**Herman**: Rosh Hashanah.

**Janet**: Okay, today is February 25th, 1994 and I’m here with Herman Greene at his home in Lauderhill, Florida. Mr. Green came from Poland, in 1924 when he was 14 years old. Mrs. Green is also here with us, and I want to say I’m happy to be here I’m looking forward to hearing your particular story. Why don’t we start by you saying your birthdate and where in Poland you were born?

**Herman**: Okay, I have, the story is that I have two birthdays. Actually my birthday is, October 1909. However when my mother came, when we came here for a, to remember days easier she gave me May, 15th 1910 and my brother July, 4th 1912. Well, I went ahead all my school records were May 15th, 1910.

I kept those records there, and went through school and everything else there with that birthday and that’s what I celebrate. Actually I’m six months older than I am but however I just celebrate May15th 1910.

I thank God, Skiernewice S-K-I-E-R-N-E-W-I-C-E. Jewish people will pronounce it this, Skiernewice, the average person. All the others would say it’s Skiernewice. As a matter of fact one day I was speaking to a woman, Polish woman here in America and she said, “Where are you from?” I said, “I was born in Skiernewice,” “You mean Skiernewice?” And she happened to be Polish.

**Janet**: Did you live in that town the entire time before you came here?

**Herman**: Yes, I went to school there, and I was going to [inaudible 00:02:11] which is equivalent to high school here.

**Janet**: Do you remember the town, can you describe it?

**Herman**: Yes, it was a small- it was a nice population, most of them, was Jewish community, the Christian community were either serving or they lived on the farms nearby, but the town itself was occupied mostly, I should say about 95% of Jewish population, businesses, services, tailors.

My grandfather happened to be in the tanning business. He would contract government- farmers to buy the hides, then convert the hides into leather and then he had a contract with the government to make boots for the army. So he happened to be a very well to do man, then we had all facilities. My grandfather’s house is the first one in town to have electricity.

**Janet**: Wow, what was his name?

**Herman**: Abb Gayer, G-A-Y-E-R.

**Janet**: Do you remember him?

**Herman**: Of course, I was 14 years old, I will show you a picture of him.

**Janet**: Wait, can you remember any experiences to what kind of a person he was.

**Herman**: Yes, well, my grandfather was a typical Hasidic Jew, and so was my grandmother. However, my mother was from the modern generation that did not observe and my grandfather was never against anything, you do what you want. Now we would go to movies on Saturday night.

My grandfather would leave money on the side there. So we can go to the movies because he wouldn’t handle any money during that. Another thing I remember, that every Friday morning, my grandmother would take two servants that she had in the house and they had built these big cellars dug into the ground, with doors opening up, inside there were shelves with food for the season.

My grandmother with two servants would stay there Friday morning and dish out to the poor people for the Shabbat to have food, they each get a certain amount of food, but she would dish it out Friday to these people, with the two servants there. Now, I went to school.

**Janet**: Wait first tell me your grandmother’s name?

**Herman**: Chaya Sura Ghayer.

**Janet**: Spell it?

**Herman**: C-H-A-Y-A, Sura S-U-R-A and Gaya G-A-Y-E-R.

**Janet**: Did you have, can you remember anything with you and your grandmother, things that you did?

**Herman**: My grandmother was a very good natured woman but had, very asthmatic, had asthma in those days and I remember in their bedroom, in front of each bed there was a square box with sand that they would cough and of course that they cough into it. I remember going to the Sklad Aptechna that’s S-K-L-A-D, Aptechna, A-P-T-E-C-H-N-A, that’s called a drug store.

Skald as a store, aptechna is uptake the front check. Then there was a pharmacy separate that do prescriptions only. The Skald Aptechna, the drug store would carry cough drops, all the other, everything but compounded with the prescriptions, there was a different plane altogether that was called an opteka O-P-T-E-K-A. There was a pharmacy recipient, a drug store was, a two different things.

Personally, we spoke Polish at home, it’s just like you speak English here. I am the stud Yiddish but my native language was Polish in it, school, friends and everything else. I would converse with my grandfather, and grandmother Yiddish words the way the average American child speaks but mixes in with the Polish. Well, I will go in on later.

**Janet**: You said your grandmother has Asthma?

**Herman**: Yes.

**Janet**: Is there anything else about medical topics that you remember from childhood, the way either.

**Herman**: No, they were just coughing all the time, but they had servants and they had plenty of food and there was no want for anything, where I hear, some of these other stories that people talk about, the living conditions, as a matter of fact, we had one cousin, third generation cousin here.

His wife would say one day to me here, “Oh, I heard about your grandmother, my husband, Martin had to steal bread and potatoes from your grandmother.” I said, “Don’t you ever, ever repeat that to anyone or to me because if my grandmother gave out every Friday morning to total strangers in the town, she would not deny anything to her nephews and nieces. So this is a story that’s made up there, don’t believe any of it.”

