

## Bar Mitzvah Speech

July 13 Introduction

Sol Friedman's oral history was commissioned by his children and grandchildren, who wished to preserve his recollections for future generations.

Mr. Friedman is a modest, gentle man who is a generous supporter of both his community and Israel. Although he couldn't speak English when he arrived in this country not quite eighteen years old, Mr. Friedman's innate intelligence accounts for achievements far beyond his limited schooling. Perceptive and industrious, Mr. Friedman created his own opportunities as a clothing salesman to agricultural workers in the San Joaquin Valley and elsewhere.

One anecdote not recorded illustrates his keenness. While at a dinner party at the home of his son and daughter-in-law, Herb and Marianne, Mr. Friedman described to us in great detail the methods and tools used in harvesting asparagus. He had never taken part in this process, but with his curiosity and eagerness to learn, he had closely observed the harvesting technique.

Another evidence of his desire for knowledge is his attendance of several bible study classes and his decision to be bar mitzvah at the age of eighty-three.

The recording of Mr. Friedman's memoirs followed a preliminary interview. Two taping sessions of approximately two hours each were held in the Concordia Club in San Francisco on April 8 and 10, 1985. After the initial transcribing, his children decided that the material be edited into narrative form.

I hope this memoir will present many occasions of pleasant reminiscences for the present generations and those to come.

Eleanor K. Glaser  
Interviewer-Editor

It seemed to me that what Jeremiah saw was like the war and revolution in Russia. The boiling pot was eastern Europe, which had no future for Jews in the shtetlich or in the cities.

And God was good to me. I was fortunate to escape the gehanna of eastern Europe for this lovely city. My wonderful brother, Morris, may he rest in peace, was here in San

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July 13, 1985 (24 Tamuz)

Rabbi Schranz, Cantor Reich, Max, fellow co  
my dear family and friends,

The good Lord has seen fit to bless me with thirteen years beyond the proverbial three score. The same thirteen years when a boy becomes a full member of the Jewish community after studying and called to the Torah.

I am a member of the B'nai Brith Bible Brea and the San Francisco Bible Breakfast Club, and Schranz's weekly Talmud class -- and when I learn first chapter of Jeremiah is the portion read on birthday, I was prompted to plan for this bar mi

A while back, my grandson Marty said to me, do you remember your bar mitzvah?" and I couldn't an honest answer because I didn't remember. Rus war when I was thirteen. It was a time of tumult destruction. We feared for our lives. Who had think about bar mitzvah in such confusion? Prob wasn't bar mitzvah, because all of us had surviv our minds. Before the war there were the pogrom the war we feared cruelty from both the Russian the villagers surrounding our town, and the Octo Revolution that threatened our lives.

In studying Jeremiah, it seemed to me that related to my own experiences during those troub This beautiful chapter tells about the invasion by Babylon. In Chapter One, Verse Eight, the Lo Jeremiah not to be afraid, for He is with him and deliver him. Verses Thirteen and Fourteen read: word of the Lord came unto me the second time, s seest thou?' And I said: 'I see a seething pot face thereof is from the north.'" (That is, the is Babylon.) "Then the Lord said unto me: 'Out north the evil shall break upon all the inhabita land."

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Francisco and helped me to get started earning a living. But a living isn't everything. A man's greatest fortune is his family, and for that my wife Fay deserves all the credit. They say behind every successful man there is a woman. That is Fay. While I was on the road for forty years, she raised our lovely children. We are now blessed with bright, beautiful grandchildren who are a credit to their parents.

I want to thank Rabbi Schranz, Cantor Reich, and Max for encouraging me to prepare myself for this bar mitzvah, and to thank all of you for sharing this special day with me.

I want to thank my nephew, Joe; his wife, Dot; my niece, Dora and her family. A special thanks to my "machateniv" Bea, and her son, Sid, for coming from Los Angeles. I thank my brother-in-law Yak Goldberg; his wife, Shulamith; and children. Also, Reuben Calic; his wife, Bess; and his children. They all made a special trip from the Peninsula. I am very happy they are all here in good numbers. I am honored to have a number of my friends from the bible clubs here to share this special shabbat with me.

I want to thank my grandson Marc, for coming from Israel to share this simcha with me. I also want to thank my daughter, Mona; her husband, Mark; and her children, Jill and Marty, for coming from Rochester, New York. Naturally, I want to express my joy in having my son, Herb; his wife, Marianne; and my lovely granddaughter, Jennifer; and my daughter, Lila; her husband, Bert; my granddaughter, Lisa; her husband, Jim; and my great-grandson, Kevin, for sharing this wonderful day with me as well. I am only sorry my grandson Steve could not be present.

---Sol Friedman

As I said, my mother was sick. My father always struggled, he didn't make enough, so she used to sell whiskey in the house to peasants that used to come, and she used to sell it by the glass. I don't think there was enough to make a living, but even sick in bed she used to get up, and naturally my father couldn't...you know, he did not mix in in that. But I remember even as a little boy I used to help out a little bit.

What I can recollect is from approximately the age of nine, in 1911. That was the year my mother died. She was no more than fifty. I remember her bedridden for some time; she must have had a heart ailment. I remember Mendel Bayles' trial the very same year. He was convicted for mutilating a twelve-year-old boy, a Christian boy, and using

## I. The Old Country

his blood for the Passover. More about that trial, read Bernard Malamud's book The Fixer.

I was born on July 10, 1902, in the Hebrew month Tamuz, in a little town called Chernevitzi in the Ukraine, about twenty miles from the Dniester River. My mother, as long as I can remember, was always sick in bed. My father, he was supposed to be a tutor, and we were always struggling. As a little boy, I remember we were always struggling to make a living. My father was named Israel Joseph, and my mother's name was Leah. Her maiden name was Skolnick.

We were eleven brothers and one sister. But what I remember is four brothers, with me five, and I was the youngest in the family. Six brothers and the sister died. I only remember one younger brother than me, who died. I could have been maybe about six, seven years old, and he was a little younger. The rest of them were already grown men, you know, being some brothers died. So the brothers that I remember, we were probably about eight years apart. And one brother, my oldest brother, he was actually a half-brother, 'cause my father's first wife died and he married a sister to the wife.

When he married her, my mother was no more than fifteen years old. Our brother was just like her own brother. His mother died out of childbirth, and the brother, his name was Benyamin...I remember him as the older brother, and then I had another, Avraham, and then another brother, Naphtali, and one brother, Moishe, and my name is Zalman, and I was the youngest. In our shtetl, when a child was born there was no birth certificate. The child was registered by the rabbi appointed by the czar. It did not have to be necessarily religious. My father wrote down all the children's birthdays in a prayer book, which must have been lost.

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What I can recollect is from approximately the age of nine, in 1911. That was the year my mother died. She was no more than fifty. I remember her bedridden for some time; she must have had a heart ailment. I remember Mendel Bayles' trial the very same year. He was convicted for mutilating a twelve-year-old boy, a Christian boy, and using

his blood for the Passover rituals. For more about that trial, read Bernard Malamud's book The Fixer.

My mother came from a little town called Lechnitz, about thirty miles distant from Chernevitzi. When I was no more than six or seven, my mother took me to visit her mother in Lechnitz. My grandmother must have been very old. Her name was Olga. They were five sisters and one half brother. My father did not have any family in that little town. Where he came from, I don't know, but I remember he used to tell me that he came from somewhere deep in Russia, that he ran away because at that time the czar was taking little children and raising them up to seventeen, eighteen, then they put them in the army. So he escaped the town, and how he landed in the town where we lived, I don't know. I'm very sorry, I should have asked. But those years, you know, the war broke out, and then we were always on the run. So I did not ask the question.

I don't think my mother had any education, but my father, he was searching for education. He was quite an educated man, naturally, in the bible. But he was not a fanatic, he was a modern man. And of course his livelihood was teaching. He had a little cheder, they call it, in our house. I remember he told me when he was a young man in his thirties, he decided to take up...he went in for bookkeeping, and he took up Karl Marx's theory, and he used to get, by correspondence, excellent grades. He was like an adventurous man.

After the war broke out, we moved to...I don't remember. Maybe it was before the war broke out. I had a brother living in Bessarabia, the town was called Lipkon, and where he was working was a big food store, a very exclusive food store, and they needed a bookkeeper. My father took that position as a bookkeeper, and the proprietor of that store was very pleased with him.

While he studied Karl Marx, he was not a communist. But he was not a fanatic, like the very pious Jews in the old country. He observed holidays, but he was more or less a modern man. When he was teaching in our little town, it was only Hebrew and Yiddish, and he felt that we should also have Russian. And he made propaganda in that little town, that they should have Russian. Both the private teachers, and when there was a school, finally, that they should take up Russian. He succeeded, and they started teaching Russian. At that time, and those years there at the beginning of the century, it was considered, you know, a big movement, to start teaching Russian. He was not the only one. There were other teachers there, too. They were called "melamed." But my father was practically the only one that started in teaching Russian. The others were

teaching a little bit Russian, not too much.

So he was a--as a matter of fact there were three brothers-in-law, and he was considered the aristocrat. His brothers-in-law had payas and beards, but he used to trim his beard, and he used to be dressed, not in the long kaf-tans. He was more of a modern man. The orthodox people looked at him as what we would call an apikoras, a free thinker.

I remember, as a little boy naturally, we had several synagogues. We lived not far from the Rav, the rabbi of the town there, and he had his own services. My father used to go every Saturday morning. Every day he didn't go, but every Saturday morning he used to go to the rabbi's. In his house he had a little minyan. There was a Chevra Kadisha, a burial society, as I remember. As a little boy, when my father couldn't make it, he used to give me the book there to collect for the weak, for the sick. It (the organiza-tion) is called Bikur Cholim and I used to go there and enter in the little book the names of those houses. One would give ten kopecs, one would give fifty kopecs, and that was a weekly collection.

Chernevitzi wasn't in the Jewish Pale. It was in the Ukraine, and we could travel from one part to the other. I would say we were about three hundred, three hundred fifty Jewish families in Chernevitzi. Some of them were in the wine business, and some had little grocery stores. Some had piece goods stores, and naturally there were carpenters. And in a little town, that was their livelihood. There were no farmers in our town. None. This was a shtetl. In the villages, naturally, there were some--wherever Jews lived, there were farmers. But in our town, in the shtetl, there were not any farmers.

In Chernevitzi there were about three hundred fifty families, only Jews. But around our town, there were some villagers--peasants. And maybe there was one or two families in each village, and they didn't have their own land. They would have the land that is called "poretz." It means the one that owns the land. Usually the poretz never paid any attention, but used to hire a Jew to take care of his land. He was like a manager.

The landowners which were called "pretzim," owned the land, and they always used to travel all over the country. They would have someone, called a "possessor," and he used to take care of the land on the outskirts of the town and around it. The manager would be either a Jew or a gentile. For instance, if there was a forest they used to lease it out from the poretz, or if the poretz did not sell it, he used to manage it himself. But when he'd lease it from the

poretz, it means like a percentage.

The relationship between the Jews in town and the gentiles in the surrounding villages was not good at all. Whenever they wanted to have a little holiday, they used to have a pogrom. If you saw "Fiddler on the Roof," that's not exaggerated, that's what we lived through. And especially, that happened on the day of the market. In our town, every Thursday was a market. Peasants used to bring their wares, like food, chickens. They used to bring it to the market and sell. Then the peasants used to get drunk, they wanted a holiday, they started breaking windows. And we lived through all that.

I actually did not have any education at all. I remember my father, when he had some children coming into the house for his cheder, so with me he said, "You just listen." He did not want to devote his time with me, because of his balebatim. You know, they send the children to school and if they see that he pays attention to me they'd think it's not right. So he did not pay much attention to me. And then when the war broke out, there was no cheder at all. I don't remember going to any cheder, except when my father was teaching those few years. Then after, when he took a position as a bookkeeper after the war broke out, I was already working for somebody. So I didn't have the chance to go to cheder.

When my mother died, I was about nine years old, ten, maybe. But when I was ten or eleven, I went to work for a food store, like a delicatessen. My father arranged with those people for twenty rubles for six months, and also they were supposed to buy me a pair of boots. You know, then the mud was very high. The first six months when I worked there, I was supposed to work in the store, but very little that they used to use me. They had a little baby, and they used to send me home to take care of the baby, paint the buggy. You know, like an errand boy. I was very much disgusted with that work there. So then I started looking.

At the time I worked in the food store for six months, my two single brothers lived and worked in Moguliev on the Dniester River. They helped out my father by sending money from time to time. In 1912, my brother Naphtali got married to a girl from Lipkon, Bessarabia, and he settled there.

Then after that I went to work for a piece goods store. I was already maybe about eleven or twelve years old. And we used to travel also. In different towns they had the market. Like in our town, it was Thursday. It was called the "yarid". That's the day of the marketplace. We used to go and set up a booth and sell the piece goods.

