?

AF: No, it wasn't...it wasn't much of that in my time. No. Of course there wasn't... you know the big Muslim influence in those days.

RL: And what about...do you remember the creation of the state of Israel?

AF: Well, yes - yes I remember certain dramatic moments and all that, yes.

RL: How was it viewed by the family?

AF: Well it was certainly I mean it was very dramatic and emotional - yeah.

RL: You said that after university you went into business – can you tell me just a little bit about the business?

AF: Yeah well I couldn't get into medicine. That's even with a degree. Even though I was trying the various universities. So my brother said 'Well whilst you're messing about waiting and trying to get in, you might as well come into the business.' So I went into the business – textiles – and I stayed in that business until...well I stayed in that business even when I got married. I got married in '56, and... but then business was going down and down. And my wife's uncle and aunt had a business in Manchester which was fabrics – retail fabrics – it was under the name of Bacher's or Bacher's, which was quite well known. It was established in about 1905 by Adele's grandparents, and they had this business. They were Friedman - their family name was Friedman – Saul and Rose Friedman had this business – it was Bacher's as they used to call it round High Street in Manchester. And it was suggested that I join the business. And I did that round about 1962 I think it was.

Tape 2: 42 minutes 22 seconds

RL: So first of all the textile business - Where was that?

AF: Which?

RL: The first one, with your brothers?

AF: Oh well it was in Falkener Street. City Centre.

RL: And can you just explain a little bit about what you were doing?

AF: Well in those days we had 2 firms. One was Tikva Textiles and the other was Hilton & Waters. We called them Hilton & Waters because Hilton Lane was where my brothers lived and Waterpark Road was where we lived. And we had 2 firms also because the textile business was sort of... converting - as we called converting - finishing cloths. You maybe buy the cloth in the raw state and then you pick a design and have it processed printed with a printer and then it's made up and then it's sold in the various stages. And there were a lot of regulations and well with converting and with taxation and so on and it was logical and better to have another firm. One firm to do the buying and the raw side and the other to do the converting and so on. We had the 2 companies. And we did all sorts of fabrics whether we just did bleaching cloth...bleaching for the bedding trade or printed fabrics for the dress trade, merchenting. It was that sort of business.

RL: Did you have...Where were the places where the converting would take place? Where did you process...?

Tape 2: 44 minutes 52 seconds

AF: Well it was mostly in Lancashire. We still had a textile industry early on in those years – you know the 50s and 60s. You know you sent the cloth out to the various...or various mills even made the cloth. You know it was only during those years that imports started – they were starting to bring cloth in from India and Pakistan, and it was pretty rough stuff. But over the years it has improved and of course they're now huge suppliers in the textile industry. Here it's now non-existent but everything was virtually done here. The ...the yarn was spun here, the cloth was woven in Lancashire and finishers, Yorkshire, Lancashire, dyers, bleachers, printers - it was all done here. But it's all changed.

RL: Which particular places did you deal with in Lancashire?

AF: All over the place. All the...They were all over all the little – you know - Poulton and you know I mean there were dozens of mills all over the area. All gone. Yeah.

RL: So were you living at home after the war when you went into business? Were you still in...?

AF: Yes we lived in Waterpark Road, yes. Yes.

RL: And did you join any clubs or societies during those years before marriage?

AF: The only clubs I was a member of were the Waterpark Club which was tennis, table tennis and social. And The Woodlands – yeah The Woodlands was also a club – table tennis club. Yeah....those were the...

Tape 2: 47 minutes 40 seconds

RL: You know you mentioned before that your father, whilst he was in Manchester, wrote another book.

AF: Yes. Besides the Kitzor Shulchan Oruch, he wrote many years ago he wrote another book which was the Shemusho shel Torah which was dealing with all the every day things in Jewish life: Food, Kashrut of foods, the examination of foods or certainly vegetables even, slaughtering animals - animal slaughter, matzo making, more practical sides of Jewish of preparation of Jewish food and things like that.