As a matter of fact, I said, “When your mother in law came with the rest of the children in this country, my grandfather, drenched money for them to come here,” in 19 also in 1920. All right, now where we want to go now.

**Janet**: How about the house that you lived, can you describe that?

**Herman**: Well, it was a big house, it was a square block in the center water pump pushes up but there were apartments and my grandfather comes all around, and my grandfather owned that property.

We had a small apartment and my mother and my brother and I, my grandfather’s apartment was large, because they had the servants sleeping there and everything else there.

**Janet**: What was your father’s name?

**Herman**: My father’s name was Abraham Grynszpan actually was Grynszpan, G-R-Y-N-S-Z-P-A-N and he came from a different city.

**Janet**: Your mother’s name?

**Herman**: Was Pearl, but she called herself Pauline. My mother, I think was 50 years ahead of her time.

**Janet**: Why so.

**Herman**: Everything about her, she is not culture, not observing the Jewish holidays, when she came to this country in 1920. Let’s go back how, I haven’t.

**Janet**: Yeah, go chronological anything else about the town, going to school.

**Herman**: But yes, I remember going to school, because I went to this [inaudible 00:10:23] and this was on Saturday, school six days a week.

**Janet**: Was this a private school?

**Herman**: Yes you pay for it.

**Janet**: I think there are only two Jewish boys I was the one of them and another boy have [inaudible 00:10:42] who happens, he came and I don’t know if he is still alive. He came in Sidney, Australia and became a dentist there, so I don’t know if he is still alive. The last I heard it was 20 years ago and he was living there through the grapevine. That was about the time, they had a synagogue, also a temple they were conservative, altogether were Hasidic.

My grandfather had the one I mimic, a Jewish and the one I mimic in the Hasidic place in the synagogue and so was right next to the rabbi, to the rabbi of the town. Then he had two seats in the bigger temple, the big Sheol that was used on the, holly edge and stuff like that, where the women sat upstairs. What else, oh yes I had that [unclear 00:11:49] Friday, we all went to public bath.

**Janet**: Talk about that.

**Herman**: It’s a public bath, it’s a public bath that would line up there and said no, I should never say no, it would be a large pool inside with hot water would have been more private bath tabs, that there were three or more people would pay for it, would go into the bath tab, yes we would go into this big pool, and what else about town.

**Janet**: Anything that you observed, any special holidays or occasions that you remember?

**Herman**: I remember Passovers yes, it was one thing I remember this distinctly that my grandmother had cooked up so many, a dozen of hard boiled eggs for the Seder and my brother being mischievous, he and two other boys ate a half a dozen of eggs had to start cooking all over again, boiling up boiled eggs for the Seder.

**Janet**: What was your brother’s name?

**Herman**: In Poland or in here? His name here was Sidney.

**Janet**: Younger or?

**Herman**: Younger, two and a half years younger, he passed away in 1987, he had Parkinson’s. He I changed, I grabbed my name to Greene and I was going to pharmacy school and I was working, in a Christian neighborhood in Yonkers, on south Broadway in [unclear 00:13:30] and most of the people coming in there are gentiles and I would never be called Greene’s spans or Green world, Green stem, Green bird, everything but Green Span, such that one day I had like a cottage point to Green put it, EM and they graduated out of the school, got married under that name and this is the way it is.

But my brother’s children, my brother never did and he has one son and one daughter, As a matter of fact the son is an engineer and the daughter had a PhD in Music, and she is at Cornell University and as a matter of fact I have her article on the paper about her, she was here the last weekend, it was her birthday. So she and her husband were here and their 11 year old daughter.

**Janet**: So, let’s see, your father came here first.

**Herman**: Here in 1912.

**Janet**: How was it that he came, do you remember the situation?

**Herman**: Yes, my father was a head book keeper for this large forest where they would sell the trees in the woods. Well he wasn’t happy with that. He wanted to do business for himself.

So, my grandfather gave him money and he went in business for himself and in the same town, instead of this, going for business and trying to get customers, he was underselling the other man, that he worked for and went into bankruptcy and European countries at that time, if you went to bankruptcy whatever you have, the apartment, the house, furniture, everything is attached, you cannot sell anything, becomes the part of the, to satisfy the bankruptcy.

So, my grandfather had meanwhile signed over things to my mother, in her name instead of his. So, bind us to leave the country, so he went to America, otherwise he would have to go to jail in bankruptcy in those days, that’s how we came to this country.

**Janet**: Did you know your grandparents on your father’s side?

**Herman**: We went, once to visit them, my brother and I during the summer time in the school the school would give us a certificate to write and train at half price and we were dressed, short pants and different, and they weren’t no pairs nothing anything.

So, we went to this town, and we went to see my grandparents, when we walked in, we told them who we were and we got the got the coldest reception and the next day I said to my brother, “Let’s leave,” and we did that’s it.

Then, I think I continue, now went on after the war when my mother got a letter from her brother that my father was going to Europe to take a ship.