Then when I was about twelve, a man, his name was Nissen, he was a hunchback. They called him "Nissela Habota." "Habota" means a hunchback. I used to go with him, and we used to sell on that marketplace -- it's like a flea market, you know. Then after that, when we had to buy merchandise, he used to give me a list. I was no more than twelve years old, maybe, and I used to go to Moluf, the next biggest town from our shtetl. I used to bring the piece goods home. Piece goods are fabrics. Besides going in the market, he had also a store in that little town, Chernevitz. In Yiddish they call it "Chernevitz." It's not the big Chernevitz, it's the little Chernevitz. Because in the Bukovina, instead of Chernevitz, we used to call it "Kleine Chernevitz," "Little Chernevitz."

At that time, my brother next to me, Moishe, was no more maybe around twenty or twenty-one years old. He worked in that town, Moluf, and his dream was to go to America. We had an uncle in Chester, Pennsylvania, by the name of Miller. Zalman Miller. Just before the war broke out, Moishe wrote a letter to him, and he sent Moishe some papers and money, and he prepared himself to come to America. It was 1913, and Moishe came to our shtetl to say goodbye. My mother died, and I had a stepmother, and I told him he should think of me, he shouldn't forget me, to send for me. He promised me that he's going to do it, but after, when he was already on the ship to land in America, the war broke out. It was already the end of 1913 or '14, and after the war broke out we lost contact. And we did not hear from my brother Naphtali till way after 1921 (after I escaped Russia), because Bessarabia was under the domination of the czar.

When the war broke out, I was about twelve years old. For the first few months we were jubilant in our shtetl, but that didn't last long. There was confusion, since every few months there was a different regime, such as the Bolsheviks. Whenever the Cossacks passed our village, they killed and they robbed.

I remember the Austrian army came into our town on the way to the Black Sea, and they went as far as Odessa. But when they attacked, we knew what was going to happen if we would be left in the town. So a good portion of the Jews ran with the Austrian army to another town. The name was Tomashpol. But it didn't take very long and the Austrians started retreating. The Russians ran and the Austrians attacked, but I think right near Odessa the Austrian army was defeated. The Russian army attacked them, and they started running back, the Austrian army.

I'll never forget that day when they started back. The Russian army, naturally in collaboration with the villagers,



they picked up eight Jewish boys from the Austrian army. We got together, quite a few Jews, in the marketplaces -- a big, open market there -- and we had to dance on them until they were all dead. They buried them in one grave. We knew that one was still alive, and then during the night, uncovered the grave, and we got out the one he was still alive. He remained in our town, and he got married in our town. It's a scene that I could never forget.

The Austrians didn't rob or hurt us. It was the Russians. And the villagers around the town. There was quite a few little villages around the town. Whenever they wanted to have a party, that day was the market day on Thursday, they would get drunk and rob and kill. Their slogan was, "Kill the Jews and save the Ukraine." I remember one day there was a pogrom, and I was caught in the street. One villager pulled off my boots and my pants. I was lucky they did not beat me up.

I remember after the war and after the Revolution, in order to protect ourselves from the peasants around the village there, we organized young men. And there were some older men, you know, in their twenties and their thirties. And we had a zelb schutz. A zelb schutz is where an organization, a defense group that, whenever there was an attack, we could go ahead and fight back. We obtained guns and rifles that we used to buy on the black market. At that time there was no czar, that was after the Revolution. We were very effective. In 1919, 1920, we heard that we were expecting Jabotinsky, Vladimir Jabotinsky, and we said, any day he's going to come to our town and the whole defense group would join him and we'd go to Palestine. But he never made it, never made it to our town.

Well, after that, when I was already about sixteen, seventeen years old, I started to be independent, working for myself. What I did, I remember, it was already after the Revolution, I used to go to Moluf and I used to buy the government sacks, and buy maybe fifty sacks there. But I couldn't carry the bundle, so it was like contraband, it was against the law, it was government material. I used to wrap them around my body there, and I'd bring them into the little town there and I used to sell it. It was a big deal. I'd buy them from speculators, and I'd bring them to my town. That meant quite a bit, if somebody could get a couple sacks and make two pillowcases, or take them apart and make a shirt out of them.

Everything was scarce. We could get a piece of mildewed bread, and we could get some hot water, and we were lucky if we could sweeten it a little bit. That was a big, big meal. That was a feast, if you could get that. 'Cause everything was scarce. Sugar was impossible to get. In

1920, when my father died--he literally died of starvation--I saw there was no future for me in Russia.

## II. Escape from Russia

In spite of difficult times, I started speculating with sugar. That was already, I would say, 1919-1920, because I remember when I decided to leave Russia, I was speculating with sugar. I had four sacks of sugar, which each sack probably weighed about two hundred pounds. And it was also the end of the Revolution, there were already the Bolsheviki, and it was against the law. But in order to survive we took chances, because the life was worthless, anyway.

When I decided to leave, I sold the sacks of sugar for thousands and thousands of rubles. My intention was to come to Romania, in Bessarabia. Originally it was Russia, but after the war it belonged to Romania. So when I sold those four sacks of sugar, I traded in the rubles and I got eight five-dollar gold pieces, for all that money, the thousands of rubles. At that time, the head of government was Petlura.

So when I decided to leave, I got those eight five-dollar gold pieces. If they searched me, they would take them away. I wore burlap pants, which I was lucky to get burlap, and I wore with suspenders. So I cut off the buttons from the pants and I covered up each five-dollar gold piece with burlap. One here, one here, all around there, and that's how I was lucky to leave with my money, the forty rubles to go with into Romania.

At that time, all the young people, elderly people, they were trying whichever way we could escape. And that's the time I decided there was no future anymore in that little town to remain. Those two others, I don't remember exactly their names, and myself, we decided... It was on a Thursday, when it was our marketplace. There was a pogrom in our town, and we all three of us decided that's it, no longer.

We decided to leave our little town and go to the Romanian border, which it's called Yaruga, and near there is the Dniester River, which divides Romania and Russia, and to cross into the Romanian border. Before the war, it was Russia, but after the war, Bessarabia became Romania. Yaruga was about three miles to go right exactly to the borderline, the Dniester River. There we met those called "contrabandchick" who were dealing with the Romanian

gendarmes. In order to pay off, we made arrangements with them. It was on a Thursday, we got there, and they kept us in the basement (there could have been about three hundred steps down) in order to know when it's clear to cross the border. It had to be already in the winter, because the Dniester River was already freezing, there were ice floes. It was on a Sunday night, it could have been maybe around midnight, and there we crossed by a little rowboat, no more. I would call it about three feet, a small one, you know. And the man that crosses the river there, in order to make us feel good, he said, "Oh, Friday night I took across a woman and a child there, and they got drowned!" But we took chances.

So when we crossed the river, the little town there is called Ottic, near the little town of Zduritza. They prepared us that where we crossed the river there'll be a Romanian patrol there, and you have to have some money to pay them off. So we got some money ready, that Petlura money, and also Romanian money, in order to pay them off. So the minute we crossed the Dniester River, they were already there waiting for us. But as long as you paid them, it was fine. Then after that, when we were already in a house about three miles from that river (it was all organized there), and it was around maybe three o'clock in the morning, gendarmes, the patrol, knocked again on the door. We had to give some more money.

The next morning, we came into a little town called Zduritza. There, they already had a Commitat. It was part of the HIAS, a committee to take care of the refugees. Being that I had a brother in Lipkon, my aim was to go to my brother. From that town to my brother's place by -- I think they had already trains -- it couldn't have been no more than four or five hours. But I couldn't do it -- I didn't have any papers. So we had to go by horse and buggy. We had to go by back roads there. Until I got there, it took me about a week's time because I stayed over in those little towns until it was clear to go. So when I got in to my brother's house, he was not home, because he was traveling, he was a salesman. But when he came back and he saw me, he fainted, because from 1913 to 1920, there was no contact.

This was my brother Naphtali, who had married a girl from that town, from Lipkon. And he was also working in that store where my father became bookkeeper. So naturally, after the war he remained there, and he lived there all his life.

He told me that he heard that some people made contact through a rabbi in a town called by the name Soroka. The rabbi of that town used to help out a lot of them. But my

brother was afraid, so he never even attempted to see whether he could make contact with me. So naturally, when I appeared there without his help, he was surprised. He gave me the information that he corresponds with my brother Moishe that was already in San Francisco, and he told me that my brother Moishe always wrote in every letter, "See whether you could get him out." He was concerned.

After seeing my brother, we immediately dispatched a letter to my brother Moishe in San Francisco. Within two weeks I received a letter and two hundred dollars to prepare all necessary documents to come to San Francisco.

Naphtali didn't know that my father died. My father died in 1920, just before I left, a few months before. It was on a Friday when I came in, and I didn't want to spoil the shabbat. I had to say kaddish, so I went to a different shul. Friday night my brother went to shul, but I went to a different shul in order he shouldn't see me say kaddish. So one of the men, Yeheshuah Darer, that I knew from before, because we lived in that town before the war when my father was bookkeeper there. So he comes over to my brother, to Naphtali, he says, "Why don't you say kaddish?" So naturally it spoiled his shabbat. Then I told him then my father died. He literally died of starvation, because there was no food.

My brothers Avraham and Benyamin stayed in Russia. Benyamin was a half-brother, from my father's first marriage. He had a big family. I left them there, of course. After I came to San Francisco, my brother Moishe and I, we tried to bring Naphtali out. That was maybe a year after I got here. I was doing pretty good the first year, so my brother and I gave Naphtali a proposition that we'd like to take him out. So he gave us an ultimatum: he would come, provided we could open up a store for him!

I was in Romania, at my brother's house, in order to wait for Moishe to send money. It didn't take very long, maybe about two or three weeks, my brother sent me two hundred dollars to prepare myself some papers. In Romania at that time if you had money, you could do anything. You know, I became a Romanian, even a native, got papers that I was born in Romania. And I started getting ready my papers to leave Romania.

At the same time I met for the first time relatives. You see my brother Moishe married a first cousin, Brucha Maltzer, and her father, Itzik Maltzer, was my uncle. My brother wrote to them that I am already in Lipkon. They lived in Vale La Lui Vlad, it's a little town also called Dombrovitz. It's not far from Beltz. They also escaped from Russia. They came from Kapaigorod.

When my brother wrote to them that I'm in Lipkon, they sent an uncle called Chaim Aaron. Without notifying us, he came to Lipkon, and he said, "Zalman, I gotta take you to my place, we got a letter from your brother. Naturally, you got to take the two hundred dollars with you, whatever you have left, and you will wait, and you'll go with the Maltzer family." I was not quite eighteen years old, and my brother was afraid for me, so he thought it would be a good idea we should get together. He meant well, but then it took almost a year before we got to America. It delayed me because I had my papers and everything to leave, just to buy the steamship ticket and to leave. But when he wanted it that way, so naturally I went to that little town.

But while I was in Lipkon, I worked. I helped out my brother, because he was in the citrus business. I used to go on the street with a little basket and sell lemons and oranges. It was imported. You could get an orange or a lemon, but it was a rarity. I'll never forget the scene when my mother was sick in bed, and somehow she got an orange from Moliv -- Moliv was a bigger town. She got one orange because she was sick, and she had to eat it sparingly, one of the little oranges. She gave it to me to taste, and I'll never forget that taste up to this day!

I had money, but my relatives were penniless. They also had to start preparing papers, and it took I would say almost a year, and we all went together. In order to obtain a visa to go to the U.S.A., it was easier to be Romanian citizens. There were men who specialized in preparing all the necessary papers and passports. In order to save twenty dollars to get my own separate passport, they decided that I should be my uncle's son, fourteen years old, by the name Zalman Maltzer. So I should look younger, they decided I should wear kneepants. I looked hideous. The very same day I arrived in San Francisco, my brother took one look at me in that outfit and took me and outfitted me with a suit, shirt, and shoes.

It took a year because we had to wait until our turn came. We waited for our papers in Bucharest for almost one year. While we were in Bucharest we couldn't work. Just whatever money they sent from San Francisco we lived on. We finally departed from Antwerp, Belgium, crossing the Atlantic Ocean on the Cunard steamship the S.S. Zeeland. We were my uncle Itzik Maltzer and his wife, Ethel, and their son, Sy and his new wife, Dina. Also my uncle's widowed daughter-in-law, Mika, and her two children. Altogether we were eight.

My money went. At the same time, they wired America for money. Money came from my brother and two brothers-in-law. My brother's wife also had a brother by the name

Moishe Maltzer, and there was another brother-in-law by the name of Louis Licht. Moishe Maltzer's wife was a sister to Licht's wife, Yeska. So, naturally, all the families, it was share and share alike. They had to send -- once they sent a check for four thousand dollars. You know, a big family. to me. He and his wife, Becky, were very, very, good to me. Parents could not be any better.

