

**THE WILLIAM BREMAN JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM  
ESTHER AND HERBERT TAYLOR  
JEWISH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF ATLANTA  
ALABAMA JEWISH HISTORY PROJECT**

**MEMOIRIST:** BERT ROSENBUSH JR.  
MARY LOUISE ROSENBUSH  
**INTERVIEWER:** SANDRA BERMAN  
**DATE:** JANUARY 11, 2012  
**LOCATION:** DEMOPOLIS, ALABAMA

**SPONSORED BY:** Southern Jewish Historical Society, Marietta, Georgia  
**CITATION:** Bert Rosenbush Jr., January 11, 2012, OHC 10816, p. xx from the Herbert and Esther Taylor Oral History Collection, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta, Georgia

<Begin Disk 1>

**INTERVIEW BEGINS**

**Sandra:** Today is January 11, 2012. I'm in Demopolis, Alabama with Bert Rosenbush who has agreed to participate in the Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Project of the William Breman Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Museum. My name is Sandy Berman and I'm very appreciative of you participating in this project. I'd like to begin by asking you, Bert, a little bit about your back . . . your [parents] . . . your family's background. Where they were from in Europe and how they came to Demopolis, Alabama.

**Bert:** My granddaddy, Julius Rosenbush, came to Demopolis and opened a store in 1895, but he came to America a few years before that. He was in business in Mississippi and I have a picture of where he was selling turkeys . . . he's got a drove of turkeys. So then he was in Mississippi. I forgot . . . let's see, the town was . . .

**Mary Louise:** Corinth?

**Bert:** No, it wasn't Corinth. I can't think of the town right off, that he lived in in Mississippi, but . . . and then my grandmother, Essie Baum, lived in Corinth, Mississippi. They had some friends in this area and they met. My grandmother, Essie Baum, married my granddaddy around 1895 and he opened a store in Demopolis. He was a very successful merchant. He had a chain of stores in this area. He also had a funeral home along with a furniture store.<sup>1</sup> He opened . . . he had a cemetery that he would bury his . . . people in, that

---

<sup>1</sup> The Rosenbush Furniture Company was established in 1895 and operated until 2002.

didn't have a plot to bury their loved ones. We have a book showing a lot of his people that passed away in those days and they would give a history . . . of the family and what they died of, and so forth. Then my grandmother's, Essie Rosenbush, daddy<sup>2</sup> was a veteran of the Civil War. They, as I said before, lived in Corinth, Mississippi.

**Sandra:** Is that C-A-R . . .

**Bert:** C-O-R-I-N-T-H. He had seven . . . eight children, four boys and four girls. They all moved to [Mississippi] . . . to Texas and Oklahoma. Recently, I'd say about three or four years ago, after my grandmother died, my daddy [Bertram Julius Rosenbush, Sr.] didn't keep up with my grandmother's family. My mother [Miriam Stein Rosenbush] . . . was sick and she just . . . it was a little problem then, in the family, although my daddy stayed married to my mother for 50 years. They lived together, but my mother was . . . sick. Then I'd say, about four years ago, my daddy had sent a telegram to some of the family in Texas, congratulating a marriage in the family. So they found this telegram that my daddy had sent and then somehow they found my name and they called me up. So we have a relationship now, with all my family . . . the Baum family from Texas. They've gotten on the . . . historical society out there. My granddaddy started a temple in . . . I believe it was a temple . . . an organization, a Jewish organization . . . in Texas . . . so they . . . we just . . . getting all the families together. They're coming to see Mary Louise and me, the 21<sup>st</sup> of this month. To get back to my family, my granddaddy started Rosenbush Furniture Company in 1895.

**Sandra:** Can I ask, where in Germany they were from? Was the . . . your grandfather from?

**Bert:** I have a history of that. It was . . . I wish you told me before we started the interview and I could have looked it up. But it was . . . what town was it?

**Sandra:** We can come back to it.

**Bert:** Okay.

**Sandra:** Do you know why they immigrated? Why he immigrated? Did he ever talk about it?

**Bert:** No, they never talked about it, but I'm sure it was for the freedom that they would have in America. I have pictures of my granddaddy and his brothers. He had four brothers. I could show you that picture before you leave.

---

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Baum (1837-1926). He fought for the Confederacy in the 13<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Infantry Regiment.

**Sandra:** Did all [brothers] . . . all the family end up in Demopolis?

**Bert:** They lived . . . some of them lived in Bessemer [Alabama], in Birmingham [Alabama], and Meridian [Mississippi]. An interesting thing about one of the brothers: they made a salve. It was made out of wolves' fat. I have a little carton where they . . . he sold a salve.

**Sandra:** That's a great story. So, your grandparents met in Mississippi. I'm just . . . getting it all together here. They met in Mississippi, they moved to Demopolis, they established the store . . . which was called Rosenbush's Furniture Store?

**Bert:** Rosenbush Furniture . . . no, it was called 'Julius Rosenbush' to start with. Then we changed the name to 'Rosenbush Furniture Company.' But when he first started the business, it was 'Julius Rosenbush.'

**Sandra:** Was it always furniture?

**Bert:** Always furniture. Then he had an undertaking department in the furniture store. They had a coach and I have the lights off that coach. Then coming in our house was a . . . I have a 'Rosenbush' that was carved out of wood . . . an 'R.' I'll show it to you. It came off of one of the . . . the funeral cars.

**Sandra:** Why did he start a funeral business?

**Bert:** It was just a . . . I guess it was a demand for it. Maybe they didn't have an undertaker and funeral homes in Demopolis at that time. Then when my daddy went in the business he went to Cincinnati [Ohio] and became a licensed embalmer. He practiced embalming along with running the furniture store with my grandmother until a tragic accident happened here in Demopolis. After that accident . . . it was just such a sad affair that my daddy decided to give it up.