RL: Do you remember him writing that book?

AF: Yes...yes. Yes, well he had a big study – a big library and – yes.

RL: Were you involved in it in any way?

AF: Not really, only... well I was a little bit. Yes I was involved in a sense in a little bit of research because he was doing things like fish for example. Which fish were kosher and which were not? And I was looking up whether to get the pictures of them or the Latin for them and that sort of nomenclature. So in those things I was a little bit helpful in that I did a little bit of research - external research. Yes.

RL: And how eventually did you meet your wife?

Tape 2: 50 minutes 2 seconds

AF: How did I meet my wife? Well I met her... She lived in Southport. And Southport was one of the holiday - summer holiday places that my parents used to go to. There used to be a family in Leicester Street, Southport – the Gewurts and Loebel family. They were 2 sisters who ran this hotel boarding house, The Sandhurst it was called – Sandhurst Hotel. Very orthodox hotel and often went there and I went as well. And they had 2 daughters and they had their friends there. And my wife was friendly with the daughters and so quite often on a Yomtov or some other time they would come in there and I got to know her by sight really. And... some of the boys of my age who were there and that's how we sort of got to know each other at a distance. And then just one day I... after I knew her for quite a long time and didn't really make any approaches, which she keeps blaming me for. And then one day I just rang up and asked to speak to her, see if she'd like to come out and that was it from then on. We were courting.

RL: What's her name?

AF: Adele – Adele Kaitiff.

RL: And where was she born?

AF: She was born in Manchester but lived in Southport because her mother was...had the baby here in Manchester.

RL: And when did you marry?

AF: 1956.

Tape 2: 52 minutes 29 seconds

RL: Were your parents still alive at that time?

AF: No...No, oh my mother was. My father died in '55. Yeah.

RL: Had he been ill?

AF: Yes, he was... he'd had stomach and heart problems for quite some years and he was ailing, yes. And he died when he was 70 – yes.

RL: Was he still Rav of the community when he died?

AF: No he'd retired, yes. He'd retired.

RL: Had he been retired a while?

AF: Yes quite a few years he'd retired, yes.

RL: Where did you get married?

AF: In Southport, Ironside Road, yes.

RL: Where did you go to live?

AF: Well we...we actually we didn't have a house at the time. We were looking for a house in north... We stayed in the flat for a few months. My wife's aunt had a flat so we just temporarily stayed there and we were looking for a house. And we couldn't find a house. We weren't looking in North Manchester. We had no intention of looking anywhere else. North and South were quite divided in those days. And we couldn't find anything that we could afford to buy...the type of house we were looking for we just couldn't afford to buy one. And one day my wife was coming into Manchester and she walked past – I think Kendall's had a sort of estate agent's window there. And she just saw a picture of this house, with some blossom on trees and the garden there. And she said 'Oh, I like the look of this.' And it was in Didsbury. So we went to have a look at it and we both sort of fell in love with it straight away and we ended up in Didsbury in St Aldwin's Road which is where we lived for 20 – 30 years nearly.

Tape 2: 55 minutes 4 seconds

RL: Did you know anybody in Didsbury?

AF: Not really, not really. We didn't really know. We knew that there was a country club in Didsbury – we sort of vaguely been there or I'd been there. But we

didn't really know anybody in Didsbury. We joined the...the Sephardi community – can't remember the name of the minister at the time. It was in Lansdowne Road anyway, and...

RL: Was Rabbi Gaguine there?

AF: Oh yes, he was in Queens Road. But this was the other synagogue. And I can't remember his name now. It'll come to me eventually. But we found it very difficult, very hard going because we were just not used to it at all. And Adele just couldn't take to it, so after a certain time we decided well even though it was further away we would join the Ashkenazi congregation - Carlebach in Wilbraham Road. So we joined Wibraham Road. And that's where we stayed until Wibraham Road became extinct and so now we've gone back to join Queens Road. And we're all right with it now. We've got used to it and it's a nice community. The minister is very nice –Elituv is very nice. So we're quite happy there.