As I mentioned before, that daughter-in-law they had with them, her name was Mika Maltzer. Her husband died, she was a widow, and she had a girl by the name Bassya, thirteen years old, and there was a young boy, maybe six, seven years old. Just before approaching Ellis Island, he died on the ship. life. Itzik married again. His first wife was my aunt, my mother's sister. But he married again. They called her Neema. That girl, named Bassya, we came on the boat together. Eventually, a love affair started in between us, and I before married that Betty in 1926. Her Russian name was Bassya, but on Ellis Island they changed it to Betty. She changed it back to Bassya when she took out citizenship papers. She was my second cousin. my brother's first there. They lived in the front and the store was underneath. And I lived with them for a year's time.

Maybe the second **III. New Beginnings** I went down to the post office and applied for the first citizenship papers. I told them the truth, that I came under the name of Salman Malt. We landed in New York. In New York, naturally, we spent a few days, because my uncle Itzik Maltzer (my brother's father-in-law and also his uncle, because my brother married a first cousin) had a lot of landsleit there. So we stayed about a week in New York, in the HIAS building. They kept you almost like a prisoner. But I had a cousin in New York, and I wanted to see him. His name was Joe Tabachnick. He didn't come to see me, but I was anxious to see him, so I sneaked out, and I went to see my cousin. When I came back, they were concerned. They saw that I didn't get lost, so they used to send me to Ellis Island and I used to bring some passengers from Ellis Island into the HIAS building. I was never afraid. I was never afraid for hard work, and long trips didn't mean anything to me. I'll tell you, when you live through wars, when you feel your life is not worth anything, so it doesn't mean anything. town So...you're not afraid. wholesalers. We got suitcases and filled them up with ladies' stockings, dresses, and all kind. Then we went by train to San Francisco. It took four or five days. The only time I traveled by train in Europe was when my father was bookkeeper in Lipkon, and he sent for me. At that time I traveled from Moliv to Lipkon, which took maybe about six hours by train. That was the only time. go ahead and start working the streets from door to door, and show 'em your wares...

When I came to San Francisco, which was April, 1921, I was not quite eighteen. I lived with my brother Moishe for

a year. And as a matter of fact, he didn't even want to take any money, so I told him, if you're not going to take any money that I'm going to move out. So I paid him five dollars a week. Well, at that time five dollars a week was quite a bit. But he was more than a brother, he was like a father to me. He and his wife, Becky, were very, very, good to me. Parents could not be any better.

When we first arrived, my brother Moishe had a store on 2335 Mission Street, and in the back of his store there was a cottage which he gave to the Maltzer family. There was our uncle Itzik (Isaac) who was Moishe's father-in-law, and his wife. Itzik married again. His first wife was my aunt, my mother's sister. But he married again. They called her Meema Ethel. Meema means aunt. And also there was Sy and his wife, Itzik's son who got married in Romania just before they came here. Sy was Moishe's brother-in-law and also his cousin, you know, my sister-in-law's brother. And Betty's mother and Betty. They lived all in that back cottage there, and I lived in my brother's flat there. They lived in the front and the store was underneath. And I lived with them for a year's time.

Maybe the second day, my brother and I went down to the post office and applied for the first citizenship papers. I told them the truth, that I came under the name of Zalman Maltzer on the Zeeland ship, but my real name is Zalman Friedman. I told the reason why I did it, and I showed them the entry when I came in. That was 1921, and I had to wait two years to apply for my second papers. In 1927 I became a citizen.

Louis Licht, my cousin Sy Maltzer's brother-in-law, had a furniture store and my brother had a dry goods store, and they discussed, "What are we going to do with the greeneh?" So Mr. Licht decided, "We'll take in Sy into the furniture store, and you take in Zalman into the dry goods store." But my brother says, "No, I don't want to do that. I want him to be in business for himself. I don't want him to start in to work for somebody."

About a week after my arrival, my brother went downtown with me and Sy to the wholesalers. We got suitcases and filled them up with ladies' stockings, dresses, and all kinds of things. He said, "You go ahead and start knocking from door to door." I remember the first day. Moishe had a store, and he also had a truck -- he used to sell merchandise to the farmers in the farms around San Francisco. He dropped me off in North Beach at Francisco Street and said, "You go ahead and start working the streets from door to door, and show 'em your wares..."

So the first day, I started in and he dropped me off, I

think it was around eight o'clock in the morning. And I started knocking on the doors, all the way almost up to Telegraph Hill. There were only a few houses there. Up to about five o'clock I had not made a sale. I was so disgusted. Finally, there was a little house. I'll never forget it. I knocked on the door and an old woman opens up the door. I opened up the suitcase and I show her what I have, and she let me in the house, and she started picking up some merchandise: aprons, stockings, all kinds of things.

From the jobbers, we used to buy pants, shirts, and what. At that time, what she picked up was around forty dollars. So I figured out (already I knew what it cost) my cost, and I knew how much profit I made. I made around fourteen dollars, fifteen dollars profit. So I come home and I tell that to my brother. I was so disgusted. I hadn't sold anything, but the last customer I sold forty dollars. "Good!" he says. As the Yiddish expression goes, "'Bist er ein mitten rechten fuss.'" In other words, "You were lucky." And you know, that gave me encouragement.

Later on, when I had a truck, I expanded my route. In the first week I made forty dollars profit, in 1921. Right after the same week there, out of the forty dollars I sent ten dollars to my brother Naphtali, in Lipkon. At that time, ten dollars were equal to sixty leis, like sixty dollars, actually! And I got a letter from him, "What are you doing, brother, picking up money in the street?" So, the first year I saved up twenty-five hundred dollars. Of course I did not have any expenses. They used to call me the hustler. I was not afraid of hard work. And then after the first year, I bought a truck. It was much easier, instead of carrying the suitcases.

At the same time I went to school at night. Horace Mann Elementary School, at 23rd and Valencia. I graduated from Horace Mann in sixteen months. Then I went to Mission High for about six months, but frankly at the same time I was falling in love with Betty, so I quit. I would say that's about the only schooling I had, but I always searched for knowledge. I did a lot of reading, especially when I was on the truck. I used to have some books and while waiting for customers, I used to read. We had a folk schule to teach Jewish children Yiddish. At that time about three

hund. Being my brother was in this business, we used to buy at the wholesale house, and we used to buy a lot at the auction, too. And we used to buy together. My brother was a good-natured fellow and he'd say, "Well, we bought a lot of merchandise. So take what you want." And he also did the same thing to his brother-in-law, Sy. And we used to divide it. Many times, if Sy took his part, we used to divide it half and half. As a matter of fact, he gave me a little corner in the back of his store where I used to keep my merchandise, and I used to take it from there. And



whatever I needed, I used to go to the wholesale houses and buy it.

At that time when I first started in peddling with the suitcases, we went down to M. L. Fleischman & Co. That's the first time we filled up the suitcase. And after that we used to buy some from Milton G. Cooper, Nustader Brothers, and Al Dinkelspiel Co., Levi Strauss, and a lot of it in the auction.

From the jobbers, we used to buy pants, shirts, and whatever. As far as clothing is concerned, I did not stock any clothing. But whenever I had an order for a suit there were some jobbers I used to go to. I'd go to Altman and get a suit on memorandum and sell it, in order not to keep stock. Clothing is men's suits. Dry goods takes in pants, shirts, sweaters, underwear.

In the auction, if I had a chance, I would buy women's dresses. I would buy them and then I already had outlets for them. Later on, when I had a truck, I expanded my route, so I could always try to sell it.

Betty and I were married in June 1924, and Lila was born September 25, 1929. Actually it wasn't a happy marriage, because Betty fell in love with one of my best friends, Philip Bibel, and eloped with him. My little girl was only about two-and-a-half years old, that was 1932.

#### IV. Promoting Yiddish Culture

Betty and I worked for the Yiddish Folk Schule, and just because we spoke Yiddish, some considered us radicals. But actually, we were not Communists. We also belonged to a literary dramatic club, which I took part in it. I used to take part in many plays, Yiddish plays, and so did my ex, Betty.

The Folk Schule was separate. We had a folk schule to teach Jewish children Yiddish. At that time about three hundred children used to attend the school. We were the organizers. It cost us money. We brought out teachers, we bought a building. We had it on 1057 Steiner Street, San Francisco. Just a few young fellows and we bought the building. At that time, to pay ten thousand dollars (and it cost me two or three hundred dollars), it was a lot of money.

Others in my family were not much interested in Yiddish. But being that we had just come from the old

country, and we were a group at that time, twenty-five, thirty people, so naturally we were more interested in that dramatic group. And so our life was different than my family's life. But they never criticized. My brother Moishe was the most wonderful person. He did not interfere with me. As far as forgetting about Yiddish, first of all, I couldn't, because my English, I knew, was poor. The reason was because I used to deal with Italians, so naturally, I spoke Italian. And when I expanded, I used to go in the field where there were Mexicans, so I picked up Spanish, a little Portuguese. So therefore, my English was limited. I was interested in Yiddish. About the literary dramatic club, I had a role in "The Blacksmith's Daughter", and I had a role in a play called "Shop", and I was the manager for that production. I arranged the props and all that, and I also acted. And I also acted in a play by Peretz Hirschbein. In Yiddish it's "Greenh Felder" -- "Green Fields." Peretz Hirschbein was a great Jewish writer. And I also played in Jacob Gordon's "Gott, Mensch and Teifel," "God, Man and the Devil." And I took part in "Menschen" by Sholom Aleichem, a one-act play. I used to take part in different sketches, dialogues, and two people talking.

From 1921 to 1924 we used to meet quite often. Then when I got married, Betty used to play, too. I think that folded up in the 1940s. A lot of them moved away, and some died. But in the 1930s, the early 1930s and in the late 1920s, we used to meet quite often. We used to have a group of about sometimes twenty five, thirty people, and we used to play the Scottish Rite Auditorium.

We did a play by Sholom Aleichem, called "It's Hard to be a Jew." And in the story there it shows about the pogroms. Sholom Aleichem wasn't towards the left, but he always criticized the well-to-do, and he was in sympathy with the poor. We used to read many short stories by I.L. Peretz. And if you know the story about Bontshe Shweig, you know a poor man, in a little town, and he's always hungry. When he dies and comes to heaven, the angels asked him, "What do you like to have, Bontshe?" he says, "Frish shtickel bilke," a fresh roll. That was his desire.

So many times we spent a thousand dollars and we had a thousand and six dollars deficit, so we called it a moral success. But we enjoyed that. We used to bring in lecturers, Jewish writers, and we had to guarantee them. And if they were fellows that wouldn't bring in enough expenses, we had to dig into our pockets and cover the expense. So then many times I used to have lectures at my

house. This was after I married Fay, after 1938. the late fifties when she was on her honeymoon in San Francisco!

I remember once we had a lecture at my house with Dr. Chaim Zhitlovsky, great Yiddish writer, great thinker. As a matter of fact it was his last lecture. On the way from our house to Canada, he died. And when we used to bring Peretz Hirschbein down, he used to stay with us, and we used to arrange the lectures. Even up to the 1970s, we opened our home to many lecturers and held gatherings for many Jewish causes. or family and friends. We were four generations at that party: my wife's mother Sheina Calic, us, our

The same with the Yiddish writers in those years. When they used to come to San Francisco they used to write to me, could I go with them and sell their books. Many times I had lectures at my house of Jewish writers in order to save money for them.

#### V. Transitions

For instance, just the day before yesterday, we were in shule Saturday and there was a woman, the director of Yad Vashem, and she gave a talk about Yad Vashem. Her husband is with her. After the services in shule, we greeted the rabbi. She was talking with the rabbi, and then she said, "By the way, do you know of any cheap hotel? I've got to be back to San Jose tomorrow." They had stayed in San Jose 29, with some friends, and she wanted to sleep over, she wants to see San Francisco. So what do you think we did? We said, "Come with us." We made lunch for them, they stayed with us, we made dinner for them, they slept over. The next morning my wife gave them a ride. In the afternoon, on the way to the Greyhound bus, (I don't drive, but the man that works for me does) they saw Fisherman's Wharf and Chinatown. They hadn't seen the crooked street so we took a detour and we showed them the crooked street, and we took them down to the Greyhound bus. e says, "Don't worry

about me. Whenever you're able, pay us back and don't delay. I could give you another illustration. About two years ago we went to the airport to pick up our granddaughter from Rochester, and at the same time there was a couple waiting for their luggage. My wife hears them talking Hebrew, so she started a conversation. They were asking how to go to Lombard Street, they heard there were some cheap motels there at Lombard Street. So we said, "Come on, we live close by." We take them in the car and then my wife whispers to me, "Maybe we ought to invite them to the house." For an Israeli it means a lot, because of their inflation. So we invite them to the house, and they stay with us a week's time. At the end of the week, the man (Gaby) said to my wife, "Be sure to let me know when you come to Israel...not only could I come to the airport, but I could walk on to the plane, because I am an officer in the Police Patrol." On my wife's subsequent visit to Israel, he took her to lunch at the Knesset (Parliament), where they dined with the head of the Druze movement and another female

But then I got a hold of Betty, married her. Knesset member who happened to be in our home in the late fifties when she was on her honeymoon in San Francisco! We started going out, not regularly, but towards the end. And another story. We were in Israel in 1971 with our children and grandchildren to celebrate our thirty-fifth wedding anniversary. We gave a party in a rental hall. We had over one hundred twenty five people there, including four Knesset members. We had also bought an apartment in Tel Aviv that time, so also it was a sort of housewarming celebration for family and friends. We were four generations at that party: my wife's mother Sheina Calic, us, our two children (Herb and Mona), their spouses (Marianne and Darrell), and their children (Marc, Jennifer and Jill). So she got a divorce in six months. Betty remarried; her new name was Betty or Bassya Bibal. She's dead now.