**Sandra:** What was the accident?

**Bert:** It was . . . a man killed his family and they were about the same age as his family. So, he just decided . . . just to stick to the furniture business and give up the undertaking part.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> This incident occurred on November 25, 1934. The "negro servant girl" arrived at the home of her employers, Frances and Elsie Smith in Demopolis on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>. There she found the bodies of her employers and their two children, Frank and Sabra. They had all been shot. Burt's father handled the arrangements and they were buried in Tuscaloosa. The Coroner's Jury found that it was a homicide saying that Frances had killed his wife and two children and then killed himself an hour later. This is odd, however, because Frances had two gunshot wounds to the head, which is hard to do if you are committing suicide. The children were young, one just a baby of three

**Sandra:** How many Jewish families at the height were in Demopolis?

**Bert:** They say that . . . there were some articles that I gave you. I don't know that it was that many, but it's been reported there were around 200 Jewish people.

**Sandra:** What was the draw for all of these people to come . . .

**Bert:** It was agriculture. It was a big cotton . . . area and the rivers . . . there's two rivers: the Black Warrior and Tombigbee. They confluence in Demopolis and there was a lot of cotton. Cotton was . . . just a very money-making crop in those days, and [they] had a lot of [cotton] gins.<sup>4</sup> When I say 'a lot of' I don't know how many . . . there must have been maybe three or four gins.

**Sandra:** Can you recall some of the other Jewish businesses that were in town?

**Bert:** They had . . . it was clothing. There was one big department store, Mayer Brothers.<sup>5</sup> It was probably the most prominent store in town. It was . . . it had a three-story building. Then there was Milton Long,<sup>6</sup> he did a lot of advancing. He would loan money to the farmers and . . . when they made their crop they would pay him back. There mostly . . . on the High Holy Days,<sup>7</sup> practically every store in town was closed. The ones that weren't Jewish they would close too. So on the High Holy Days the downtown area was just all closed up.

**Sandra:** Why would the other stores close?

**Bert:** I don't know why they would close and I'm not 100 percent sure that they did. But it's just reported that most of the stores downtown were owned by Jewish people. The other stores were just closed, maybe in respect to the Jewish people that had closed.

**Sandra:** When was the synagogue established?

**Bert:** It was in the eighteenth century. I don't remember the exact date. But it was around . . . there's a plaque on the front of the cemetery . . . on the front of the Temple, stating

---

months who was shot in her crib. See article from the *Demopolis Times*, November 29, 1934 in the file for more details.

<sup>4</sup> A 'gin' (short for 'cotton gin') is a machine that quickly and easily separates cotton fibers from their seeds, a job that otherwise must be performed painstakingly by hand. The first modern mechanical cotton gin was invented by American inventor Eli Whitney in 1793.

<sup>5</sup> One of the first large department stores of note in Demopolis, Mayer Brothers, built its three-story brick building adjacent across from the public square in 1897 and operated for most of the twentieth century. That building is now utilized by Robertson Banking Company.

<sup>6</sup> Milton Long became heavily involved in Demopolis life, owning five downtown stores and donating vast sums of his wealth to the B'nai Jeshurun congregation, its local cemetery, and local educational causes like a school for blacks in Greene County, Alabama.

<sup>7</sup> *Rosh-HaShanah* (New Year's) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).

the date. I would say it was around . . . it was in the late 1800's. I don't remember the exact date.

**Sandra:** Was it founded as an Orthodox<sup>8</sup> congregation?

**Bert:** No, it was . . . it was mostly the Jewish people that lived in Demopolis were Reform.<sup>9</sup> There were very few Orthodox or Conservative<sup>10</sup> Jews. We never had a rabbi, we just had readers.

**Sandra:** The name of it? Of the synagogue?

**Bert:** Is B'nai Jeshurun.<sup>11</sup>

**Sandra:** Was it an active part of your life growing up?

**Bert:** We lived in downtown Demopolis, just around the corner from the synagogue. My grandmother lived right up the street from us. In those days, it was . . . people would visit and live in a close neighborhood, where today people don't live in close neighborhoods. But you asked me if it was part of my life. I went to Sunday school, but I didn't really . . . my parents didn't really enforce me to learn a lot about the Jewish religion. I liked to hunt, so on Sundays I'd ask my momma or my daddy if I could go hunting instead of going to Sunday school. That's what happened a lot of times. But I was confirmed, I don't know that . . . they just gave me a confirmation certificate . . . or whether I learned that much.

**Sandra:** I want to go back and really talk about your childhood. What year were you born?

**Bert:** In 1929.

**Sandra:** You grew up and went to public school?

---

<sup>8</sup> Orthodox Judaism is a traditional branch of Judaism that strictly follows the Written *Torah* and the Oral Law concerning prayer, dress, food, sex, family relations, social behavior, the Sabbath day, holidays and more.

<sup>9</sup> A division within Judaism especially in North America and Western Europe. Historically it began in the nineteenth century. In general, the Reform movement maintains that Judaism and Jewish traditions should be modernized and compatible with participation in Western culture. While the *Torah* remains the law, in Reform Judaism women are included (mixed seating, *bat mitzvah* and women rabbis), music is allowed in the services and most of the service is in English.

<sup>10</sup> A form of Judaism that seeks to preserve Jewish tradition and ritual but has a more flexible approach to the interpretation of the law than Orthodox Judaism. It attempts to combine a positive attitude toward modern culture, while preserving a commitment to Jewish observance. They also observe gender equality (mixed seating, women rabbis and *bat mitzvahs*).

<sup>11</sup> Temple B'nai Jeshurun was a synagogue located in Demopolis, Alabama, United States. The B'nai Jeshurun congregation was established in 1858, making it the fourth oldest Jewish congregation in Alabama. It was active throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth. The original temple was built in 1893. It was torn down after a new smaller building was built inside the older structure in 1958. The temple was inactive by the 1980's, with the title being transferred to a local church in 1989.