**Janet**: Do you remember anything about the First World War? Did you have any personal experiences related to it?

**Herman**: Nothing, we went to school, we had food, we had everything, we had no. We weren’t in want of anything.

**Janet**: You didn’t see anything around you?

**Herman**: We saw the soldiers there, because they had barracks there in town, outside the outskirts of town are these, soldiers would come, and I remember some of them, the Jewish faith, would come Saturdays, the synagogue in their uniforms and then how are they say, they would go to people in town, Saturday for meals and holiday meals, something like that.

That, the war is over, my mother gets this letter that he is coming for us, that was 1918, 1919, 1920, no Abraham. So, my mother went to, said to my grandfather, “I’m going to America and look for him.” She went to the American council in Warsaw, and got the passport and got the passport for herself and my brother and I.

So, when she came back and told that to my grandfather, he says, “No way you are going to take the children with you, leave the children here and you go and look for him.” But she came here, and she started looking for him in the HIAS and all these other organizations.

**Janet**: [Sneezes], excuse me.

**Herman**: Bless you, well me there.

**Janet**: Did she leave you there?

**Herman**: She left us in Poland with my grandfather, we just continued going to school, and we were living with my grandfather and grandmother. We would get letters from my mother and just some stuff like that.

**Janet**: What did your mother tell you about America, do you remember anything in the letters?

**Herman**: Well, she would be very the status, she had never worked in her life, but she became learned and owner of her business, and little by little she became a designer if she worked just temporally. Later on after we came here, so she went to Poland, meanwhile she went to Poland to put my brother and I up.

**Janet**: Did she find your father?

**Herman**: Always I’m sorry. It took her until 1924, from 1920, to 24. Located him in Los Angeles, California and he was living with a woman there. So, he wanted to leave the woman and then my mother she said, “I don’t want to be part of it, I want a divorce,” and that’s it.

So, she had a divorce and then instead of sending for my brother and I, she just said, well, she might just as well go to Poland, see her mother and father, and bring us back with her. She went to the American Council in Warsaw gave them the passport that she had, for the original 1920, and they wanted to have it stamped in and then we left Poland.

**Janet**: Do you remember leaving?

**Herman**: Yes, definitely, I was 14 years old?

**Janet**: How did you feel?

**Herman**: Well, I would miss my friends and school, it was entirely different life that we were expecting I mean. So, we went to France and remember we got on the ship and went to France.

**Janet**: Have you been out of your town, I mean…

**Herman**: Previous?

**Janet**: I mean you must have taken a train.

**Herman**: Yeah we took a train yeah.

**Janet**: But previous.

**Herman**: We would take trains at different summer time vacation, we would go to the different place to visit.

**Janet**: I see, so this wasn’t completely new.

**Herman**: No, it wasn’t no and definitely not, it wasn’t new it was just a longer distance to go to at an entirely different life, as a matter of fact my mother did, she met a man, who was from England and for two weeks she started, she hired this man to give us some English lessons.

**Janet**: Where were you then?

**Herman**: In Poland [inaudible 00:21:31] it’s dangerous. As a matter of fact seven words people would say, you don’t speak like a New Yorker, because I was brought up in New York, I was 14 years old, but I recall though anyone, when we started school here and I would walk in the street and I had a little booklet with me, a little pad, and I would write down the names down and the signs and everything.

I had a casualty by living a few blocks away and I would go by say, “Hi, what are these words?” and he would tell me. I will never forget my first English, probably the first, I had on the seventh grade, I was the only one that I had 100% and I didn’t know what the words meant.

**Janet**: Can you remember the words that your tutor in Poland.

**Herman**: England?

**Janet**: Yeah, the English taught you.

**Herman**: But they were the English accents and we got to know the words, by the “e” is silent like sometime. But this was a difficult time, I had one when I came here, when I would play with the boys in the street, and I would leave, I would say, “I will see you in summer time.” They would say, “What do you mean summer time, this is summer time.” I would say, “S-O-M-E-T-I-M-E,” Oh you mean sometime, because I would pronounce the silent letters.

**Janet**: I see.

**Herman**: But I would tell everyone, when they speak to me, I would say, “Please, don’t speak to me, any language but English I want to learn English, so if you want to converse with me, you can speak to me, and slowly explaining the words,” and this is, but one day I came at home from school and I was very annoyed, my mother says, “What’s the trouble?” I would say the kids at school are teasing me, “You came from Europe you don’t speak Yiddish.”

I said to one of them, I said, “How many, you and many others how many of you speak Yiddish?” “We speak certain words,” also the same thing with me.” “And so why are you annoyed?” I said, “I want to show these kids are, I want to learn Yiddish, I want to learn, speak it, read it and write it.”

So, I went to a school to a workman circle school, where they teach you Yiddish, and not Hebrew Yiddish, explain all the Jewish history and everything else but all in Yiddish, so I read, write and speak Yiddish and not a polish, a Russian Yiddish, as a matter of fact when I had married and my in laws were living in Florida, her brother was a determined, as an employment contractor, I was the official correspondent, that was still writing Yiddish.