For my daughter I V. Transitions couple, the Bermans, into the apartment. They took care of her and moved into my apartment until I got married in 1936, and my wife took over. From 1921 to 1929, my brother and I had an apartment house on Capp Street, a six unit building. We bought a store on Mission Street and we used to buy stock. I wouldn't say we were millionaires, but we did pretty good in those years, and we did pretty good on the road. But 1929, when the Depression came, we lost it all. We lost the store, the building, the apartment we sold, and we were on the verge to go bankrupt. And the reason why we didn't go bankrupt then was due to the people that we owe the mortgage on the store. They also were in the manufacturing business --Goldstone Brothers, Co-op Manufacturing Company. We owed them quite a bit of money. And my brother and I, we went. They knew it, our circumstances. We asked if we should declare ourselves bankrupt. He says, "Don't do that. You're young; don't ruin your name." He says, "Don't worry about me. Whenever you're be able, pay us back and don't declare bankruptcy." And sure enough, he encouraged us, we did not declare ourselves bankrupt, and eventually we paid him off, I don't remember the exact sum we owed, we paid him off in '33. at that time for the Public Food Store. They're also family. Mr. Lanfeld was the owner of the Public Food Store I wasn't able to get home every night, I used to stay out two or three days, sometimes four days. During the season work, I used to drive around the San Joaquin Valley, the Sacramento Valley. And in the winter months, when there were no laborers, I used to work around the coast. I used to go all the way up to the Oregon border.

That was the period from 1932 to 1936, because she came in '33. It was a struggle from 1929 to '33, but Roosevelt became president and after that things changed and I started in again, and I've been doing pretty good. Of course the separation with the first wife in '32 made it very bad for me, I felt kind of depressed. job -- marry her! We were married in 1936 when Fay was about twenty-two, I suppose. I

But then I got a hold of myself, started dating, especially when the Calic family came. There was a young girl--she was at that time about, say, nineteen years old, Fay. We started going out, not regularly, but towards the end, it developed into a love affair, and we got married, on January 22, 1936. Then I did pretty good and got on my feet again.

When my first wife left me I took care of Lila. She was about two and a half at the time. There was no such a thing as custody. We had an agreement. I mean, we figured, the child is not a piece of furniture. We left that out. Betty went to Reno to get a divorce. In order to get a divorce I had to admit that I was extremely cruel to her. So she got a divorce in six months. Betty remarried; her new name was Betty or Bassya Bibel. She's dead now.

For my daughter I took a married couple, the Bermans, into the apartment. They took care of her and moved into my apartment until I got married in 1936, and my wife took over. I lived at 557 Capp Street, and Fay's family lived in 367 Capp Street.

The year 1932 was a turning point in my life. The very same year, Don Calic's family came from Romania: his wife, Sheina; nineteen-year-old daughter Fay; Shulamit; Reuben; Sylvia and Yitz. Fay's brother Jack came the year before. I was asked to come with my car to the railroad station to meet the family. They had several cars to greet them. And somehow the nineteen-year-old Fay stepped down from the train wearing a straw hat and a polka dot dress; she was striking. She immediately went in my car on the way home. It was love at first sight. We dated for four years, and on January 22, 1936, we eloped. We got married in Reno, Nevada.

Before I married Fay, her father was struggling. They were a big family with six children, and Fay was the second oldest so she had to contribute to the house. Her father, Don, worked at that time for the Public Food Store. They're also family. Mr. Lanfeld was the owner of the Public Food Store and the son-in-law to Mr. Licht. Being that I knew the wholesalers, I got Fay a job at Walton & Moore, a big wholesaler I did business with, and she used to label merchandise there. When she lost that job, I got her a job at Snider Knitting Mills.

That was the period from 1932 to 1936, because she came in '32. I used to date different girls, but after that I used to take her out, too. I started getting, you know, warm feelings for her. She always had to help out the family, but then I decided that instead of getting jobs for her, I'll give her a steady job -- marry her! We were married in 1936 when Fay was about twenty-two, I suppose. I

was then thirty-four.

In 1935, before I married Fay, three fellows and myself, we picked ourselves up, we went to the Chicago World's Fair and we went to New York. I decided I couldn't take a honeymoon with her, so I took it by myself! We were four fellows driving at that time. Just before we approached New York, we had a head-on collision, we almost got killed. But I was not the driver. We were four drivers, but I did all the night driving. I'd been driving since 1921, so I was considered a pretty good driver. On the way home from New York, I looked up some relatives in Chester, Pennsylvania: my uncle and his three daughters. His last name was Miller. He was the man who brought my brother Moishe from Romania to America in 1913.

Many years later, in 1964, Fay and I went to Philadelphia on our way to New York (before sailing for Israel on the ship "Shalom"). We went to Philly to visit Mr. and Mrs. Shore, friends of my wife's father from the old country. While there, since I remembered that Chester is only forty miles away, I wanted to see if I could find the Miller family again, who I last saw or had contact with in 1935.

I remember Fay wasn't feeling well, and I was itchy to go to Chester to see the family. My wife says, "How are you going to find them?" So I said, "Well, I'll take a chance." So I took the train which stopped in the middle of town, and I got off. To the right there were businesses. And I remembered they were in the furniture business. I go into one store and I said, "There was a fellow by the name of Miller who had three daughters. One was Rose (I remembered some of the first names) and one was Dorothy. And so the salesman says, "I cannot tell you, I don't know. But why don't you go in the back there, ask the bookkeeper." She was an elderly woman. I go and ask her and she says, "Oh yes, you go across the street to the furniture store, Rose, that's their store."

I go in there, and my cousin wasn't there, but one of the sons was there. That's how I discovered all the three cousins in Chester. One cousin lived in Philadelphia and one in New York. When I got back to Philadelphia, I got their telephone number. So after that, before we left for Israel, I got them all together. We stayed in the Americana Hotel and I got all the cousins together, about eighteen of them. Some were New York family (Tabachnicks, Tobins) and some were Chester, PA family (from Zalman Miller's children). And I took them out for brunch at the Americana Hotel. That was a wonderful reunion. So that shows you, where there is a will there is a way. Or where there is a way, there is a will.

## VI. On the Road

So you see, I come from a big family with a lot of relatives. As they say in Yiddish, "It's geknipped und gebinden." The literal translation is "knotted and tied." But it means more than that. Geknipped und gebinden means it's a real tight family.

Well, as I said, when Lila was two-and-a-half years old, I had a problem: my ex-wife. She and her new husband went to New York for a year's time. So when they came back, naturally it was a little hard. It was hard on Fay, let's put it this way. Betty came back and she was interfering, and it made it a little tough that she wanted Lila. So what are we going to do? As I mentioned before, the child is not a piece of furniture. So she had Lila for a few years, then we had to take Lila back. It wasn't easy on Fay and me and also on Lila.

Lila came and stayed with us for several years, and Lila, when she was sixteen, we got her a--I'm jumping, but the sum total is, we married Lila out of our house. She met a son of my dentist. We belonged to one lodge, and we went to a picnic, and we had Lila to the picnic. She met Bert over there, Bert Greenberg, and they were courting for a few years. They got married in 1949 and she's married now about thirty-five years or thirty-six years. And thank God she's happily married.

Lila has a son and a daughter. Steve, he's thirty-two now. He's in Italy, teaching law there. But when he graduated here, and he worked for the Sheriff's department in charge of legal services. Then when Reagan became president and they cut out CETA funds, the position (legal services) was changed to a city position. So Steve resigned. He was living with a friend of his, Marianna. She's German, but a very fine girl, and they both went to Germany. Somehow he got in with the University of Maryland, teaching at U.S. bases. He's not in the service, but he's teaching law. He teaches eight weeks in Italy and eight weeks in Germany, and Greece. And he's been there already, I think it's almost four years now. The daughter, Lisa, is married to a very fine man, Jim Gioia, and they have a little son, a very cute boy, Kevin. She is a family therapist, and he is also a psychologist; he's got his own office now. They live in Pleasanton, and she works for the police department in Hayward. I'm a great-grandfather. Eighty-three years old, am not I entitled to be a great-grandfather?

But I said, "Your Honor," (that was before court), "I know I'm innocent in this case. I was on my side, there was traffic going, there was no interruption in traffic there, and the man just approached me against my truck." It was a panel, three-quarter ton truck I was driving at that time.

## VI. On the Road

The first truck was a Model-T Ford. I bought the chassis and I built panelled shelves with side doors. I bought it the end of 1921 in South San Francisco, and by the time I got to 23rd and Potrero, to make a left turn, I turned over! I wasn't hurt. I just had to climb out through the side door! The truck was damaged, but I had insurance.

Once, in the late thirties, I was working around the Delta, the Sacramento Valley, and I was driving on the levee road there. At the time there were migrant laborers, pea pickers, and they used to travel over there in trailers. The levee roads are narrow and gravel, and I saw one of the trailers approaching me. In order to make room for him one side is the river and one side are the fields, down. So, I was lucky that the truck landed upside down on the field, and then, some people came, and they turned around the truck, back on the wheels. I drove it into Rio Vista, filled it up with oil and gas, and then I drove home like this.

Let me tell you about the head-on collision that I had on Highway 1. It was 1940, in a little town, Elk, on the coast, in Mendocino County. It was around five o'clock in the afternoon, and right in the center of town, on the main drag. A man approached me, I was on the right side and it was a head-on collision. He was pretty badly hurt. He was in the hospital. And naturally, the police came and they took some pictures and took the report. But I couldn't drive the car -- it was damaged. So I parked it in the garage and rented a cabin in town.

Then around midnight the police knocked on the door, and I opened it up for them. They started asking me questions, and then they're writing out a ticket for reckless driving. So I said to them, "Why didn't you write a ticket at the scene of the accident?" I couldn't argue with them, and they gave me the ticket. I had to appear before the judge in Point Arena.

When I came to the judge, I introduced myself. I remember his name, his name was George Magowen. He noticed that I was a Mason and he is a Mason, too, so he said, "Why don't you plead guilty, and I'll fine you ten dollars and that's it." But I said, "Your Honor," (that was before court), "I know I'm innocent in this case. I was on my side, there was traffic going, there was no interruption in traffic there, and the man just approached me against my truck." It was a panel, three-quarter ton truck I was driving at that time.



The judge said, "You know, I'm in a position. The man is the owner of the town of Elk." And he told me the truth. He said, "There's nothing I could do. Plead guilty and you pay your fine." And I insisted. I said, "I'm not gonna plead guilty, because I feel innocent in the case." So they set a trial for May. They sent me a notice that I had to appear in Ukiah, the county seat. So I answered that I will appear, and just about a couple of days before I had to appear, they said that they dismissed the trial.

But they brought suit for the damages. The man was in the hospital, and I think they sued for me around six thousand dollars. Of course, I was insured, and I tell the insurance company, "I'm innocent in this case." So they said, "Mr. Friedman, it's better for us to pay the five or six thousand dollars. You are an outsider, this is the county seat, the man has influence on the town and in the county." And they paid the hospital bill. It was close to five or six thousand dollars.

So this is the story of my accident, in addition to the other accidents: one I had on the levee road in the Sacramento Valley, one in my first truck that I bought in South San Francisco, on the way home I turned over, and one with my brother. We were going to Santa Cruz together, and we had my brother's truck parked in the public garage on Valencia Street. Before we started out, my brother decided he wanted to fill up the truck, to take a full tank there. When they got through pumping the gas into the tank, he took a match. Naturally it exploded, it exploded a big plate window there. But I took that handle fast, and I closed the tank, and that flame stopped there. I can't remember whether we changed trucks, because I had the same truck, or we took the same truck. I think it was the same truck. When we stopped in Los Gatos for breakfast, we see the headlines in the papers. The incident about looking in with a match into the gas tank, and the flame exploded a plate glass in the garage.

We came back the same day, that was just for a one-day trip. I don't know whether our wives heard it on the radio, but when we came home we told them what happened.