**Bert:** Went to public school, went to high . . . grammar school and public school in Demopolis. Then, in the eleventh grade my daddy sent me to military school over at Marion, Alabama.

**Sandra:** Why?

**Bert:** I wasn't a bad boy. But he just felt like . . . he went to school over there when he was a young man. He just felt like that I would get a better education and some discipline that I needed . . . so he sent me to Marion when I was in eleventh grade. I just got so homesick and everything and I wanted to come back here and graduate with the people that I'd started school with. So I came back . . . to Demopolis and graduated with my regular class.

**Sandra:** Was it ever difficult for you being Jewish in a small town?

**Bert:** I don't . . . nobody ever said much about me being Jewish and they were gentiles, but . . . I just feel like there was some antisemitism. It was never an open thing, but I'm sure there was in the back part of some peoples' minds there was some antisemitism.

**Sandra:** Did you ever . . . was there any overt . . .

**Bert:** No, there never was any overt thing. It just so happened that my girlfriend was Jewish. I didn't pick her out as a Jewish girlfriend, but we just became . . . girlfriend and boyfriend. It wasn't any . . . a lot of romance involved because . . . it took me a long time to ever grow up. But a sad thing happened to her. When we were in the twelfth grade, she was killed in an automobile accident.

**Sandra:** What was her name?

**Bert:** Joan Fields. She's buried at the Jewish cemetery here.

**Sandra:** Were the schools at the time you were growing up were totally segregated?

**Bert:** Yes . . . they were segregated. The blacks went to one school and the whites went to another.

**Sandra:** Did you ever think about that or was it . . . how did you feel about that, as a child?

**Bert:** I never realized anything about it. My parents never talked about it. I never thought anything about it. We had black aides and truck drivers and people that worked in the yard. It never was anything said about it from my parents to me about segregated schools. I was just oblivious to the fact.

**Sandra:** When . . . first of all, did you have a housekeeper or maid in the home that . . .

**Bert:** My daddy always had help in the house for my mother. He would have a cook and domestic help. Then when I was growing up he had colored boys that would nurse me and play with me. Then he built a goat wagon, and had a colored man that would drive the goat wagon for all the kids in the neighborhood.

**Sandra:** Was there anyone who was in the home that you became particularly close to or you can remember?

**Bert:** We . . . not really. They were . . . I knew them and they knew me. They would take care of me and be good to me. But I never . . . it's not like I really became attached to any of those people. They were . . . like I said before, they were good to me and I was respectful to them, but I never became real close to them in any way.

**Sandra:** Did your father or you have black employees at the furniture store?

**Bert:** Yes. Then my grandmother always had a black driver for her car. She couldn't drive. They would drive my grandmother. The first date I ever had, my grandmother loaned me her car and her driver. I had date with my girlfriend and had a driver.

**Sandra:** Growing up did you ever go to the Jewish singles dances, like Ballyhoo or Falcon in Montgomery?<sup>12</sup>

**Bert:** We had Falcon Picnic, and I would go to those. They had one in Birmingham that was the Jubilee. I would go to those every year.

**Sandra:** Tell me what those parties were like.

**Bert:** They were a lot of fun. You met girls that . . . I was real young in those days, and like I said, I hadn't grown up. But you would meet girls and boys and it was just . . . a nice affair. It was . . . I can remember some of the girls I went with. It was just a different affair from what . . . life was like in Demopolis.

**Sandra:** Was there a picnic . . . or barbeque activity? Or was it . . .

**Bert:** It was just more of a dance. Just a get-together. It wasn't any picnics or anything like that. It was just little parties where you would meet people and associate with them.

**Sandra:** Did you ever go to Ballyhoo in Atlanta?

---

<sup>12</sup> From 1931 to the late 1950's, members of Atlanta's Standard Club sponsored 'Ballyhoo,' an annual courtship weekend attended by college-aged sons and daughters of the Temple community. Over a long weekend, participants endured rounds of breakfast dates, lunch dates, tea dance dates, early evening dates, late night dates, formal dances, and cocktail parties, with the goal of meeting a "nice Jewish boy or girl" who might well become a spouse. Similar courtship weekends in southern cities included Montgomery, Alabama's 'Falcon,' Birmingham, Alabama's 'Jubilee,' and Columbus, Georgia's 'Holly Days.'

**Bert:** Never did, [no].

**Sandra:** Did you see Alfred Uhry's play, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*?<sup>13</sup>

**Bert:** I am not familiar with that in any way. I've never heard the name. I didn't have any friends in Atlanta growing up. I just never went to Atlanta.

**Sandra:** During the late 1950's and early 1960's when the South was becoming integrated in all aspects, what was going on in Demopolis? How did it . . . was it a . . . what was it like? As a business owner, what was it like?

**Bert:** We were always respectful to the colored people. We were good to them. My grandmother, especially, didn't allow . . . anybody to . . . not to be respectful to them. My daddy was respectful to them and, of course, my mother was too. We had a good relationship with the colored people. In fact, right now, when I go to the grocery store, I'll see a lot of my customers, and they're glad to see me. We did a big credit business. They would buy on an installment plan and come in and pay every week or every month or every two weeks. A lot of times the colored people would get on hard times and they couldn't make their payments. I would wait on them and give them a chance to pay instead of turning it over to an attorney or repossessing their furniture. We were . . . I was especially good to them.

**Sandra:** What were the . . . did the schools integrate peacefully here?

**Bert:** Yes. I really didn't understand a lot about the integration growing up. They integrated the schools and I just went on about my business. I didn't take part in any civil rights activities or anything. I remember one time, the mayor asked for a donation . . . said he wanted to do something and I made a donation to him. But I never did know what he did with the money.