RL: How did you find life in South Manchester, having lived in the north?

AF: Well it's not bad...it's quite... We got used to it, we made friends here and we're quite happy here, yeah.

RL: I think this film is about to end so we'll just stop there.

Tape 2: 57 minutes 29 seconds

End of Tape Two

TAPE 3

Tape 3: 0 minute 11 seconds

RL: This is the interview with Abe Feldman and it's Tape Three. So we were just talking about life in South Manchester. What would you say was different about life in the south to the north?

AF: Well it was certainly more I don't know what the word is – secular? - The number of Jewish shops was more limited. Of course there were some Jewish shops here a butcher and grocery and so on which there aren't now. But the community itself was less dense – the Jewish community. And I suppose in the beginning I suppose we were not part of it. Customs were a bit different and that sort of thing. But as time went on we just integrated quite easily into it so it was not...And I found it quite convenient because I used to like to play bridge and there was a bridge club here in South Manchester and that was very convenient for me, virtually on the doorstep. I spent quite a lot of time there.

RL: Did you already play bridge whilst you were in North Manchester?

AF: No it was only at university I started or I learned to play bridge, so...

RL: Where did your mum live once you were married? Did she continue to live in Waterpark Road?

AF: No she lived in the Sandhurst Hotel because she was not able to... she had to be looked after because her arthritis was so bad that you know she was on crutches and you know quite invalid. So for quite a number of years she was actually resident in the Sandhurst Hotel and then it became worse and we moved her to a nursing home in the same street a bit higher up and that's where she stayed.

Tape 3: 3 minutes 5 seconds

RL: When did she move to Southport?

AF: Moved to Southport around about...well not long after father died.

RL: About the time of your marriage?

AF: Yes. Yeah just about, because she was there then. She was at the Sandhurst when we were married yeah.

RL: What children do you have?

AF: I have a son, David, and a daughter, Debbie.

RL: When were they born?

AF: Debbie was born in 1959. David was born in 1961.

RL: And where did they go to school?

AF: Parrs Wood. Parrs Wood.

RL: And after that?

AF: They didn't have any further education after that.

RL: So Parrs Wood Junior School as well as...?

AF: Parrs Wood High School.

RL: What about the Junior...?

AF: I'm trying to think where they went there from...from Kindergarten they went there, to Parrs Wood.

RL: And what did they do after school?

Tape 3: 5 minutes 2 seconds

AF: Well...Debbie went... she was in Israel for a period. She lived in Israel for a period doing odds and ends. And then she came back here and she also did a variety of jobs – nothing really professional – sales and things like that. You know she had various different jobs. Sometimes it was telesales sometimes it was in a store - sort of

nothing very lasting or anything like that. She worked for a newspaper or something at one time. And David was apprenticed really in textiles. He worked for a few companies in textiles and eventually he went to London and joined my brother in London. He worked...he went to live in London. He got a flat there and he worked for my brother in London and eventually he took over his business. So he's kept the company which is called Swimer Textiles. He runs the company and he's brought it back to Bolton now. He's come back to live in Manchester, so he's taken the company back to Bolton.

RL: How long were you at Bacher's?

AF: I was there from '62 till '99 I think – 36, 38 years something like that.

Tape 3: 7 minutes 50 seconds

RL: What was your job within that business?

AF: Well I was in that business together with my brother in law Leon, Adele's brother Leon – Leon Kaitiff. And we ran the business when Saul and Rose retired.

RL: Is that business still going?

AF: No it was sold and then it was disbanded and got rid of...like many other things. No more.

RL: Coming back to your children. Who did they marry and what children did they have?

AF: Well Debbie married Antony Horne and he – Antony was divorced – and he's got a boy – he's now 15.