I used to go on about four, five day trips. Work during the day, stop in a little town at night, call on trade there, and come back, stay a couple of days in the city. It was hard. It wasn't so hard on me, but it was hard on the family.

Well, starting in the twenties, I was going up and down the coast for about fifty years. My territory was mostly around San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, during the

migration laborers' season. And in the winter months, I used to travel on the coastline. I used to call on the dairies, selling menswear. I would say in the early thirties, I used to work around Morro Beach among the Italians, and whenever they used to go to Alaska for the fishing season, they used to buy of me rubber boots, heavy underwear. In the winter months, they went all the way to Alaska for their fishing. I imagine they still do. I don't know, because I lost track. But when it came the season to go fishing, quite a few from North Beach used to leave, and they used to buy of me the Lackawanna underwear. It was a yellow underwear, very heavy, and Scotch wool, Medlicat underwear, real heavy underwear.

Also, I used to work in the produce market. I used to get up around three-thirty, four o'clock in the morning with my truck. Some of the Italians I knew from when I used to work the ranches around South San Francisco, Half Moon Bay, used to bring in their produce there, and I used to sell them some merchandise. Now I did that for several years. Like I had to be there around four-thirty, five o'clock by the time they distributed their vegetables. After that they used to come to my truck, maybe just to buy some underwear, shoes, or whatever they needed.

When I used to work around San Joaquin County and Sacramento, I used to work among those laborers. The contractor used to bring in some Mexican laborers--wetbacks. They lived around Stockton, around Sacramento. They used to have to work three hundred men, seven hundred men, and there were some bunks for them. The foremen that took care of the Mexicans supplied the laborers, and they used to buy some blankets from me. And then in the truck, I used to have merchandise for the laborers.

I was well acquainted with the foremen. At first, when I started in, I had to make friends with them, because there was a lot of competition. But when I got to know them, they were my friends. Naturally, I used to give them a gift, and I had a lot of privileges. Instead of just guessing when the payday's going to be, being I knew the secretary in the office and I knew the foremen, I used to call them up and ask them when is going to be a payday. I used to go from my house, and instead of making a trip in vain, I would call. They used to tell me, "Sol, if you come this afternoon, they'll pay this afternoon." So I knew where to go.

A lot of my competitors--I had a lot of competition, especially after the Israel's 1948 War of Independence. A lot of those Arabs came in their cars, and they used to sell merchandise from their cars. But I was in this business much longer, and I knew all the angles with the foremen. So my competitors always used to say, "How did you guess?"

I didn't tell them that by telephone I knew, because many times they just go ahead. You know, you gotta come in time when there's payday, and if you come and there's no payday, you lose in another camp. So I always knew where the payday's going to be.

Those years, in the fifties, in the early sixties, I used to carry between sixteen thousand and twenty thousand dollars cash in my truck, in order when there was a payday, to be able to cash the checks whenever they bought. And then the competition I used to have was when those pimps used to bring some girls in the camps from Sacramento, from Stockton. They used to come with Cadillacs, and naturally, the minute the Mexicans saw that, they all -- they used to be around my truck buying, but when they saw the girls, they all disappeared. They used up their cash, whoever had cash.

But a lot of the Mexicans had their checks. So the pimps used to come to me, "Can you cash me a couple of checks?" So in order to get rid of them fast, I used to cash them the checks. Sometimes it would take about an hour, an hour and a half, and there was nobody in my truck. But the minute the girls disappear or when the police came and they picked them up (a lot of them they picked them up) then the laborers came back to my truck and they bought whatever they needed. So they were my competition!

I was never robbed carrying so much money, but a lot of times they broke into my truck and they stole some merchandise. My panel truck had side doors, and some of them would break the lock. I remember in one camp I might have had around ten, twelve pairs of shoes. I come to the side there, it's empty. It was nighttime, and I started searching; I picked up some shoes. So, what are you going to do? You know, I did pretty good business those years, where it came to two or three hundred dollars business. And if you have thirty or forty dollars merchandise stolen, what are you going to do? You just have less profit.

The Okies didn't buy, they were poor customers. But wetbacks were afraid to go to a store, so they bought from me. I just did not concentrate on the Okies. I dealt with Mexicans. During asparagus season, there were a lot of Filipinos, so I dealt with Filipinos. From 1927 up to 1940, there were only Filipinos. After 1933, they brought in a lot of Mexicans working in the fields.

There were few Chinese working in the fields. I used to have a lot of Japanese customers before Pearl Harbor, I had a lot of Japanese families. I made friends with them, and they used to buy a lot of merchandise from me. Especially when they were all put in the concentration camps. I used to supply them with suitcases and clothes,

they used to buy from me. Quite a few Japanese customers.

There was one potato camp, on the island of Mandeville. That was owned by Zuckerman, and they had some potatoes over there, also asparagus, tomatoes. In that island he must have had around five, six hundred men working in different bunks. You had to have a ferry to go across.

I remember one evening, when we were on that island. I was selling clothes, and there were quite a few of those Arabs with their cars, some with their trucks there. While I was selling, a young man comes over, and he sees the way I'm operating there. Then he goes over to the other peddlers and he said, "You fellows pack up and leave, and do not come into the island anymore." And he came over to me and said, "You keep on selling, and tomorrow you stop in the office and I'll give you a permit." That was Alfred Zuckerman.

Every year Zuckerman used to send me from the office a little slip, "Mr. Sol Friedman has permission to sell in Mandeville Island his merchandise." Because he saw the way I was operating. The other peddlers asked for a shirt ten dollars and they would sell it for three dollars. With me, whatever the price was, I told them. You know, he watched. He didn't want they should take advantage of the workers there. And that went on for several years. He used to get permits. And he was a friend. First of all, he was Jewish. And he saw the way I was operating the business. I had a lot of camps that they gave me permission to sell and the others couldn't come in to sell merchandise. It's a way of doing it. They knew me. And besides that, the way you sell.

One time I pulled into the camp, and at the same time a fellow by the name Joe Greenberg (he was also peddling), pulls out and he said, "You're wasting your time here. I spent an hour and a half and I didn't sell a nickel's worth." But I never paid any attention. I went in there and I sold, it would have been probably 1950, I sold one hundred fifty dollars merchandise. I saw him next day, he says, "Did you do anything in that camp?" I says, "No, I didn't." So it's the way you approach the customer.

During labor unrest in San Francisco in the thirties, I remember witnessing some strikes, but I never took part in them. I was busy. I was mostly on the road. Then during the war years, I didn't have trouble getting gasoline for my truck even though gas was rationed. For the truck I had special T-coupons, and then the customers, being I was in the camp, they used to sometimes let me fill up the tank there. And then I had two cars, so between the two cars, I managed.

money to discount the bills, because we used to get two percent. Merchandise was scarce, but I never had any difficulties getting merchandise. First of all, my credit rating was good. For instance, the jobbers would sell me one thousand dollars merchandise, or five hundred dollars, whatever it is, they knew they were gonna get paid within ten days. Levi Strauss used to give merchants their quota of Levi's, a certain amount. But I had a truck and I also had a store, so I had a double quota. Sheets were hard to get, and I used to deal with Lesley Meyers, and whenever I needed some sheets, a case of sheets there, they supplied me. I never had any problems getting merchandise.

So what it is, the name means a lot. That's why I never. They were always glad to sell me merchandise. I remember a scene, that was already after the war years, and there was a jobber by the name Morris Thau, he decided he wasn't feeling well, and he was liquidating his business. I remember coming into him, and he had a hundred dozen, two cases of T-shirts. There happened to be a Mission merchant, and he offered for those T-shirts, five dollars a dozen. Thau didn't accept it, and he walked out.

After he was gone, Thau said, "Sol, that's all I got left, I have these two cases of T-shirts, do you want 'em?" I said, "Well, I can't raise the price, I saw the man is offering you five dollars a dozen, and you turned him down. All I could use them for is four dollars a dozen." I already had a couple of stores at that time, and I was going to put them up for forty-nine cents. For five dollars you got to sell 'em for seventy cents. You usually work at about forty percent markup.

He said, "They're yours." I was puzzled, so I said, "Morris, I can't understand." I don't want to mention the name of the man, he's still in business. "He offered you five dollars and you're refusing, and you're giving to me for four dollars a dozen."

He said, "Sol, I'm going out of business. I want to close my books. If I sell it to the man I could wait sometimes sixty days, ninety days, six months, and he'll pay. But I know when I'm selling it to you, within ten days I'll get the money." So therefore, you know, I got 'em at my own price.

Like in our line, at that time we used to pay floor tax on the merchandise the first Monday in March. So a lot of merchants wouldn't buy any merchandise. Why should they pay floor tax? But at that time I used to buy merchandise in order to get my own price, because the jobbers, the distributors, were anxious to sell. They also didn't want to have any merchandise on their floor, and they wanted to unload. Many times I used to even go to the bank and borrow

dollars a week. Then I figured maybe it's not so bad.  
money to discount the bills, because we used to get two percent in ten days. One man said, "Sol, I can't understand you. Why do you want to go ahead and pay interest at the bank and discount your bills?" I said, "To discount the bills two percent, it's twenty-four percent a year. Here it costs me only six percent. That's number one. Number two, you get good credit rating with Dunn & Bradstreet."

Even right now, I'm out of business over twenty years, and I still got every year to fill out a financial statement. Many times I'll get from jobbers lists to buy merchandise, because I'm still in the Dunn & Bradstreet book. So what it is, the name means a lot. That's why I never had any trouble getting merchandise. Because the jobbers know the credit rating like one, one and a half, and they'd always go after those merchants, to sell them merchandise. Especially when merchandise was hard to get, they didn't even look at a little man. They didn't care to sell.

I also had to pay floor tax. First of all, I had a store, and I also had a truck. And even if I didn't have a store, as long as you have merchandise on hand and you're a businessman, you had to pay. But I was willing to pay the floor tax where the other people were not. I'll give you an illustration. I remember there was some underwear at forty-eight dollars a dozen, and it was a closeout so I could buy it for nine dollars a dozen. It paid me to pay the tax. As long as I bought it at my price.

## VII. Branching Out in Business

The stores I had were -- Once, I had a store on Fillmore Street, and one I had on 16th and Mission, and one I had 29th and Mission. I used to put in some people in the store when I was traveling. Then I bought a store on Castro Street in 1946, and that store I ran for about six months. I bought it from a fellow by the name Licht. It was an Army & Navy store, and he's been in that store for about forty years. After I closed that store on Fillmore Street, I took in the merchandise to Castro Street. About six months later, I called in an auctioneer and I sold all the merchandise. Naturally, I made a profit on that.

Then I started in again. Although merchandise was hard to get, it didn't take me very long and I filled up the store with fresh, nice merchandise. I kept that store till 1970, I believe it was. When I bought that store, I took in a woman, and she ran the store. After that I took in my father-in-law. I used to pay him, I think it was fifty

dollars a week. Then I figured maybe it's not enough or maybe it's too much, so I decided to take him in as a partner. He ran that store for about twenty months, and after that I sold all that merchandise. I paid him out, which was about ten thousand dollars he had coming in his share, and I put in some fresh merchandise.

Then my nephew, Sam, came back after the war. He was actually a high school teacher, but at that time he couldn't get any work, so I took him in to work for me in the store. He worked for me, I think, from 1970. He was my brother's son. (My brother left two sons, Joe and Sam.) After that I turned over the store to Sam. I remember, fixtures and all, I sold it to him for twenty-one thousand dollars. It probably was worth more, but he was in there. He ran the store for quite a few years and then he liquidated and went to college. He took up social welfare, and he just died a couple of years ago, of leukemia.

The truck was more profitable than the stores because there was no expenses, just my travel expense. And I did not stay in fancy hotels. I used to stay in a nice, clean hotel, like Motel 6, and at that time you paid six dollars. I could find a place maybe in a hotel instead of a motel for two and a half dollars a night in order to economize. Well, that's all it was, is the travel expense and the markup.

For instance, when I had the store on Castro Street and I was also traveling, and the Internal Revenue agent came in and checked my books. He couldn't figure it out. I did practically the same amount of business (let's say fifty thousand dollars, roughly speaking) in the store and also on the road. The store only showed a net profit of twenty-nine hundred dollars, while the truck it showed twelve thousand dollars. So he couldn't figure it out, "How's that, you show such a big profit in the truck and not in the store?" "Well," I said, "I paid rent, I paid a man four, five thousand dollars a year." I used to pay him in those days around seventy-five dollars a week and then I increased him to a hundred dollars a week. "And it probably would have been a bigger markup in the truck, but I was all alone and they used to steal a lot from me." And so he was satisfied.

I remember once I had an agent by the name Mr. Foster, an Internal Revenue man, who checked me. My son, Herbie, used to work for me during the summer months. Actually, I had to watch he shouldn't make more than six hundred dollars a year. So he said, "Who's this?" I said, "That's my son. He comes in Saturdays. Sometimes when he's got a vacation he comes and works in the store." I had him on my employee's list there. And he said to me, "How do I know that he comes in?" I said, "Well, Mr. Foster, why don't you come some Saturday, you'll see him in the store." And he

was boiling! So that was one incident that I had with an Internal Revenue man.