**Sandra:** What was the general tone in Demopolis during that period? Was . . . were

---

<sup>13</sup> *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was written by award-winning playwright and screenwriter Alfred Uhry that premiered in Atlanta in 1996. *Ballyhoo* later received the Tony Award for Best Play when produced on Broadway. The play is set in Atlanta on the eve of World War II in an upper class German-Jewish community as Adolph Freitag and his sister and nieces look forward to attending Ballyhoo, a lavish cotillion ball sponsored by their country club. *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* was inspired by Atlanta-native Alfred Uhry's childhood memories and is the second of what is known as his "Atlanta Trilogy" of plays. The first is *Driving Miss Daisy* and the third is *Parade*.

there [White] Citizens' Councils?<sup>14</sup> Was there any Klan<sup>15</sup> activity here?

**Bert:** No, no, there never was any boycotts or anything that I can recall of. I just attended to my own business and didn't take part in any of those activities. It was just something that I never participated in.

**Sandra:** Can you talk a little bit more about the store itself? What did it look like when you walked in?

**Bert:** We had a store on . . . Washington Street . . . that my family rented from some people that owned the building. It was a nice store and we had a lot of merchandise in it. Then my uncle had a jewelry store in North Carolina and he convinced me to have a jewelry department. So for several years we had a jewelry department. It had watchmakers and we sold a lot of jewelry on credit. We had some name brands. It was very profitable. But I couldn't manage the jewelry department and the furniture store too. My daddy retired and turned the business over to me.

**Sandra:** What year was that?

**Bert:** It was around 1955. My grandmother gave me interest in the business and around . . . before 1955 . . . I didn't graduate from college. I went to college for three years and then I came into the business. My grandmother gave me part interest in the business. My daddy retired several . . . around four or five years after I came into the business. So it was a big responsibility on me to run the business. I didn't have that much experience in running a business, but I was able to do it.

Then . . . in the early 1970's, this building that I was very proud of—Merchant's Grocery—went out of business. It was a three-story . . . a two-story brick building. It was a beautiful building. It had . . . it was just a beautiful building. So, it was three buildings that went on sale. I was interested in one of the buildings, but I wound up buying three buildings. We were . . . my wife and I restored it and got it on the National Register and the Alabama

---

<sup>14</sup> White Citizens' Council (WCC) was an American white supremacist organization formed on July 11, 1954. After 1956, it was known as the Citizens' Councils of America. It had about 60,000 members, mostly in the South, and was opposed to racial integration during the 1950's and 1960's when it retaliated with economic boycotts and strong intimidation against black activists, including depriving them of jobs. By the 1970's its influence had faded.

<sup>15</sup> The Ku Klux Klan (or Knights of the Ku Klux Klan today) is a white supremacist, white nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-Jewish, anti-Catholic, anti-black secret society, whose methods included terrorism and murder. It was founded in the South in the 1860's and died out and came back several times, most notably in the 1920's when membership soared again, and then again in the 1960's during the civil rights era. When the Klan was re-founded in 1915 in Georgia, the event was marked by a cross burning on Stone Mountain. In the past its members dressed up in white robes and a pointed hat designed to hide their identity and to terrify.

Register.<sup>16</sup> It was just a beautiful, beautiful building. It had a beautiful façade to it and the inside . . . it was just a treasure really. We were in the building for 25 years.

Then my wife and I retired in 2002 . . . my wife came in and helped me in the business and we . . . the mayor of the town wrote us a letter and asked us if we would donate the building to the city or sell it to them. So my wife and I, we felt like we could afford to give it to the city. We were very disappointed that the city didn't take any pride in the building and try to preserve it like we had. It's supposed to be a museum someday, that's . . . but whether it will ever materialize, I don't know. But it was just a treasure and people would admire the building. My wife and I would go to the furniture markets and we would have a line of merchandise that we felt like we could sell. We were very successful in our business.

**Sandra:** Was it all kinds of levels of furniture?

**Bert:** Yes. It was mostly low-end to mid-end because most of our customers . . . didn't have a lot of money. We didn't get into the most expensive line. We sold on credit and people could buy things paying so much a month.

**Sandra:** Do you recall any incidents at the stores that are really memorable? Like a funny story, an anecdote about a special customer? Anything like that?

**Bert:** One day . . . I wasn't there . . . a black customer came in and Mary Louise was there. She had a dog in her clothes and she went back and just laid on one of the beds. Then we were robbed . . . around 1990. This man had just gotten out of jail. He asked one of the people in the town, a city clerk at City Hall, where was a good place to buy furniture. She said, "Rosenbush's is right down the street." So he came in our store. Mary Louise and I would . . . we had a little break room and we were having lunch. He said he wanted to buy some furniture. Mary Louise waited on him and then soon as she approached him he had a gun in his possession. So he directed her to the cash drawer and took all the money out of the cash drawer. Then he . . . I had just gotten over a little hernia operation . . . it was my first day at work and he tied us up and took all the money out of my pocket. I had a gold money clip that my daddy had bought for me in Mexico. I had some money in it and he took everything out of my pocket. Then we had our Cadillac car that was practically new. We gave him the keys to the car and told him not to

---

<sup>16</sup> National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. It promotes public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America's historical and archeological resources. Various states have a Register as well.

harm us, just to go on and take the car. He stayed around in the store and tied us up. Then my two deliverymen came in and he tied them up and put them on top of my wife and me in our little break room. Then he finally took the car and left and went to a neighboring town and wrecked the car. Then he went on over to Meridian, Mississippi and they arrested him there. We were lucky that he really didn't harm us.

**Sandra:** How did you get untied and loose?

**Bert:** One of the deliverymen wasn't tied . . . we weren't tied too tight. He was on top of us. He untied us and we called the police. But that was a trauma[*tic*] experience. Then one of my friends came after the robbery and brought us a little cocktail and settled us down.