**Janet**: So, how long did you study at that workman circle?

**Herman**: For about a year, went to school three or four times a week.

**Janet**: Well that’s a, what port did you leave from?

**Herman**: Le Havre, France.

**Janet**: The ship?

**Herman**: Was a, wait a minute I knew it, Sufferin S-U-F-F-E-R-N, SS Suffern it’s a French line. You see my mother said, when she was coming first time I saw bananas was in Berlin, Germany. We slept off, and then when came to eating vegetables, she said you must learn to eat this, because you will be eating vegetables in America.

**Janet**: You weren’t used to eating.

**Herman**: We occasionally had a, tomato called the [inaudible 00:25:25] and oranges attain from different parts of the world, not components so, and that would never you would never get a whole orange its slices, slice that bottom we had.

**Janet**: Can you remember any foods that you did have, any dishes that.

**Herman**: In Poland?

**Janet**: Yeah in Poland?

**Herman**: It was typical Jewish dishes, Jewish cooking, the chicken and fish, Gefilte fish and I remember once, and my mother was there when she came to pick us up and was Passover and we went to some Christian house that she is one of her girlfriends, years back. I remember eating a piece of ham, have it for the first time on Passover but I would never dare tell that to my grandfather, and as a matter of fact my mother didn’t keep the close at home with it, I was [inaudible 00:26:26].

My grandfather well you just go up to the area, read the part of the Torah, and that’s it because they will make big things as made in America but my brother soon had the [inaudible 00:26:38]. Because my mother didn’t have Kosher at home.

**Janet**: Do you remember the Sufferin?

**Herman**: Yes, there is a nice part about that. My mother wanted us to have pleasure of a long ride in a boat. So it’s this ship got tickets on this plane, on this boat, that catered to American tourist, who didn’t want to go first class, third class, it was one class only.

So, everyone was dressed nicely, served nicely and beautifully, but it was actually a pleasure boat that we got so many Americans on there, who were returning back to the state. As a matter of fact two boys I met many years later in school, in high school he said, “We came on the same boat with you, when you came to America.”

**Janet**: So were you.

**Herman**: What happened to him?

**Janet**: I’m sorry.

**Herman**: Go ahead.

**Janet**: Were you able to speak a little bit on the boat English?

**Herman**: Little bit not too words enough to be understood with motions and stuff like that. So when we got to the states, we got to New York they started speaking, they inspectors at the.

**Janet**: Ellis Island.

**Herman**: Not Ellis Island, at the boat. I started speaking to my brother in English and we spoke very little there is really the four years of the country how did you speak very little, I said we are not, we are not here four years, this is our first trip but according to the passport we were coming back here with my mother.

So, they said well they will have to hold my brother and I until the papers have straighter up, and they sent us to Ellis Island, so my mother said, “If you’re taking the children I’m going with them, you’re not going to take the children alone to Ellis Island.

So, my mother with us, meanwhile she got in touch with some elders around, we will connect with the Jewish newspaper to [unclear 00:28:46] he was a writer at Lee Young Gottlieb and he had a [unclear 00:28:50] socialist party in those days .

They went to Washington DC and Explained that we, my brother and I were on a quarter in 1920 when my mother came, however we didn’t come on that, so no one came in our place, so actually we were entitled to come in, so it took four days to straighten this up and this Lee Young Gottlieb came picked us up and took us up to his apartment in Bronx.

**Janet**: What do you remember about Ellis Island, describe?

**Herman**: I remember the, keeping the men separate, the women separate and I got to learn the word, mange, mange, everybody got to eat and learn. As a matter of fact I remember we were, and I was in the Ellis Island three years ago, the woman asked everyone to raise their hands, “Who was here?” And I raised my hand among others.

I was the first one to call on in, she said, “What do you recall?”, so I told her, I said, “It was 67 years ago, but I remember these things,” and then she said, “What else do you remember?” “I remember after four days we left and nobody gave us a bill, we weren’t charged.” They got us taking out of it, the audience was there and the woman was conducting it.

**Janet**: Was it clean, were the accommodations alright?

**Herman**: Oh yes the accommodations were all right, they were clear, you know it’s really difficult to recall, I recall one thing, that many years later when I was going to pharmacy school, I met a black man, and he said to me, “You look familiar to me,” I said, “I beg your pardon,” he said, “Where did you live before?” I said, “I lived here in town here,” I said, “What kind of work did you do?” He said, “I was an inspector at Ellis Island and I remember your face.”

**Janet**: So, there were black inspectors at Ellis Island?

**Herman**: Yes.

**Janet**: Huh.

**Herman**: Not many, the years of inspector he was orderly there, that I don’t recall exactly. I know, he told me that he worked at Ellis Island. I presumed he wasn’t an inspector, maybe he wasn’t orderly maybe he was just a worker.