Once I had a Japanese Internal Revenue man checking me. I had the store business, the truck business, and at that time I was picking up a second mortgage with a discount. He came in and I gave him the back of the store. I cleared up a counter there for him to work, to check my books. With all this business in there, he used to get dizzy. He had to stop, walk around the block, and come back! And after that, of course he couldn't find anything. I kept books of what I sold with the sales tax, the Internal Revenue. Everything was recorded. So after that he was fascinated with the mortgages, and he said, "Mr. Friedman, why don't you sometimes let me know if you can get a good second mortgage. I'd like to get that for my father. He's got a few dollars he wants to invest."

I started with second mortgages around 1950. I remember when Herbie -- he was about sixteen years old at that time, because he was already driving -- and we were supposed to go to Van Ness Avenue to buy a car. He wanted to buy a used car. And at the same time, those real estate men used to come around and propose that we buy a mortgage. Herbie was anxious to go buy a car, but yet, what could I do?

I called Herbie, I said, "Herb, Mr. Bock just showed me a mortgage," -- Al Bock was his name. "and there's twenty-two hundred dollar face value and he wants thirteen hundred dollars for the mortgage. They pay twenty-two dollars a month at six percent interest. Which it's actually about twelve percent because you buy that mortgage at thirteen hundred dollars and you get interest from twenty-two hundred dollars." So he looks at it, "Well," he says, "Dad, if I buy the car, it's going to cost me seventy-five dollars a month. Here I get twenty-two dollars a month. So I'd better get the mortgage."

That's how he got his first mortgage. I bought it for him. That's how I started in with Herbie. And after five years or so, he had already a few dollars in the mortgage. Then I made a partnership out of the mortgage investment; I made Friedman Investment Company. So he became a partner with his share, and I got my daughter as a partner, and that's how we started the Friedman Investment Company.

So I said, "Well, I'll cancel the policy." He says, "Why? You only got three years to go? Why should you cancel it?" I said, "What do you mean, three years to go? I'm only insured for eight hundred fifty dollars, because three thousand one hundred fifty dollars I get cash now. You cancel it and write me a new policy." I was paying one hundred twenty dollars a year. He says, "A new one would



cost you one hundred thousand dollar policy." So I said, "What of it? So let it be one hundred sixty dollars."

Now, as far as buying property, I mentioned before with my brother I had a store on Mission Street and also on Capp Street, which I lost during the crash. The war broke out December 7, 1941. On March, 1942, my father-in-law had a little store on Post and Broderick, and there was a woman, a widow. Just a half a block away she had a twenty-two unit building, eleven one-bedroom apartments and eleven studios. And I started talking to her. Her husband died, and she couldn't handle it.

I said, "Mrs. Van Herrick, I'm interested buying the building." And I was also going on the road. At that time my only income was selling merchandise from the truck. So I made an agreement with her, and for thirty-six thousand dollars she's selling me that building, eleven studios and eleven one-bedroom apartments. And she made an agreement, that she's going to carry a twelve thousand dollar second mortgage. So I would need twenty-four thousand dollars more.

At that time I didn't have any cash that I might have had in 1941. Whatever I had was invested in my business. I had that merchandise, and I always had to buy merchandise. So I went to the Bank of America. At that time it was already Bank of America; it used to be Bank of Italy first. I had to convince them, and they finally agreed. They committed themselves to a twenty thousand dollar loan, eighteen years to pay it. So I still needed four thousand dollars.

When I came to this country in 1921, right the first day, there was an insurance agent, "Exclusive New York Life Insurance." A little fellow by the name Jacob Finkelstein. And he was concentrating on those "greenh." Whenever a new man came, he was there to sell him insurance. So he wrote me a four thousand dollar policy in 1921. By 1942 the policy was already seventeen years old.

I called him up, I said, "How much could I borrow on that policy?" He said, "Well, you could borrow three thousand dollars at five percent interest." And I said, "What about if I cancel the policy?" So he said, "If you cancel, you get three thousand, one hundred fifty dollars." So I said, "Well, I'll cancel the policy." He says, "Why? You only got three years to go? Why should you cancel it?" I said, "What do you mean, three years to go? I'm only insured for eight hundred fifty dollars, because three thousand one hundred fifty dollars I get cash now. You cancel it and write me a new policy." I was paying one hundred twenty dollars a year. He says, "A new one would

cost you one hundred sixty dollars a year. A new four thousand dollar policy." So I said, "What of it? So let it be one hundred sixty dollars."

So I cancelled the policy, and I put that into the title company, I think it was City Title Company. And twelve thousand dollars that she was going to carry and the twenty thousand dollars from the bank. So after I got all the finances together, pro-ration and all, the title company sent me back a check for four thousand dollars or four thousand five hundred dollars, I don't remember exactly. So I ended up with the building, and I had a few dollars cash. That was March 1942.

I remember also the family, especially my cousin Sy Maltzer, and the others, said, "How can you take such a chance? Here, you lost property in the depression, you had a good lesson, and besides..." They were talking about the war. We lived not far from the beach, on Fulton near 40th, and people were talking that they're going to make some fortification there. People were talking that they're going to leave San Francisco. But I took a chance. Right across the street on Post Street, they're building already a negro housing project. But what are you to do?

I took a chance, and that's when I bought the building. I paid off that mortgage when I sold that building in 1962, I think it was. I sold it for two hundred eight thousand dollars, which eight thousand dollars I paid commission, and two hundred thousand dollars was a sale. I got thirty-five thousand dollars cash, and I carried, I think it was, a hundred and seventy-three thousand dollars first deed of trust.

There's another building I bought, probate, on Lombard Street. About six months later a building came up, forty-five unit building, on Pierce and California. A friend of mine owned twenty-five percent of that building. We bought that building for three hundred sixty thousand dollars, and his share would have been eighty thousand dollars, and he didn't need the money. He says, "Give me a note and you pay me only interest. That's all I need is interest, which is four hundred ten dollars a month." So I paid him interest. The mortgage was also with the Bank of America. I cooperated with them and they were very nice to me, because I was a depositor with them since 1921. They gave me a two hundred thousand dollar mortgage, also at six percent interest, also for eighteen years. I needed three hundred sixty thousand dollars, so I hypothecated that one hundred seventy-three thousand dollar note and they gave me the balance. They gave me eighty thousand dollars, and eighty-two thousand dollars I got from the seller, the one that had twenty-five percent. That took care of it. And after I got through closing it with the title company, I also got a check back

for about forty-five hundred or five thousand dollars, and I ended up with that building.

So I just went from one building to another bigger building. My real estate investments were successful. For instance, when I bought the first building on Post Street it brought in about seven hundred fifty dollars a month gross. Then even with rent control, I more than doubled it. I used to get an income over sixteen hundred dollars a month. For instance, the building on Pierce Street, when I bought it it wasn't worth more than about thirty-eight hundred a month, and when I sold it two years ago it brought in more than two hundred thousand dollar a year income. I kept that for over twenty years. I always had the feeling that you cannot go wrong with property. Even when I came here, I was only eighteen years old, and I just felt property is the best thing to have.

In a way my selling on the road was good, because maybe if the real estate salespeople could reach me, I would've sold it (the road business, that is). But they could never reach me, so that was one advantage of always being on the road. I always had managers. I had live-in managers. For instance on the Post Street building, I had a couple by name Mr. and Mrs. Smythe. They were a lovely couple. They were with me for about fourteen years. I used to come by maybe once in a month or once in two months, and they used to say, "Oh, Mr. Friedman. Thank God we have no problems, we have no expenses this month." Now it's different. To manage property, it's pretty bad. Tenants and managers. It's no fun now. First of all, the rent control has made the difference. And then you don't get good management.

There's another building I bought, probate, on Lombard Street in 1970. The same salesman I used to deal with proposed that building. It was in probate, thirteen units. He showed some property to Stanley Lipshutz. Being he was a friend of Herbie's, Stanley asked my opinion. So we looked at that building, and I told Stanley, "You can't go wrong with that building. And you want to know what I think of it. It's fine."

At that time he used to work for the Emporium. He had to go to New York to buy merchandise, and that building had to come up in probate. So I said, "Well, I think we ought to put in a bid in that building. If you want it, it could be your building. If not, I'll take it anyway." So it came up to court, and we decided what to bid on it. I bid at that time about two hundred eight thousand dollars, I don't remember exactly. So when he came back, and I told Stanley that we put in a bid and it's going to come up before the judge, somehow he got scared. At that time, he was in the process of going into business for himself. I said,

"Stanley, tell me the truth. Don't worry about it. If you don't want that building, I'll take it if we do get it." It had to come thirty days later before the judge to prove the sale so he said, "You really mean it, Mr. Friedman? You sure?" I said, "Yes, don't worry about it." And he felt relieved. I put in my bid, and they accepted my bid, and that's the building I still have.

When I put in a bid for that building, Nixon was already in, and they had a rent control. It only brought in seventeen hundred dollars a month. The reason why Stanley was scared, because over a two hundred thousand dollar investment and only seventeen hundred dollars a month was bad. But I figured, well, the rent control will not last long. An old woman was the owner of the building, and she never raised the rents. At that time some tenants paid one hundred twenty-five a month, which should have been four or five hundred dollars a month. Right now I still have the building and after the rent control went off it brings in about nine thousand dollars a month gross income. Of course I did a lot of improvement on the building.

That was building number three. Building number four was Laurel. I bought that in 1969, and I moved into it after I bought it. It was a trustee sale, and the agent that proposed Laurel Street, Floyd Edwards, he's the one that also was the agent for Lombard Street. We had a pair of flats, and what a beautiful pair of flats it was. As a matter of fact, we offered them to Herbie and to Mona and they said, "No, thanks." They were not interested. We paid fifty-five thousand dollars, and sold them for one hundred ten thousand dollars. Right now they're probably worth seven, eight hundred thousand dollars. But if I wouldn't have, if I would have kept the flats, maybe I wouldn't have bought Laurel Street.

In 1950, we bought the flats, and lived there for about ten years, 57/59 Heather Avenue. In 1960, we sold them to Fred and Marlene Levinson. They came in to have a cup of tea with us, and they ended up buying the flats. He's in insurance. Before moving to Heather Avenue, we lived in an eight-room house on 6330 Fulton Street, which we bought in 1935. We bought it from a cousin, Mr. Lanfeld, and paid sixty-five hundred dollars. He was a cousin of mine. He had the grocery store and went bankrupt during the depression. After that, he went to work for the Friedman Bag Company in Los Angeles. He was a brother-in-law to one of the Friedmans. When he moved to Los Angeles, he sold that house, and I bought it from him. That was from 1935-50.

Now in 1970 also, my son, Herb, was working (he graduated from Boalt Law School in 1962) for Burd, Hunt & Quantz at that time, and he also represented Cal Financial.

Cal Financial had a lot in Pacifica, and Herbie proposed that I should buy that lot; they were going to build for me. So Herbie made all those arrangements, and I bought the lot for one hundred thousand dollars. Actually Herbie did all the transaction, and they built for me seventy-one units, twenty-four two-bedroom apartments and forty-seven one-bedroom apartments. After they completed the building, they leased the building from me. I paid them on the mortgage, and they leased the building and paid me rent.

We kept that for about four or five years, I don't remember exactly, and then we traded in that building for twenty acres of land in Redwood City, which the Swig family owned. And Herbie got together with a company -- Merrit Sher and Joe Blum -- and they started building a shopping center. It's called Peninsula Boardwalk. A third of it we sold to Mervyn, and they put out a Mervyn's Store. And right now that works out pretty good, so at present time we own ninety percent and ten percent Merrit Sher and Joe Blum. It's a partnership now, Friedman Investment Company, which the children and I are the sole partners in the shopping center. We also had a Phoenix shopping center which we traded for an office building in Berkeley that Herbie, Mona and the grandchildren are having an interest in.

#### IX. Family Life; Community Involvement

In 1936, when I married Fay, it was hard on her because I was always on the road. On January 2, 1937, a son was born, and we named him Chaim Yoseph, Herbert Joseph. Especially it was hard on Fay the first year the baby came, Herbie, and she also took care of Lila, and especially when we bought our big house in Fulton Street. She had a young sister; there was about five years difference in the age from Lila, her name is Shulamit. So it was hard on her to keep the house and Herbie a small child. To show my appreciation for Fay for taking care of my daughter, which she was very nice to her, the only way I could reciprocate was be nice to her family. She has a brother in Israel (Yitz Calic), who now with inflation we are helping out. And then when Herbie was small, we moved into Fulton Street. Naturally, we had more room. When we lived in Capp Street it was pretty hard on Fay, all those stairs. We lived on the top floor. On Fulton Street it was a little easier, but at the same time it was a big house, and by me being on the road all the time, it was no picnic for her.