**Sandra:** You might have needed a big cocktail after that!

**Bert:** Yes.

**Sandra:** It's amazing to me that there were at one time 200 families . . . Jewish families . . . or people . . .

**Bert:** . . . people . . .

**Sandra:** . . . in Demopolis. You are the last man standing, so to speak. What happened to all the community?

**Bert:** They just moved away and died and went to nursing homes and other towns and just . . . they all left.

**Sandra:** When did that all start happening?

**Bert:** They just dwindled away . . . they just . . . growing up we had a few Jewish people in our Sunday school class. Then they just married and moved away. Our Temple was . . . we remodeled our Temple around 1951 . . . it was a big beautiful building with . . . it had an organ in it and a balcony for the choir. Then it was a wooden building . . . it became hard for our congregation to keep up. At the time, my daddy was building this house and the architect drew up some little plans for the remodeling of the Temple. We had a reader and a *Torah*. It was a nice little building. [It] had a Sunday school room. Then, some of the older people in the Temple got together and decided they would give the Temple to an Episcopal church. It really just broke up the congregation that we had. Some of us wanted to donate the Temple and give it away and others wanted to keep it like it was. It was a very . . . I really hated it. It just preyed on my mind. I couldn't get anything done about it.

**Sandra:** What year was this?

**Bert:** It was around . . . 1990 . . . I mean 1995 to the year 2000. Now the Episcopal church owns it and they took all the seats out and made a warehouse out of it and has a food bank. They really don't respect the Temple as it . . . being a Jewish temple. But it was given to them and there's nothing I can do about it. I went in it one night to make a little talk about the Temple and the lawn mower was in there. Then a friend of mine went in the Temple one time and prayer books were all over the floor and he brought me one.

**Sandra:** That's a shame. You had mentioned that there was a major department store in town . . .

**Bert:** Mayer Brothers?<sup>17</sup>

**Sandra:** What happened to that?

**Bert:** They borrowed some money from the bank. The bank took it over and all of the Mayers left town and passed away. The bank took over the building and it's now a bank.

**Sandra:** No children came back or no . . .

**Bert:** They had children but they never ran the store. One of the grandchildren became a professor at [University of] Alabama. He had a successful career as a professor. My daddy and I bought the house that they lived in. We converted it into some apartments and then finally sold it. It was a three-story brick building in downtown Demopolis. The bank—the Robertson Bank—remodeled it, but they didn't keep the original architecture . . . of the building. It had an interior in it through the third story which was the most beautiful part of the building but they just closed it off and just made it into a bank building.

**Sandra:** You also mentioned that you . . . first of all, where did you go to college?

**Bert:** I went to military school for a year and then I went to [University of] Alabama [Tuscaloosa, Alabama].

**Sandra:** Why didn't you finish?

**Bert:** When I went to military school . . . college for one year . . . then I transferred to the University. I didn't want to lose any credits. I really wasn't qualified to start. . . in a sophomore year at a big university. Then, about that time the Korean War<sup>18</sup> started and that was

---

<sup>17</sup> The Mayer family was a very prominent family in Demopolis. Morris Mayer was one of the first Jews to arrive in the town, right after the Civil war, in 1866. He founded a store with another German Jew, Henry Enners. Mayer brought his brothers Ludwig and Simon to Demopolis and with their help Mayer Brothers became a very successful department store. Mayer became widely known as the 'Merchant Prince' of Marengo County.

<sup>18</sup> The Korean War began when North Korean forces invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950. American troops entered the war in defense of the Republic of Korea to the south against the Soviet-backed Democratic People's

on my mind. I just didn't do good in college. I wasn't . . . it was just too big of an institution for me. I would have been better off in a smaller institution. But that's just the way . . . that I joined a fraternity and partied and that type of thing.

**Sandra:** What fraternity?

**Bert:** ZBT [Zeta Beta Tau].<sup>19</sup>

**Sandra:** Did you always know you were going to come back to Demopolis?

**Bert:** I always wanted to come in . . . to my business. I just always wanted to be in the furniture business and that was my desire.

**Sandra:** Did you ever want to not come back to Demopolis?

**Bert:** I never . . . [no], I never. I always wanted to come back and be in the furniture business. I'm thankful that I did that because I was happier here in Demopolis than I would have been in some other town or some other business. Demopolis is a small town and the Rosenbush's were a respected family. I had a future here. When my grandmother passed away . . . she was a successful business woman . . . she left me a lot of property. When we . . . when my daddy built this house out here in 1951, I wanted to . . . he had started off with 40 acres and I wanted to add to that. So I was . . . my daddy and I were able to add to the farm area. It's 360 acres now. Then I planted trees and got a tree farm started and a Treasure Forest.<sup>20</sup> Then my family, my wife and I, when daddy and mother died, we were able to settle the estate and buy what we wanted. I have a sister and she . . . lives in Virginia, so she got . . . it was divided up. She got her half in money and we got ours in the home and the property.

**Sandra:** How do you see Demopolis having changed over the last . . . it's certainly not the same place you grew up in.

**Bert:** No, it's not.

---

Republic of Korea to the north. Fighting ended on July 27, 1953, when an armistice agreement was signed maintaining a border between the Koreas near the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel and creating the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two Korean nations that still exists today.

<sup>19</sup> Founded in 1898 as the world's first Jewish fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) prides itself on being an inclusive organization welcoming of any college man who understands and appreciates our mission. With more than 140,000 initiated men ZBT's can be found in all aspects of life: business, entertainment, media, politics, and much more. In 1989, ZBT became the first fraternity to abolish pledging from its organization and, in its place, created a brotherhood program that focuses on equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities for all members.

<sup>20</sup> Alabama TREASURE Forest Association members are stewardship-minded men and women dedicated to improving the forest lands in each state and the nation. Forestlands that include wildlife habitat, pine and hardwood timber resources, clean water, recreation opportunities and beautiful scenery. When managing multiple resources of the forest, we are very sensitive to environmental concerns and conduct our stewardship approach accordingly.