RL: What's his name?

AF: Guy.

RL: When did Debbie marry?

AF: 2002.

RL: Where do they live?

AF: They live in Hale Barnes.

RL: And David?

AF: David... got married in...where are we 2005...

RL: 2006.

AF: Yes, I'm just thinking he got married...2004 – end of 2004. He married a non-Jewish girl and he did... well after he was in London he did...for 10 years he took out only Jewish girls. And in that time you know he just couldn't find a mate, and somehow or other he met this girl Sharon Lewis and they got married. And they have a child – Daniel – who's just over a year old and they live in Altringham.

Tape 3: 11 minutes 2 seconds

RL: When your children were smaller did they belong to any clubs or societies?

AF: Well there was a little bit of a club here in South Manchester but it wasn't very much. There wasn't a great deal of activity here in South Manchester. Always been lacking in South Manchester.

RL: What kind of religious upbringing did you give your children?

AF: Reasonably so. We weren't..., knowledgably to a degree yes, but not strictly as such.

RL: What kind of background was your wife from?

AF: Reasonably orthodox background yes.

RL: If you were to define yourself in terms of identity how would you describe yourself?

AF: Identity? I don't know what identity means, I mean... Background is one thing. How one changes over the years and how one...you know you refer to traditions and things like that but...individually you know they go their own way in the end, which is I suppose what I've done and what my children have done.

RL: How would you classify yourself in terms of nationality?

Tape 3: 13 minutes 27 seconds

AF: I don't know, you can't call Jewish a nationality can you? I don't know it's a... I don't want to label oneself in that way. I suppose I just think of myself as Jewish. Ok I mean you're British with a British passport but I suppose the...the feeling still is leading towards the Jewish. You say Israeli well ok there again they've got plenty of grumbles there. You can't agree with everything that's happening there, but you must support them.

RL: When did you first go to Israel?

AF: I think it must be...30 years ago – a bit more.

RL: How do you feel towards the country?

AF: Well I mean I feel strongly drawn to it. The country, as I say I admire what they've done there. As I say, you can't...the situation is very, very difficult there and

not everybody agrees with the *way* they do things. I understand the reasons they're doing them but don't always agree with the way they do things and the decisions that they take. But as I say we have to support them.

Tape 3: 15 minutes 51 seconds

RL: Do you belong to any Israel Society?

AF: No. I support them charitably and that sort of thing but I don't belong to an actual society, no. I've never been a society man somehow or other.

RL: Do you feel different to the British in any way?

AF: Well I suppose in all honesty I can't say I'm a Britisher. I'm naturalised British but I don't know how one feels British. Everything in my upbringing has been more Jewish than anything else, so you can't really say you feel that way.

RL: How do you feel towards Germany?

AF: Not drawn to it. I have never. Well I've not set foot in Germany. I have once, in transit, Frankfurt Airport. But I've had many occasions and I've been in correspondence with Leipzig, because they've done quite a lot in Leipzig with buildings and reinstating Jewish things there and information and everything else. They've done quite a lot and even asked me if I'd like to go back. I just say I don't want to. I've just said I don't want to. I don't feel pro-German in that sense in any way. I still feel that it needs a few generations.

Tape 3: 17 minutes 54 seconds

RL: Did you receive any restitution from Germany?

AF: No. Well I don't think I was entitled to anything really.

RL: And I mean how secure do you feel in Britain?

AF: Not 100%. I mean you feel secure. But you do wonder and think about some of the signs that keep appearing that you know things that are happening you know with desecration of graves and violence that takes place and attacks that take place against Jewish institutions - which are surfacing. Whether it's happened particularly because of the Arab Israeli Muslim things, I don't know if it's brought it more to the surface but... There is a feeling of unease.

RL: Do you think you would ever move?

AF: Bit late in the day. It's getting a little bit too late I think for me. Yeah.