On February 11, 1943, a daughter was born, Miriam Brucha, Mona Bell. So I missed a lot of the children's growing up while I was on the road. There's no question about it. I knew it was very hard on my wife, but what can

you do? You had to make a living. But we started traveling. We went to Hawaii, I think it was 1951. But 1955, that was our first big trip. The children and us, we took a trip in February, took off three months, and we didn't come home till May. We were six weeks in Israel and six weeks we were traveling over Europe.

I remember when we decided to go on our trip, Fay went to the teacher and said, "Well, she'll be missing school." The teacher said, "You don't have to worry about Mona. She'll make it. Just let her write letters to school here, and that will be her homework." She was eleven when we left, and when she came back she was twelve. Her birthday was February 11th, 1955, and we left just before her birthday. We came back in May, I think it was.

Thank God, the kids were healthy. You know, the usual sickness, mumps and so on. But Herbie was always a good student, and so was Mona, of course. I remember when he started for Bar Mitzvah. He didn't go to Hebrew school, Mr. Goldberg prepared him for Bar Mitzvah. He lived just a few blocks away from where we lived on Fulton Street. He lived somewhere on 43rd or 42nd Avenue. So Fay had to drive Herb over, or when I was in town I drove him over there. And he always expressed himself, Mr. Goldberg, he said, "I just love to have your son to study with him. He's so good." He always was a good student! And so was Mona.

Herbie's Bar Mitzvah was in Beth Sholom. And the party we had at Sherith Israel. At that time, they just finished the temple house. That was in 1950. And in 1949, six weeks previously, we married off our daughter, Lila. She got married in Sherith Israel, and the party took place in the new temple hall, just completed that year.

Herbie could've gone to the Beth Sholom religious school to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah, but we wanted a private tutor, and Mr. Goldberg was very good. As a matter of fact, when he was little, Ezra Harrare used to come into the house and give him Yiddish lessons. In Yiddish. And he used to write Yiddish very fluently, Herbie. He went to George Washington High School, and Mona went to Lafayette Grammar School. When we moved into Heather Avenue, she went to Roosevelt Junior High. Both graduated at Berkeley, and Herbie made Phi Beta Kappa, and he got a high honor. Then, he went to Boalt Law School.

Mona was dating Darrell Friedman when they were fourteen years of age. They were the same age, and they went to the same school. They graduated high school together, and then they both went to Berkeley. They graduated Berkeley together, and right after they graduated, they got married. They got married in 1964.

Just by coincidence his name was Friedman. At that time, we lived in Pierce Street; we lived upstairs on the sixth floor. We gave them an apartment on the fourth floor. He had to get his masters, so she had to work while he was going to college. His father died in 1965, six months after they were married, and financially, there was only the mother there. So we had to help out with the schooling.

When he graduated he worked for a while in insurance. Then he went as a social worker, and they moved to Rochester. He was the director of the Jewish Welfare Federation in Rochester. And then Mona went back to school and got her masters degree. So she's a social worker also. Twice or three times a week she used to go to Syracuse University, because there was some subject in 1977-78 that Rochester didn't have, so she used to go to Syracuse for classes.

Our grandchildren are: Jill, born in 1967, and Marty, who is sixteen now. Mona's kids. Then Marc and Jennifer. Marc is twenty-two, and he'll be twenty-three in June. Jennifer is nineteen, twenty in August.

Herbie got married in 1958 when a junior at Cal, before even starting law school. Marianne quit college to work while he finished school. I think he graduated Boalt in 1962. My wife and I will never forget when he took the bar. We happened to be in Lake Tahoe at that time, and we were so anxious to find out whether he passed the bar. I remember we bought a paper and we looked through the list and we saw his name. So you could imagine how happy we were when he passed the bar.

I managed, with all the traveling, to have time for organization work. I remember they used to come on behalf of AMPAL, they sent some representatives here. So I used to manage to take off a morning or even a day, and I used to take him around in my truck, and we used to go to some people to subscribe for AMPAL shares. That's American Palestine investment. Or Histadrut (another organization). They used to come, and in my truck I used to go and see people and they used to make their contributions. Or some writers used to come and sell their books. I managed to do that, too, to take care of that.

I was six years on the Beth Sholom board. That goes back maybe around twelve, thirteen years ago. I knew Rabbi Saul White for many, many years. When Fay and I got married, we eloped to Reno. So Rabbi White was new here. He was hired in 1935, and he probably didn't take the pulpit until the end of 1935. We got married in 1936, so he married us when we came back from our trip. From Reno my wife and I went to Los Angeles to spend a week with the

family. When we came back -- it was naturally a surprise to the family -- so we told them we got married by a rabbi, too, besides the civil ceremony. But my father-in-law wanted to play safe, so he invited to his house Rabbi White and our family. So Rabbi White married us, too, besides the Rabbi in Reno. So almost half a century I was with Rabbi White.

It's going to be our fiftieth wedding anniversary, our golden wedding anniversary next January 22, 1986. We will celebrate that together with my Bar Mitzvah, so they could combine it together, and the family will come from Rochester. My daughter and my grown granddaughter. My grown grandson is going to be at camp and he can't get away. Jennifer called us last night, she wants to come to the Bar Mitzvah. Of course, Marc...I don't know whether he'll be able to make it.

About Marc making aliyah, well, we have mixed feelings, my wife and I, and I imagine Herb and Marianne probably the same thing. But he's twenty-two years old and he's gotta have a mind of his own. We only hope that there won't be any war, and of course there's good news now. For a new immigrant, it was eighteen months army service. Now they've change it for only one year. They cut down, so he'll only have to serve twelve months.

And somehow it seems to me that Marc is really turning religious. He called us and said he's not going to be with the family in Hadera for seder because he doesn't feel comfortable with smoking on Pesach and on Shabbat. He used to spend a lot of Shabbatat with the family in Hadera, and he says he feels uncomfortable to jump in and out of the cars on Shabbat. So this year he spent Pesach with a rabbi in Jerusalem.

Until the beginning of April, he was in the Ulpan in Arad, now he moved to Jerusalem and he's spending a lot of time with the rabbi. So it looks like the rabbi had a lot of influence on him, and he's going to be a Chabadnick, maybe! So, whatever, let him stay well. He's a good boy.

I remember in 1936 when I wanted to become a Mason, so I had to put in an application. And my brother tells me that he had a hard time in order to get me into the Masonry because some of the members. Being I speak Yiddish and I belong to these clubs, they branded me as being to the left, a Communist. But he had to use influence in proving that it's not so. I just love Yiddish literature, and I'm far from Communism, and there's no reason. So, when they voted on me and they accepted me, my brother was very elated.



He was so good to me and he was so proud. For instance, when we got married he was so happy for me. Or when I bought my first building on Post Street there he was proud and told the family, "Oh, my brother bought that building there." As a matter of fact, he wasn't feeling well already at that time, and I said, "Morris, I would want you to be a partner in the building." Because we always bought merchandise together. He said, "No, I don't want to, just get it for yourself." And he said, "The way I feel, just get everything for yourself."

He was only forty-four years old when he died, and to me it was just like cutting off my right arm because I was so close to him. The two brothers, our cousins Morris and Sy, were always -- not on speaking terms. My brother used to talk to them and say, "Look here, why do you have such distance between you? Look here, Morris, at Sol and I, we are getting along." He was just a wonderful person. So now I only have one nephew left, Joe, and we are very close. Not too close, because I'm interested now in the Concordia and I'm spending a lot of time in the Press Club and all these bible clubs. So I'm spending my time and I manage to keep busy.

For instance, Fay joins me on Wednesday mornings and we attend Rabbi Schranz's Talmud class, which we enjoy very much. Every morning we spend three quarters of an hour with him, we gain a lot. He's a wonderful teacher. During the summer months we don't meet. The other study group is called the San Francisco Bible Club. We meet at the Olympic Club every Tuesday morning. It has nothing to do with the Olympic, but we meet over there. We serve breakfast, and then we read a chapter of the bible, and we discuss it.

It's non-denominational. We are maybe around four to five Jewish, and every Tuesday there's about fifty to sixty people. Right now we're reading Psalms. But we go through the Old Testament, and we're going already on the third time. This club exists over forty years, and we read one chapter each Tuesday morning, and then the moderator goes around the table and asks for comments. If anybody wants to make a comment, fine. Many times they called on me, but they know lately I have trouble with my eyes to read. So I told them, "Don't call on me too often." But sometimes they do call on me and I have to make my comment.

And on Friday morning we belong to B'nai Brith Bible Club. We also do the same, we read a chapter at a time and we make comments. Somebody invited me for one Friday morning, and I enjoyed it. So you make a habit of it, whether rain or shine. Of course now I'm having difficulties. Most of the time Fay drives me Friday mornings, but Tuesday mornings usually one of the members

# Breakfast Bible scholars going strong after 27 years

By PEGGY ISAAK GLUCK  
Of the Bulletin Staff

They tackle the wisdom of the prophets, the five books of Moses, the Psalms, and the rest of the Bible. And they've been doing it every Friday morning, every week, every year for the last 27 years.

Since April 18, 1958, the dedicated members of the B'nai B'rith breakfast Bible club have met for more than food for thought at 7:45 a.m. in a private room at Knights' Restaurant, 363 Golden Gate Ave., S.F. Membership in B'nai B'rith is not required, only an enthusiasm to study and learn, according to attorney Daniel Goldberg, who has served as moderator of the club since it began.

It took the group 16½ years to complete the first cycle of '39 or 40 books, depending how you count them," Goldberg explained. The painstaking chapter-by-chapter, week-by-week format is a slow way to complete a book — the 52 chapters of the book of Jeremiah, for example, which will be completed at a special dinner Monday, took nearly a year.

Every Friday morning, following breakfast, a volunteer for the week reads a chapter of the text in English. Most of the regulars "have the Soncino edition of the Bible, which has the Hebrew, too," Goldberg noted.

Though few members have a command of the biblical Hebrew, discussion about certain Hebrew words and their meanings do arise. "We talk about the various translations and make comparisons between the Hebrew words and what they mean."

After the chapter reading, Goldberg then goes around the table, asking for comments. "If someone has no question, they'll pass, but we find the time is almost always taken up," Goldberg explained.

Goldberg, the former chairman of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma, stressed that "we are not a formal organization, have no officers or board, and do not have any kind of structure."

Nor is there a rabbi to lead discussion, except when the club completes a chapter of the Bible. New members can join anytime.

Anywhere between 12 and 20 people attend each week's session, according to Goldberg. The sessions are adjourned promptly as 8:45 a.m., "so people will be able to gauge their next appointment. This was planned for people who work during the day."

With more than a quarter of a century of meetings, the B'nai B'rith club, according to Goldberg, is the second oldest in the city. Only a group meeting at the Olympic Club has been meeting longer, he said.

The B'nai B'rith club was an outgrowth of a B'nai B'rith weekend education institute in 1955, though the group didn't begin meeting until 1958. Every year, participants at the institute discussed getting together informally during the year, but it wasn't until the 1957 institute they got the program going, Goldberg reported.

"The first session was held at the Holiday Lodge on Van Ness Avenue," Goldberg reminisced. The

group also has met for lengths of time at Foster's restaurant and David's Delicatessen. For the few Fridays Knights' has been closed, usually the day after Thanksgiving, the group has met at Goldberg's San Francisco home.

Some participants have consistently attended over the years, including Goldberg, Judges Irving and Marvel Shore, Norman Stillier, Leo Hills, Herman Hirschfeld, Ralph Silverman, Sol Friedman, Sylvan Eisenberg, Cantor Julius Blackman, and Arnold Goldberg.

One time, Goldberg remembers, the late Judge Joseph Karesh, who was a Jewish scholar in his own right, was invited to open a Friday session with the first chapter of the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis. "He had not been coming on a regular basis, but he [continued to attend] because he wanted to know how the story turned out."

At the start, the group had asked the then-director of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Rabbi Bernard Ducoff, to read the first chapter of Genesis. Over the years, other rabbis, judges and scholars have been asked to read the closing chapter of a book, when the group holds a dinner celebration.

Monday's dinner, which will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Humanities Building, 2328 Clement St., S.F., will feature Nanette Stahl, head librarian of the Jewish Community Library. Reservations can be made by calling Jerry Klein at 586-8603.

Next Friday, the group will start study of the book of Ezekiel.