**Janet**: Do you remember what you did for those four days when you were there?

**Herman**: Nothing very much, there wasn’t anything to do, it was really waiting impatiently to hear what’s going on, because some of them being, returned back to Europe.

**Janet**: But you were with your mother again?

**Herman**: Yes, I mean we were separate parts but the women were in their own place where we ate breakfast, lunch and dinner, and we spent during the day, during the day, that history of that, that took me from 1924 to 1931 to do all public schools, all cases of high school, three years of pharmacy school I went all in ten years.

**Janet**: Tell me, can you make any comparisons between the pharmacy in this country and anything you remember about it?

**Herman**: That was the, the pharmacy in Poland was strictly cut and dry, you walk down there, you were respected, speaking to a pharmacist you had respect, you set and waited until your prescription was ready. This is the time, I mean was professional from there and believe was commercialized there, well it became much more commercialized after I got into it. So many years later I mean when I got my own pharmacy and it was entirely differently.

**Janet**: It was more like a physician almost?

**Herman**: Yeah, definitely. As a matter of fact you didn’t have many- I don’t think there was much conversation going on, between the pharmacist and the patients, usually the patients, were six weeks ago too early and someone would go and get the prescriptions, so there was never much conversation.

**Janet**: Is there any difference in what the prescriptions would be?

**Herman**: If they were compounded most of them in those days, I imagine they were compounded because it was 38years ago, my time here, most of them compounded here, as a matter of fact, even after I retired and I came down to Florida and I worked here two days a week from 1971 on Mondays and Saturdays I worked 9:00 to 3:00.

Six hours a day and we came to any compound that this dermatologists where others would write, and where they bring it into the pharmacy they would say, “Well you have to leave it here,” across I was the one that compounded- do the compounding because these kids getting out of school now.

So, to them, it doesn’t even take enough to [inaudible 00:34:29] and now everything is computerized, you just put the numbers there and girls do the computing [inaudible 00:34:33] you’ve got to call the doctor, and sometimes I know it’s different from that.

**Janet**: Do you remember any folk, like homeopathic or a folk in [Crosstalk 00:34:51]?

**Herman**: Here in this country, but not in Poland, I don’t remember, that I don’t remember well. Here they had the homeopathic medicine [inaudible 00:34:55] they were all numbers number 77, 84, all the- in this country.

**Janet**: So, when you first got in this country and you were able to leave Ellis Island, do you remember your first time [crosstalk 00:35:17].

**Herman**: Yes I remember, yes we went up to this cousin’s house up in The Bronx on Southern Boulevard near the [inaudible 00:35:24] and we had our shorts, called here Bermuda shorts. It was summer time but they shirt, so a long sleeve shirt and open collar and the shorts and we went down to buy clothes with my mother down to Eastside and they started pulling us from all the sides, my mother says, “Leave those boys alone, they are not Green horns, you just leave them alone, don’t pull them into the stalls.”

**Janet**: They would literally pull you?

**Herman**: Yeah, they would literally pull all these foreigners, they grab and hold them, they put them on jacket, maybe back there will hold the jacket back, this would make a perfect fit. My mother was too modern for that, too Americanized.

**Janet**: So, then you got American clothes?

**Herman**: Yes, I remember and also knickers, I remember I was going to high school got my first pair of long pants.

**Janet**: Your mother was now, making her designing?

**Herman**: Yes, after that she went in the middle and opened up a normal store of her own.

**Janet**: Where was that?

**Herman**: I had it on the 16th street. It was in New York City, between [unclear 00:36:44] and 5th avenue on both sides of the streets. All 90% of [inaudible 00:36:52] of those people used to come from all over. As a matter of fact my mother had worked up a beautiful trade, she had a three room apartment in the back of the store and they had a machine to that, sewing machine.

So has all these different six section crowns, eight crowns, [inaudible 00:37:16] Jewish women come there, and order 3, 4 hats at a time, the lure hats of the, and I remember going downtown with her one day to the wholesale house to get the body which they had to be blocked in all.

**Janet**: Okay, so how did your mother change, how can you describe the difference if your mother once she became a business woman and that’s the.

**Herman**: Yeah, well she worked hard, would not deny anything for my brother and I, she met a man from this town in Poland that admired her, when she was young, teenager and he never got married and then he, somehow talked my mother into marrying him because there were class of people there, his family were of the poor class don’t mix with the rich family, like where my mother came from, my grandfather, my grandmother.

So, there was [unclear 00:38:27] I mean, this is, you know what that word is? It’s honorary, there are different classes about you would say the American society of people and a lower person of, not as far as education is concerned but as far as their upbringing and everything else, about the mannerism, so he would never dare to approach her.

But here was a different story altogether, so they got married and the 1930, my mother gave birth to a girl when I was 20 years old. As my wife and I got married in 1934, she was our flower girl.