**Sandra:** Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Bert:** In days gone by, there were a lot of retail stores in downtown Demopolis. Now they . . . the town is just practically all closed up. They moved away. We had the last . . . at the historic mark[er] in front of the Temple. You may want to take a picture of that someday. Rosenbush Furniture Company was the last Jewish business that survived all the other Jewish merchants. We were the last Jewish merchant to close our store. Of course, Mayer Brothers closed up and Fronzig's. A lot of them had to have some . . . Feibelman's had a saloon. It was . . . just a lot of Jewish merchants in Demopolis. Some of them loaned money, some of them advanced stuff . . . Baumann's . . .

**Sandra:** When did that all start happening? What decade?

**Bert:** I guess in the 1940's and 1950's. Then after the . . . during World War II, there was one German family that came to Demopolis to escape the persecution.

**Sandra:** Do you remember them? I think we know who they are . . . the Kohn's.

**Bert:** Yes.

**Sandra:** Because Herbert Kohn is one of our speakers at the Museum.

**Bert:** Yes.

**Sandra:** Can you tell me about that? Do you remember them very well?

**Bert:** I was a young man then, a young boy. I remember they came to Demopolis and they lived on a farm. Or they may have lived in town. I knew them, but I was just a young boy at the time, in the early 1940's. I remember them but I don't remember a lot about them.

**Sandra:** When the town started to change, though . . . was that in the 1970's maybe?

**Bert:** No, it was in the 1970's too, but then I guess people started leaving in the 1940's and the 1950's and the 1960's and the 1970's and the 1980's. One of the worst things that I remember about the change was . . . I'd mentioned before about the Temple, it was given away. It just broke up the congregation. That affected me more than anything else.

**Sandra:** What do you think was the cause of it all? Do you think loss of manufacturing? Loss of . . . ?

**Bert:** Cotton . . . cotton was king and then when cotton started . . . the cotton . . . farmers . . . there were a lot of tenant farmers.<sup>21</sup> They had farms and then the colored people

---

<sup>21</sup> After the Civil War (1861-1865), thousands of former slaves and white farmers were forced off their land by the bad economy. They lacked the money to purchase farmland, seeds, livestock, and equipment they needed to begin

raised the cotton and lived on the farms [in] tenant houses. They would come to town and shop and spend their meager earnings. It just changed. We had some hosiery mills that were here and then we had Vanity Fair [Mills]—it made women’s lingerie. My daddy was a director in the company. It had a great big building and [employed] a lot of ladies. Then . . . I don’t know . . . it just . . . I wasn’t on the City Council and I didn’t have anything to do with keeping the town . . . the matter . . . the city going. But it just I don’t know what happened. I don’t want to criticize anybody or say anything detrimental.

**Sandra:** I think it happened to a lot of towns . . .

**Bert:** Yes.

**Sandra:** . . . throughout the South. Your family was prominent. Did any of you ever run for political office?

**Bert:** No, my family didn’t. But my girlfriend that I went through all through high school with, her daddy was mayor of the town [Napoleon ‘Bony’ Fields].

**Sandra:** What was his name?

**Bert:** Napoleon Fields.

**Sandra:** Napoleon, wow!

**Bert:** Then the reader at our Temple, Jerome Levy, was on the City Council.

**Sandra:** Are any of those descendants or folks around?

**Bert:** No, no, none of them are here. Jerry [Jerome] Levy’s daughter, Lizzie Montgomery [sp], she married a Wampole [sp]. Then the other people just scattered around the country and died. The Koch’s, they had two sons and they moved to Prattville [Alabama]. One died and the other one, Alan, still lives in Prattville [Alabama].<sup>22</sup>

**Sandra:** What was their family business here?

**Bert:** They were partners in an automobile agency.

**Sandra:** The Feibelman’s saloon . . . where was that?

---

farming. Former planters were so deeply in debt that they could not hire workers. They needed workers who would not have to be paid until they harvested a crop: cotton or tobacco so they divided their land into smaller plots and turned to a tenant system. Tenant farmers usually paid the landowner rent for farmland and a house. They usually needed credit from a local merchant until harvest time. They owned the crops they planted and made their own decisions about them. After harvesting the crop, the tenant sold it and received income from it. From that income, he paid the landowner the amount of land owed. This system was distinct from sharecropping in which the sharecropper did not own the land, house, food, tools, equipment, or seeds and had no control over what they planted. The landowner sold the crop and applied its income toward settling the sharecropper’s account.

<sup>22</sup> The Museum has the oral history of Alan Koch OHC# 10819 (January 22, 2012). See [www.thebreman.org](http://www.thebreman.org), Research, Cuba Family Archives, Oral Histories. Alan Koch died in 2015.

**Bert:** It was just somewhere downtown Demopolis. I don't know that much about it. They just . . . that was his business to have a saloon. My daddy never told me much about it. My grandmother had a big, beautiful home in downtown Demopolis. [It] had leaded glass windows. ust a great, big, beautiful home. When she died it wasn't preserved. I regret that. But it's just . . . the way it happened.

**Sandra:** Have you ever thought about living anywhere else in all these years?

**Bert:** No, no, no. My wife had a home in Tuscaloosa [Alabama] when we married. Her family had a farm in Mississippi . . . but I never wanted to leave Demopolis.

**Sandra:** Where's the cemetery . . . the Jewish cemetery?

**Bert:** The Jewish cemetery is on Jefferson Street. I wanted to take you out there today. Did you know about our Holocaust monument that we put up?

**Sandra:** No, I didn't.

**Bert:** I'm a charter member of the Holocaust Museum in Washington. I've always been interested in the Holocaust. I went to the World's Fair in Montreal in the 1960's and I wanted to put up a memorial then, but I never could convince the local congregation to do it. So finally, I was able to get permission from the people that were in charge of the cemetery to put up a Holocaust monument. About four years ago, I got permission and I put up a memorial to the Holocaust victims. I contacted the museum in Mississippi and they had some friends at the Holocaust Museum in Washington. They helped me with the wording and the Hebrew letters. I had a local company that I was friends of to build the monument and put it up at the cemetery. Then we had a ceremony . . . when the monument was finished. It's a beautiful cemetery, all the . . . I don't remember how many graves are there, but maybe I could take . . .