Goldberg estimates that it will be 1990 when the club finishes the biblical cycle again. "After we finished

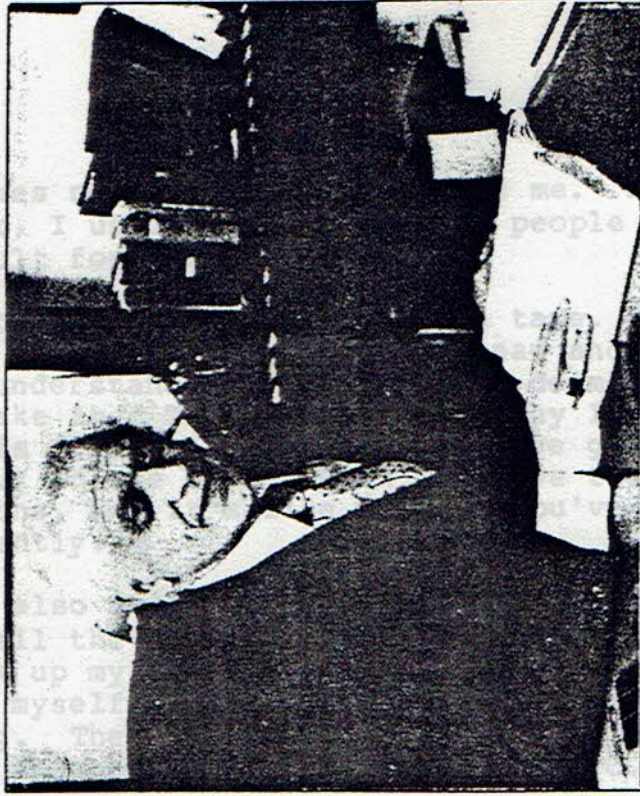


Photo by Tom Wachns  
Looking at a copy of his own Bible is Daniel Goldberg, the B'nai B'rith Bible club's unofficial moderator.

the first cycle, there was some talk of going into the New Testament because some non-Jews come to the group regularly." But members decided that since the Olympic Club group did this, they elected to start over with Genesis, much as they did in 1958.

"There were more lessons to be learned," he said, explaining the group's decision. "We do not limit our conversations to the Bible, but whatever thoughts or comments are presented are welcome because we feel the Bible offers lessons for today."

Weekly discussions may revolve

around whether biblical characters did the ethical thing or whether their behavior was consistent with their teaching. "We approve and disapprove actions of heroes," Goldberg said. "For example, David did something no one could be proud of."

While moral and ethical teachings are important to the group's discussions, equally important, Goldberg said, is what the biblical teachings "have to do with events today. We'll compare the plight of the kingdoms of Israel and Judea and the country of Israel today."

who lives not far from me, drives me. When I was driving the car, I used to pick up other people that it was difficult for them to go down.

For my Bar Mitzvah I have a tape. A friend of mine made a tape, and I know how to read and write Hebrew. I don't understand all of it, but I do most of it, and I hope I'll make it. There's no reason why I shouldn't. Well, there is different notations, you've got to read it Mapach Pashta. In the bible, when you have the Hebrew, there's notations, and it's like music. You've got to sing it differently.

I also still take care of my little bookkeeping, still write all the checks for the business. Before, when I used to pick up my monthly statements, I used to post into my ledger myself. But now it's difficult, so Fay does the posting. Then I bring it out to the bookkeeper and they put in the ledger and then it goes to the C.P.A.

So I try to be kept busy. Like my man, Paul Sue, a Chinese fellow, he's about fifty now; he's been with me fifteen years. And he said, "Mr. Friedman," (he knows I'll be eighty-three years old) "I don't see what you're doing, you could outdo me, you could do more than I can." I'm not lazy. If I come down the front there, and it's got to be swept out, I could take the broom and do it myself.

My wife and I, we are not extravagant. We live very economically, and even on ourselves we are not spenders. I just completed a charitable trust fund, which Herbie and Mona are the trustees, and just the proceeds of the fund will be distributed to charity. Just completed it a couple of months ago.

About joining the Concordia, well, Herbie has been a member over there, and he used to take me down as his guest. Although they didn't care, you know, but I felt uncomfortable to come down always as a guest here. I remember it was one year about twelve years ago, we were in Israel at that time, Fay and I. At that time they had a special because they didn't get enough members in, and it was a reduced price. So Herbie put an application in, and of course whether there was opposition or not, you've got to go through an investigating committee and through the board. And that's when I became a member.

And the Press Club, I was a member about twenty years ago, maybe not that long. But when we had the fire at the Concordia, the Press Club extended an invitation to the membership to come and use the Press Club. So we did it until the Concordia was completed. After that, they decided that's it. They were nice, and I cultivated some friends

there, so I figured I might as well -- it costs me forty-four dollars a month and clothes locker. It averages me about eighty dollars, ninety dollars a month, and I don't feel like dropping out. I'm a member there, too.

I love the sundeck on the Concordia's roof so I'm there during the week, to go upon the roof on a nice day. It's over a hundred stairs, but I do it. But Saturdays and Sundays I go through the dining room, because the dining room is closed, and I only have around thirty stairs to walk up. But at the Press Club I could take the elevator all the way to the roof, so I divide it up between the two clubs.

Before I had my hip operations and my eye trouble, every year during the Welfare Federation campaign I used to get the pledge cards, those that were the delinquent cards. I used to call on those people, and some of them I succeeded even to increase their contribution. I remember I once got a card of a man working for Paul Bissinger and Company, and his card was a seventy-five dollar pledge. It was I think somewhere on Montgomery Street and I came and had parked my truck in a yellow zone. He wasn't there, so I left the card with the secretary. I didn't have an envelope, so I left the card with the secretary to give it to the man -- I can't remember his name. I had some checks so I stopped at the Federation to give them a report.

Mr. Weintraub at that time was the director, and I gave him the report. Those cards for people that I couldn't get a hold of I had to mark down in the back: "couldn't see him," "unable to get a hold of him." Then Mr. Weintraub calls me in his office. He says, "Sol, you shouldn't have done that. You know, the man just called and he gave me a bawling out. He said, 'What kind of people do you send to give it to the secretary?' (He was embarrassed that he only contributed seventy-five dollars.) You should have had enough decency to put the card in an envelope." Years ago, many times I used to have some cards in the Marina, and some women they used to push through the peephole, and they used to give me two dollars for a contribution.

That goes back maybe in the 1950s, but I did that for quite a few years. And now my son is going to be president of the East Bay Federation. I'm very proud of him. We give plenty, both of us. I paid in 1984, in advance for 1985. My bookkeeper said I have to give some more money!

About Mona, well, Mona's husband, Darrell, was the director of the Welfare Federation at Rochester, New York. Then he got a promotion to go to New York, so naturally they sold the house in Rochester and they bought a home in Scarsdale. That was 1978, I believe it was. And 1979, Fay and I were in Israel. I came home about a month earlier, I

think it was, and Fay remained in Israel. Naturally I stopped in New York to spend a few days with the family.

I noticed Mona being so sad, so I popped the question. I said, "Mona, what goes on between you and Darrell?" So she said, "Dad, we're going to separate." I said to her, "After sixteen years?" She said, "Dad, it shouldn't have happened sixteen years ago." So naturally, you could imagine, how I felt, and the first thing I thought was how it's going to be with Fay. I knew she plans to stop over in New York, too. I was very worried, so I was even thinking to come back to New York on the time that Fay comes from Israel. But somehow she took it, and it was a great shock to both of us.

But thank God, after a few years Mona met a very wonderful person by the name Mark Kolko and we love him very much and I could see they're very happy. He has two children -- a girl, Danielle, which she's going to be bas mitzvah in May, and Fay and I, we're even going to attend the bas mitzvah. He also has a boy, Jed, who was bar mitzvah about a year ago. And the two children, his two children and Mona's two children, Jill and Marty, they just get along wonderful. And this is our greatest joy, that the kids get along good, and Mona and Mark are just two love-birds, and we love them both.

(THE END)

*Please join Sol for cocktails and dinner  
in celebration of his simcha  
Saturday, the thirteenth of July  
Nineteen hundred and eighty-five  
at seven-thirty in the evening  
at the home of Marianne and Herb  
220 Lafayette Avenue  
Piedmont, California*

# Bar mitzvah at age 83 shows that it's never too late

By PEGGY ISAAK GLUCK  
Of the Bulletin Staff

Under ordinary circumstances, when a young man or woman is called to the Torah for a bar or bat mitzvah, the eldest of the family goes to the *biimah*, the altar, first.

That won't happen Saturday, when Sol Friedman — at age 83 — is called to the Torah at Congregation Beth Shalom in San Francisco. In this case, it'll be the younger members of his family — his son-in-law, then his brothers-in-law, then his grandson, in that order — who precede the grandfather, who never had a bar mitzvah.

To add to the family nature of the ceremony, the bar mitzvah's son, Herb Friedman, 48, will read the *haftorah*.

There have been no formal invitations to this bar mitzvah, nor will there be a fancy reception. Sol Friedman wants a minimum of hoopla because at his age, he feels, his bar mitzvah is more symbolic than religious. "You figure a man's life is usually three score and 10, and if he reaches 13 years over 70, he's entitled" to a bar mitzvah then, he says.

The practice of having a belated or second bar mitzvah, a practice that some rabbis say originated in America, allows people such as Sol Friedman to reaffirm their Judaism. According to the ancient rabbis, a male attains religious majority at the age of 13. The ceremony for bar or bat mitzvah is *not* required at that time, because the person is considered an adult regardless of whether a ceremony takes place. Though children must be 13 for their first *aliyah* to the Torah, it's never too late for them to celebrate

their bar or bat mitzvah.

In Sol Friedman's case, there was no bar mitzvah at age 13, in the World War I era, nor was there a chance to live as a Jew unless he could escape Russia after the war was over.

In Cherniwitzi, a little town in the Ukraine, not far from the Dniester River, Friedman's family had only one focus in life: to stay alive. "I was 13 when there was a war in Russia. Who could think about a bar mitzvah then?" he remembers. "We just thought of survival."

He left "when I was not quite 18, because I felt there was no future for me" there. His flight to America was a dangerous one. He and his companions had to bribe Romanian border officials to allow them into that country, where one of his brothers lived. Finally, through a Jewish resettlement organization in Romania, Friedman was able to contact another brother who had come to San Francisco in 1914.

Reuniting the brothers in San Francisco was something Friedman wasn't sure would happen. "We'd lost contact during the war, and from 1914 to 1921 had heard nothing from him." But contact was made with his San Francisco kin, and Friedman arrived in the Bay Area at age 18.

Friedman says his Jewish education began when he came to San Francisco and joined the Yiddish literary and drama club. Jewish writers addressed the group, sparking Friedman's interest in Yiddish because in Russia "we didn't write it correctly" — schooling was inadequate.

Living in the Mission District, he belonged to "the 19th Street con-



Photo by Peggy Isak Gluck  
Sol Friedman  
...bar mitzvah at 83

gregation," Congregation B'nai David, which until five years ago housed San Francisco's only *mikveh*, ritual bath.

By this time, Friedman had become a peddler, first going door-to-door in San Francisco "and later on with a truck," taking his wares of ladies' clothing and work clothing to customers in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. "I used to go away three or four days, and this was hard on the family, but Fay [his wife] was a great help to me," he says. However, this schedule didn't help him in his studies of Judaism.

As his children grew up and Friedman gave up the road for a little more relaxation, his interest in Judaism revived. About 15 years

ago, he joined the B'nai B'rith breakfast Bible club, a group that meets every Friday to discuss the portion of the week.

At one point, the group was discussing the *parsha* Jeremiah. That prompted me to have a bar mitzvah. "The first chapter of this *haftorah* recounts the story of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem. 'Israel, at that time, was in great danger. It came back to me personally, that as a little boy, my aim was to escape Russia," he explains.

Friedman felt this portion described his life and "what I lived through," and told his rabbi, Allan Schranz, that he wished to study for the ceremony he never had as a child. Besides, he admits, it also would be "a chance to have to have the whole family together" — three children and their spouses, Mona and Mark Kolko, Herb and Marianne Friedman and Lila and Bert Greenberg; six grandchildren, Marc, Jennifer, Jill and Marty Friedman, Lisa Gioia and Steve Greenberg, and one great-grandson, Kevin Gioia.

Instead of traditional gifts for the bar mitzvah, Friedman and his wife

have requested that friends give contributions in his honor — "as long as it goes for Israel." The two, married nearly 50 years, are active in numerous Jewish organizations and believe that giving *tzedakah* is one of a Jew's most important *mitzvot*.

Some things don't change. Even in their first home on Capp Street, Fay Friedman remembers sending their first contributions to Jewish charities. "We'd rather scrimp on ourselves than not give charity," she says.

The Friedmans are supporters of numerous local and national Jewish organizations. They were founding members of Congregation Beth Shalom "49 years ago," and Sol Friedman has been a member of its board. The San Francisco Press Club and the Concordia-Argonaut Club are "my homes away from home," he says.

What has Sol Friedman learned through all his involvement? "To be good, to help out people, to live right, to be a good person and a good Jew and to give *tzedakah*," he says.

And that's the wisdom he'll include in his bar mitzvah speech.