**Janet**: What was your mother’s second husband’s name?

**Herman**: Actually was her third, but Rwemer R-W-E-M-E-R and it wasn’t maybe my brother and I might have caused some over there, because my mother would not deny my brother and I, and he resented some of the things. I remember one day, I was walking after school and I wanted to get a nice suite, so I asked her to come with me, he went with me, and I picked up a nice suite and he says, “That’s too an expensive suite for a boy your age to buy.”

I said, “Well, I’m paying for it, and I would like it.” He said, “Well buy it then but don’t talk to me.” So, we weren’t in a good relationship there, and he passed away and my brother and I supported my mother, she passed away at the age of 93, and we had everything for her, whatever she needed, whenever had, she had her own apartment, the same building, where my brother lived in a garage.

After my two boys, my older son didn’t want any part of pharmacy, he wants to study medicine, fine and my other son was eight and a half years younger. So, I wasn’t going to wait until he told me he doesn’t want pharmacy.

So, I sold the store and I get a friend of mine who had a drug store at the 46th, 6th avenue he was very ill and his wife calls me up she says, “Can you come in and give Mark a hand,” he had two partners, two silent partners who was an old liquor store that was converted to individual owning and all the pressure was on him 7 days a week, all hours, I said I will go and help him.

So, I had gone away for a couple of weeks and I worked, after he came back he was tempting for to stay with him, but then it got to be so, meanwhile our oldest son got accepted in medical school in [unclear 00:41:32] after he graduated Bronx high school of science. Now he went to [inaudible 00:41:41] then he was accepted to medical school, I happened to call an employment agency, pharmacy employment agency in New York when I was working in this drug store on 46th street Hedley Pharmacy and it belonged to a man, Jack Burger.

I said, “I need a relief man,” he says, “Herman Green why the hell aren’t you getting out of New York City?” I said, “Why?” He says, “There is a chain of drug stores out of [unclear 00:42:07] in New York that I am very friendly with and you could have a beautiful life up state.” I said, “Come on I have never been away from New York City, since I’m here.”

Well when our son was accepted in medical school in [unclear 00:42:22], I get a call from this Jeff Burger who says, “[inaudible [00:42:29] congratulations, I hear your son was accepted. How would you like to work [unclear 00:42:30]? I said, “I beg your pardon?” He said, “How would you like to work for this chain of [inaudible 00:42:42]?” I said, “I’ will speak to my wife.” I came home, I said, “Alan has been away four years and he just connected in and now he is going to [unclear 00:42:45], the medical school, how would you like? I was offered the job.”

She says, “Well, let’s think about it,” so I called back to this Jack, and I said, “Jack I would like to speak to this people first.” We drove, we had a wedding in New York and my son came in for the wedding, her cousin got married and drove him back to [unclear 00:43:11] there. I had the call before and she made the appointment with the executive vice president of the small general drug stores in [inaudible 00:43:23] in New York with the home officers for a certain day on a Tuesday to go over there to be interviewed and speak to them.

So, we drove around back to [unclear 00:43:32] union college and I didn’t know how, I have never been [unclear 00:43:37] or I didn’t know where it was, where Rochester was. So, we made an appointment for Tuesday morning, so we went Sunday we drive in, on Monday I drive up to Rochester and we got into Rochester, we check in the hotel then the next morning I go for this interview and the secretary just says, “Yes.”

Mr. [inaudible [00:44:03] my name is Greene Herman. “Yes, Mr. [inaudible [00:44:02] is waiting for you,” she calls in on the intercom, comes out and takes me inside. He said, “When did you get here?” I said, “We got here yesterday.” He says, “What do you mean we?” I say, “Well my wife is with me, we brought my son back to [unclear 00:44:13] to Union college.” He said, “Where she is?” I said, “At the hotel.”

He calls the secretary, call her and ask Mrs. Greene let me speak to her. So, I called and she wasn’t there. So I said, “Maybe she is out shopping maybe.” There in the hotel, “Well leave a message for her, she is not to have lunch, we are coming down there and we are having lunch at the hotel together.”

So, we drive down in this big beautiful limo into the hotel, and going down and at the dining room she is there, having this small town, she introduces her, President of a bank and all these other executives, meanwhile he had shown me around, the whole warehouse and everything else there and he says that, he tries to tell my wife about it. Try to sell her [inaudible 00:45:19].

Well by that time, we got to know each other’s first name and everything else. I said, “Jack,” I said, “Let me go to New York and think it over.” I said, “You don’t know too much about me.” He said, “Are you kidding, I got a list this long, from the time you came here from Poland. We don’t offer executive jobs just to anybody that we don’t know about. So we know everything about you. But you think it over.”

We went back to New York and I spoke to the man, this fellow Mark Hector that I was helping out, I said, “Mark I got a preposition, as supervisor for this general drug store at New York. He said, “Come on stay here, you want to become a partner here? You will be a partner here. I’ll buy one of my partners here, the silent partners there.” I said, “No, no.”