Tape 3: 19 minutes 58 seconds

RL: Has any branch of the family maintained the strict orthodoxy of your father?

AF: Yes, my nephew has. My nephew who lives in London. And 2 of my nieces in Israel.

RL: So this is Sam's children?

AF: Yes.

RL: Did he maintain the same degree?

AF: Yeah. Yeah.

RL: And your other brother Morris?

AF: Well he was a bachelor. He never got married and he ended up in The Maurice Feinmann home. The last few years he was there.

RL: Did he continue to be as religious?

AF: No. He...didn't no, he...

RL: You mentioned that your nephew in London wrote a book?

AF: Yes. Well he didn't write it. He compiled all the various Shaalos Uteshuvos – the questions and responses in correspondence that took place between many of the rabbis all over the world. There was quite a lot of interaction and correspondence between them. And my father left quite a lot of written things about these conversations and other things that they would – discussions. And so we got together all those things and we've got somebody else who is capable of doing the arranging and editing them. And he's produced a book which has all these things in which was a few years ago, yeah.

RL: What happened to your father's library?

AF: It was sold. Well certain people took things or were given things to a few people and then it was sold by auction.

Tape 3: 22 minutes 37 seconds

RL: Was it sort of different people bought different things from it?

AF: Yes.

RL: Was there sort of a chunk of it went somewhere in particular?

AF: Well there were chunks that went and yeah, it was broken up I'm afraid - yes.

RL: But these letters, these papers they'd been kept?

AF: Yes, some of them, well quite a number of them had been kept, yes.

RL: Is there anything do you think that we might have missed out that you might want to include?

AF: I don't know really I mean plenty of trivia but...but...I don't think there's a great deal really. I mean you can go on hours and hours but....not many things I should say that are of great importance.

RL: Is there any message you'd like to end with?

AF: I should say you know you do what you can, and do it whilst you can.

RL: Do you belong to any refugee organisation, the AJR, or...?

AF: I have joined the AJR, yes.

RL: When did you join?

AF: Not so long ago actually.

RL: How did you come to join it?

AF: I don't know, how did I come to join it? I don't really know how it came about. I think it was through the magazine. It might have been through the magazine that...and I don't know how I got the magazine either but I just came across it somehow or other. And one or two people who I know are members and I thought I would support it somehow or other. I mean I'm not trying to say I'm a refugee. I feel a little bit under false pretences because the word 'refugee' is someone who was actually chased out and had to flee. In a way we just preceded that because we went of our own accord, so a little bit under false pretences. I don't really classify as that. But I think it's a worthwhile organisation so I thought well ok I'll support it.

Tape 3: 25 minutes 37 seconds

RL: Did you ever speak to your children about your past – you know your early life? Did they ever show any interest in it?

AF: Yeah they show a great interest now particularly in latter years. I'm just very, very sorry that I'm not able to give them more information because I didn't seek the information which I should have done. And that's the message I would leave to people to say, 'Get the information whilst you can because when it's too late then you can't get it'. However much research you do you just can't get this information. And I find this now. I'm trying to trace my father's family. I presume there must be some around somewhere and I didn't ask enough questions of my father. And I'm finding it very difficult. And things do crop up now and again which give you a hint – you may be able to follow this clue or that clue - but it's very, very difficult. As I say the book which I just mentioned to you, you know this book which my aunt Masha – Masha Feldman...And she was in South America and she wrote this book in Yiddish about life at home with my parents which is interesting reading. And I never knew that my father had I think 8 siblings. Some died young but – 8 siblings. So some must have

got married some must have had children. So there must be some family around somewhere. And I just can't... trace them.

Tape 3: 27 minutes 45 seconds

RL: You don't know of any letters? Did your father used to correspond with them?

AF: Well there was a little bit of correspondence but I haven't got it, I can't find it and I don't know where it is. And it's...this is the annoying thing. And that's the message I give to my children and youngsters. Gather as much information as you can whilst you can you know, because if it's too late you just can't get it. And then your children will want to know.