**Sandra:** Is it near the building? Is it near the synagogue?

**Bert:** No, it's on the edge of town. It's on Jefferson Street about, say about ten blocks from town.

**Sandra:** Going back to your earliest years again, I have a few more questions. Your boyhood friends, were they Jewish or mainly not Jewish?

**Bert:** No, no, they were all gentiles.

**Sandra:** Did you ever feel like an outsider among them?

**Bert:** No, I never did. I was just a kid growing up. I had a bicycle and I'd been in the Boy Scouts. [I went] to school and helped my daddy in the furniture store. I never, never

felt any antisemitism.

**Sandra:** Were they ever curious about where you went to church?

**Bert:** No, no, I never . . . it never was any . . . just growing up, I never thought much about it. Then when I went off to school, everybody would go to church on Sunday and I'd stay in the dormitory.

**Sandra:** What about holidays in your home? Did your family have a Sabbath dinner?

**Bert:** No, my family . . . never, never was really interested in . . . my daddy and mother were Jewish, but they never really practiced much of the Jewish religion. I would go to temple with . . . on the High Holy Days and Friday nights and my mother would go with me. But my daddy . . . never attended services very much.

**Sandra:** Did you have a Passover *seder*<sup>23</sup> at your house?

**Bert:** The only Passover supper we ever had in Demopolis, I got it together. I had this local restaurant where I would eat a lot and I had the lady fix a Passover supper. That was the only Passover supper we ever had in Demopolis.

**Sandra:** But you didn't have one in your own home growing up?

**Bert:** No.

**Sandra:** What about Christmas? I know a lot of Jewish families in small towns ended up celebrating Christmas.

**Bert:** We did. We always had a Christmas tree and celebrated Christmas more than we did *Hanukkah*.<sup>24</sup> But now, my wife and I read the services on *Hanukkah* and celebrate the holiday. Then a few years ago I wanted a real pretty *menorah*<sup>25</sup> and bought one.

**Sandra:** Did you ever as a child go to Jewish summer camp?

**Bert:** Never did, never did. I would go to Boy Scout camp . . . that was the only

---

<sup>23</sup> (Hebrew: *Pesach*) The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days. Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

<sup>24</sup> (Hebrew for 'dedication.') An eight-day festival of lights usually falling around Christmas on the Christian calendar. *Hanukkah* celebrates the victory of the Maccabees in 165 BCE over the Seleucid rulers of Palestine, who had desecrated the Temple. The Maccabees wanted to re-dedicate the Temple altar to Jewish worship by rekindling the *menorah* but could only find one small jar of ritually pure olive oil. This oil continued to burn miraculously for eight days, enabling them to prepare new oil. The *menorah* with its eight branches commemorates this miracle.

<sup>25</sup> The *menorah*, which has seven branches, is an ancient symbol of the Jews. It has come to be connected with *Hanukkah*. The *Talmud* states that it is prohibited to use a seven-branched *menorah* outside of the Temple so the *Hanukkah menorah* (*hanukiah*) has nine branches.

camp I went to.

**Sandra:** Do you feel . . . so your parents weren't that concerned, because I know some parents in these smaller communities were concerned that there weren't other aspects of Jewish life for their children, so it was just . . .

**Bert:** My mother and daddy were not that way.

**Sandra:** If you could have been on the City Council or if you were on the City Council or in city government is there anything you think you could have done to kind of hold back some of the changes that have happened in Demopolis?

**Bert:** I don't know if I could've . . . what I could've done. The furniture business was my main concern. I just spent full time managing the store. About the only organization I was really in growing up was the Jaycees.<sup>26</sup> I took an active part in that, and tried to do what I could as a young man to maybe help the town a little bit. But I just . . . I never did get involved in the Rotary Club and the Lions Club and the Kiwanis Club.<sup>27</sup> I was a Mason<sup>28</sup> and I took part in that organization, so I'm . . . but I would've . . . I don't know that I could've done much. I don't know whether the people would've listened to me or not.

**Sandra:** Do you miss the furniture business?

**Bert:** Not really. I was 1970 . . . the early Seventies when we retired. The store that we took so much pride in and worked so hard to preserve it and to really have a beautiful building . . . the city did not take care of it. [It] had a wood . . . all the original wood on the front was protected by an awning. They took the awnings down . . . just didn't take care of it at all. The two buildings we gave the city were appraised for over a \$500,000. One of the 10,000 square foot warehouses . . . they didn't take care of that and the roof is falling in. The two-story furniture store that we gave they just . . . the mayor of the town, Austin Caldwell, was a good friend of mine. We'd play golf together. He wrote my wife and me a letter and asked us if we would give the building to the city. We didn't have any use for it. It would have cost us several

---

<sup>26</sup> The United States Junior Chamber ('JC's' or more commonly 'Jaycees') is a leadership training and civic organization for people between the ages of 18 and 41. Areas of emphasis are business development, management skills, individual training, community service, and international connections. It was established January 21, 1920 to provide opportunities for young men to develop personal and leadership skills through service to others.

<sup>27</sup> These are service clubs, that is, the members meet regularly to perform charitable works either by direct hands-on efforts or by raising money for other organizations.

<sup>28</sup> Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It exists in various forms all over the world today, with a membership estimated at around 6,000,000 people. It is organized into Grand Lodges, each of which governs its own jurisdiction.

hundred thousand dollars to maintain it and we didn't have any children to leave it to. We felt like it would be a heritage for the Rosenbush name to give it . . . it's called the 'Rosenbush Building.' So we talked about it and decided to give it to the city. They just had a new Council that came in shortly after we gave the building. They boarded up all the windows and took down the awnings and didn't take care of the warehouse . . . they just didn't . . . I don't know. Maybe it'll . . . it's supposed to be a museum, but the lady that's running the museum organization has been running it for about six years now and nothing's happened. My wife and I are on the committee, but it's just a very . . . I don't want to say anything about it, but it's not working.