I called up Rochester and I said, spoke to this [inaudible 00:46:24] and I said, “Jack, I would like to tie a three month period for myself, I want you to pay all my expenses. I don’t want to burnish or to stay in a hotel over the three months. Weekends I want to go into New York.” I got this through way, through platting those days 1956. So, I can go back and forth and be through way and I say, “I will try it.”

He says, “Fine, when do you want to come?” I said, “At least, sometime in July.” “All right let me know,” and I got up there. The second day I was there, in [inaudible 00:47:09] because they had traveled, they brought a man from out of town, from Chicago.

As the supervisor the other pharmacists in town resented it, why shouldn’t they go promotion, so they sat there with me and did the same thing, they want to prevent it with me, by working in [inaudible 00:47:38] then when eventually I’m not going to Utica, I’m just being transferred from [unclear 00:47:40] to Utica, there won’t be any of that, it just what would have.

But I got to love it so much and my son came to me when I had taken an apartment because my son- medical school, at that time didn’t have dorms for the students in 1956. So I took an apartment near the school, so we wouldn’t need two cars and the relationship was very nice and then went into Utica and that was I suppose 16 years, beautiful relationship that came to his son’s wedding, and then my son Eric, they met the doctor and we’ve been very happy, not that, we’ve been very happy and in 1971, 1968 they wanted to have sold out to a Rite Aid Corporation.

The Rite Aid Corporation bought this chain of 48 stores and they incorporated with them it became and it was entirely a different operation, it wasn’t a personal thing.

**Janet**: That’s when you left?

**Herman**: That’s when I said to them, I said, “I’m sorry, I’m leaving give me my pension and let me get out of here.” “What did you mean you got to be 70 years old, 60, 1970 you will be 60 years old.” I said, “As far as I’m concerned the pension that you have I’m eligible at 55, I want to get out. You have been to my son’s wedding, I hope you to be at my other son’s wedding, which is eight and a half years later. I’m not going to get the pressure there, being pulled on me by Rite Aid. I don’t want to think about it.”

So, this is what happens, I said, “I want you to give me my bonus, my years of vacation, and employment and get out of here.” They gave me everything but the bonus, the bonus they wouldn’t.

**Janet**: Well tell me um…

**Herman**: Yes.

**Janet**: Your wife’s name and how you met her?

**Herman**: Her name was Edna Gaffe, G-A-F-F-E. When I worked on this pharmacy in New York, there was a young couple, Silvia and Raymond Weyl W-E-Y-L. Silvia’s mother was an assistant buyer at Gimbles and Edna’s aunt was the buyer, I would go out with Silvia and Ray and they, and every time she would tell her mother, aunt Selah would be there, and Herman, she says, “Who is this Herman?”

“Well, this is one of the pharmacists that has been working on this drug store and many other days we go out together.” “Well I have a niece, I like him to meet.” So, Silvia calls up and says, “Herman I got a blind date for you.” I said, “What the hell what have you? I mean blind dates. I had no any blind dates [unclear [00:50:53]. So, where is it?” At that time they had moved away from this direction Washington Heights and moved down to 83rd street on the west side and I went down there to meet her. I met her there, we spent a very pleasant evening, I said, “Let me take you home, she said fine.”

This is 883rd, 79th street. So, we go to 79th street to a hotel, I don’t remember what the hotel it was, but it was a residential hotel that I had settled in. She says, then I asked her to give me her phone number, she gives me and I remember talking about, said that’s Bronx, she says, “Yeah that’s where I live.”

My aunt I’m supposed to meet tomorrow. So she said they were going to Bronx and coming back again, I’m staying overnight at my Aunt’s, so I dropped her off the, that was on a Saturday. Tuesday my fraternity had some kind of affair an affair and I had made that they put the girl and she called me up, she is having difficulty with her dress and everything else. I said, “Forget about it,” I called her and she said, “Wait a minute, I have a date with someone for Tuesday night.”

I said, “Break it, I will pick you up at 7:00 o’clock, I will pick you at 7:00 O’clock,” and I hang up. 7:00 O’clock go there pick her up, then I heard later on as we were driving away, her date came. So her mother says she had to go to Bronx to her aunt, somebody got sick and then the following Saturday, something else, oh yes another friend of mine, whose sister is married to a motion picture producer in Hollywood and they came, they were staying at the Essex house.

So, this fellow David Finger was going out with this Mildred and her sister right away she gave him the apartment to use. So, she is going to bring a date I call her up common got a date for you, got a, at this hotel. So, we went there and that’s just how it started.

**Janet**: You have two children?

**Herman**: We have two sons, our older son is 58 now, he is already [inaudible 00:53:19] in Boston retired last year. He has 3 children, two daughters and a son.