RL: What kind of relationship would you say you had with your father? How close a relationship?

AF: Quite good, although he was very steeped in Orthodoxy and learning and everything like that, he was quite of a practical nature and he was open-minded. And he was very interested in the modern things. You know we were talking and when we used to go for walks I used to go to shul with him, we'd talk about different subjects and you know we were talking about...we were talking about - before the man on the moon - we were talking about the possibility. And we were talking about all these sort of things, and television was only just about to start. And he was interested in the scientific progress. He would discuss things like that. So we had quite a good relationship. I was told off I suppose like all kids were at the time when we did wrong, well we did. Yeah. It was all right.

RL: So I think we've covered...

AF: Covered a lot of ground.

RL: Thank you very much.

AF: Ok.

Tape 3: 30 minutes 6 seconds

End of spoken interview Tape Three

Photographs Tape Three

Tape 3: 30 minutes 10 seconds

AF: This is a photograph of my father's mother, Mrs Feldman, or my grandmother probably taken around about the year 1900.

RL: And the place? Where was it taken?

AF: Taken in the Ukraine, in Tolno.

AF: This is a photograph of my grandfather Shammai Feldman, my father's father, taken around about 1900, in the Ukraine in a place called Tolno.

AF: This is a photograph of my grandparents on my mother's side – Mechel Fixler and Feige Fixler - taken around the year 1900 in Czechoslovakia possibly in Novoselice.

AF: This is a photograph of the family Feldman from left to right, myself, Abe, my mother Golda Feldman, my eldest brother Morris Feldman, my father Rabbi Feldman and my other brother Sam Feldman taken in the year 1933 in Leipzig, Germany.

AF: This is a photograph of myself Abe Feldman taken in 1933 on my entry into the Carlebach School in Leipzig with my Schultute.

AF: This is a photograph of my late mother, Golda Feldman, taken in the 1920s in Leipzig.

Tape 3: 32 minutes 32 seconds

AF: This is a photograph taken in the 1920s of a number of rabbis who met nearly every year in Marienbad a spa in the summer holidays which my father, Rabbi Feldman also attended.

AF: This is a photo of the send-off of Rabbi Feldman and myself. I can be seen in the right-hand bottom corner – from the station in Leipzig, on the way to England taken in December 1934.

AF: This is a close-up of the previous picture where you can see me a little bit more clearly in the right-hand bottom corner.

AF: This photo shows the first page of the alien's registration book in Manchester which had to be presented at the police station every year or Rabbi David Feldman, my father.

AF: This is a photo of a parchment written scroll which was the contract that employed Rabbi David Feldman to his position in 1910 as a Rabbi in Leipzig.

AF: This is a photograph taken at the Jewish Day School in Sedgley Mount in the late 1940s with Rabbi Feldman, my father, on the extreme left.

AF: This is a photograph of Rabbi David Feldman together with Chief Rabbi Brodie in early 50s at the inauguration of the Mikvah in Southport.

Tape 3: 35 minutes 5 seconds

AF: This is a photograph taken on July 22nd 1956 on the occasion of my wedding, Abe Feldman, to Adele Kaitiff in the Southport Synagogue.

AF: This is a photograph taken in the early 1950s in Blackpool when my team won the EBU Teams of Four Congress. On the left is Maurice Blank, then myself Abe Feldman, then Archie Preston and Hymie Reece.

AF: This is a photograph of my daughter Debbie with her husband Antony Horn and son Guy taken in 2004.

RL: In? The place?

AF: In Manchester.

AF: This is a photograph taken in Manchester in 2002. Starting on the left is Guy Horn, my son, David Feldman, my wife Adele, myself, my daughter Debbie and my son-in-law Anthony Horn.

Tape 3: 36 minutes 30 seconds

End of Photographs

End of Tape Three