**Janet**: What’s your son’s name?

**Herman**: His name is Alan Greene, as a matter of fact Alan said to me one day dad if you have to change from Greene Span to Greene look what happened to Alan Greene’s family in Russia and DC, as I’m very happy with our own Greene’s radiologist. He graduated medical school with honors. He did his residency at the [inaudible 00:53:53] in Boston when he got through with that, he had a six months teaching fellowship with Harvard medical children in radiology.

Then he went to service, he would be stationed in San Antonio Texas for two years. Did nothing but diagnostic radiology in the two years he was there, we went to there as a matter of fact, his third child Debby was born 1966 while he was in the service in San Antonio.

**Janet**: How about your other son.

**Herman**: Our other son, eight and a half years difference, went up to, when we moved up state to Utica, he became very active in boys scouts and everything else there, graduated high school and went on to Buffalo University as a pre law student. After- [Crosstalk 00:54:39].

His name is Fredric, Fredric Green, after 3 years pre law he was given, he was accepted in law school, he went to law school for two years, met a girl from the Yonkers in New York up in Buffalo and decided they want to get married.

So, they got married in 1966, 1966. Yes, because Bobbie couldn’t come down from Buffalo for the wedding, my younger son was his best man for his brother when he got married in 1959, yeah 59. So, Alan flew in from San Antonio to be his best man on his wedding, they come back from their honeymoon decided he didn’t want, they decided he didn’t want law. So, he was offered- he got masters and then he got a scholarship for his PhD.

**Janet**: What’s his field?

**Herman**: Business administration and labor relations, and that’s what he is at Manhattan college. They have one daughter who has gone, Riverdale country school from preschool to graduation went in into Brandies, graduated last year [inaudible 00:56:14].

**Janet**: Well, we have just a few minutes left.

**Herman**: Yes.

**Janet**: Tell me what impact do you think, starting out in Poland and coming here in your teens, how do you think that affected you?

**Herman**: Me, it didn’t affect at all, because the things that we had, that I and my brother had, were the same things we would have here, as far as school is concerned as far as living is concerned, food and everything else there.

We did not have, and my mother said they, was working as a [inaudible 00:56:57] as a designer, as a, several jobs, even on Saturdays when the shops are closed, she would go on Saturdays and do samples for little [inaudible 00:57:05] manufacture who could not afford to have a full time designer she would go on Saturday and make samples to this. So, there is always a bread to eat, we weren’t angry.

**Janet**: Do you feel that there is any signs to you or aspects of you, personality that are polish or?

**Herman**: No, no separate.

**Janet**: Customs that you keep from?

**Herman**: I don’t know, nothing as a matter of fact, my mother who did not observe the Jewish religion and even the [unclear 00:57:42] that she had would close on Rash Hashanah and Yom Kippur but we’d never go to temple, we’d never go to the Sheol not until I met this girl that I become a Jew and become active in Temple, and my mother wanted to a Kosher meal she’d come to my house because had no other mother or father in the country, so, we have two sets of dishes.

As a matter of fact one day I came home from the drug place I was working in [unclear 00:58:12] and I see a glass plate, I say, “What’s this? She says, “You bring your sandwich up there, please use the glass plate, because you will get the [inaudible 00:58:22] mixed up. This way, you use the glass plates where mother and father can.”

My brother married a girl, whose father was also orthodox, very orthodox, so they had the kosher. So when we wanted to bake then next we would go to my mother and my mother wanted kosher she would come to my house or my brother’s house.

**Janet**: How about this phase of your life, your retirement phase?

**Herman**: I worked part time until two years ago in this pharmacy. I became very active in temple here, I’m on the board of trustees, my wife is on the [inaudible 00:59:01]. Our lives circles around children, grandchildren, we have three beautiful grandchildren in Boston bunch the radiologist- his oldest. The only thing we have complained about is none of them are married from 21 to 31. My wife wants great, she wants to be a GGA, a great Grandma.

The oldest one from the Boston is a lawyer in Washington DC with the government, Judy Beth. Her brother graduated circus and he is in California going to Master music. The third one Debby, graduated Boston College and she went to stage. So she went to New York, and went into the second square theatre for one year and then would like to stay much, she stayed down another year.

It’s a difficult situation to get into, she has participated several, as a matter of fact she just got with one month of Shakes Spear acting.

**Janet**: We have about one minute.

**Herman**: Okay.

**Janet**: Tell me, what you feel most satisfied and proud of in your life?

**Herman**: Both the accomplishment, I met the most wonderful girl on the world, she is also came for us, from the water, from Brooklyn, she is really beautiful life and in fact we are about to celebrate our 60th anniversary in May this year with a lovely family of three children and as a matter of fact on my wife’s 80th birthday I wrote to the President of United States, and to thank him through him for the opportunity that were given to me, when I came to this country.

**Janet**: Perfect place to stop. I want to thank you very much I have been talking with Herman Greene, I’m here in Florida and his home in Lauderhill and it’s February 25th 1994 and this is Janet Levine signing off for the National Park Service. Thank you.

**Herman**: Thank you so much, this has been wonderful. You know this but…