**Sandra:** I'm sorry about that. I'm going to ask you a question that I know is going to put you in a . . .

**Bert:** Go ahead!

**Sandra:** . . . you won't think about . . . the building anymore. How did you meet your lovely wife?

**Bert:** We had a blind date. It was a friend . . . my wife was at the University of Alabama [Tuscaloosa, Alabama], in charge of the University housing.

**Sandra:** For the purpose of the tape, say your wife's full name.

**Bert:** Mary . . . Mary Louise.

**Sandra:** And her maiden name?

**Bert:** It was 'Bell.' Anyhow, she was working with a lady that was from Demopolis, Susan Lott. Susan told her about me, and we were invited to a dance here. So she came down for the dance. It was on New Year's Eve. We always eat black-eyed peas and hog jowls,<sup>29</sup> so my mother had fixed that. We went to the dance and then . . . I think my wife stayed out here for the weekend. She was just such a smart, pretty lady. I just start dating her. She was dating some other fellows at the time. Every Wednesday and Saturday I would go up . . . I'd spend the weekend in Tuscaloosa. Wednesday afternoon, the store closed and I'd go on Wednesdays to see her. We dated. I had been married . . . I was married to a Jewish girl from Virginia. The marriage didn't work out. I'd been divorced for about ten years and I just knew from the start that she was the kind of person I'd want to be married to. We've been married for 40 years. She takes good care of me and is good to me. She's a very intelligent lady and the Lord

---

<sup>29</sup> Hog jowls are the cheeks of the hog and are used to season beans and peas, or fried and eaten like bacon. On New Year's Day, hog jowls are traditionally eaten in the South to ensure health, prosperity and progress.

just blessed me.

**Sandra:** I also wanted to ask you, you mentioned that you were . . . you played golf with the ex-mayor . . .

**Bert:** Yes.

**Sandra:** Is there a county club here?

**Bert:** Yes, I'm a charter member of the country club. I've been a member for about 40 or 50 years. Now I'm an honorary member.

**Sandra:** What's the name of it?

**Bert:** Just 'Demopolis Country Club.'

**Sandra:** There was no issue with you being Jewish?

**Bert:** No, none. They had several of the members of the congregation that were in the club and it never was any antisemitism or any remarks or anything. That's just the way it was in Demopolis.

**Sandra:** Does it seem strange to you that you are the last Jewish person in Demopolis?

**Bert:** It's just the way the good Lord dealt the cards. In 1990, my wife and I joined the Temple [Emanu-El]<sup>30</sup> in Tuscaloosa. We don't get to participate in the service because it's 60 miles, but we go to the High Holy Days and some special occasions we're invited to. I want to be a member of a congregation even though we don't get to attend services. My wife always goes with me. Now that I'm older, I read a lot of the *Torah* and the Jewish books and learn things now that I didn't learn growing up.

**Sandra:** You mentioned that you were always interested in the Holocaust. Why so?

**Bert:** I just felt sorry for the persecution of the Jewish people. It's just something that means something to me all. Every year we send a donation to the [United States Holocaust Memorial] Museum<sup>31</sup> and a couple of years ago I got put up . . . after we put up the monument,<sup>32</sup> one of the . . . Mr. [George] Hellman, one of the top men, came down here to visit with us. One

<sup>30</sup> Temple Emanu-El was founded in 1912 on Broad Street (now University Boulevard). Over the years they have moved to larger quarters several times and as of 2010 relocated to the University of Alabama campus. They are currently the only Jewish congregation in Tuscaloosa and welcome all Jews whether Reform, Conservative or Orthodox. The current rabbi is Rabbi Steven L. Jacobs. (2016)

<sup>31</sup> The Museum is the United States' official memorial to the Holocaust. It was dedicated in 1993 in Washington, D.C. It provides for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history.

<sup>32</sup> Bert and Mary Louise were instrumental in getting the Holocaust Memorial Monument in the Jewish cemetery in Demopolis. It was dedicated on April 21, 2009. It is a simple stone engraved with "In Memory of the Six Million Jews Who Perished Under Nazi Rule, 1933-1945."

time there was an article . . . some news about me, one of the . . . I forgot his name now, but he was head of the museum, wrote me a nice letter. Then we visited the museum when we were on a tour in Washington. Every year my wife and I used to put up a display at the library about the Museum. We had some pictures that we'd put up.

**Sandra:** Growing up in Demopolis in the 1940's did you know anything about what was happening to the Jews of Europe?

**Bert:** No, my daddy never talked about it. I was oblivious to the fact. I just was oblivious to it.

**Sandra:** So after the war when everybody knew, do you remember how your family . . . did your family talk about it then?

**Bert:** No, my family never talked about it. They never talked about it. It's just the way my mother and daddy were.

**Sandra:** If you could recall one of your best days growing up, what would that be?

**Bert:** I guess my best days growing up . . . I loved the Boy Scouts<sup>33</sup> and I was interested in it. I lacked one merit badge of becoming an Eagle. I would just enjoy the summer camps and participating in the movement, I guess. I would like to go to the movies on Saturday. I had a bicycle and I enjoyed riding the bicycle . . . I guess I was just a carefree kid. In the summers my daddy would buy a season ticket for us to go to the swimming pool. I enjoyed playing tennis and swimming . . . then my girlfriend . . . we would . . . go to the dances together. I guess those were the years that I enjoyed the most.

**Sandra:** Did . . . it just went right out of my head. You mentioned going to dances and the swimming pool and your girl . . . oh, I know! Was there one movie theater in town?

**Bert:** One movie theater.

**Sandra:** What was the name of it?

**Bert:** Marengo Theater.

**Sandra:** How much did it cost to go to a movie and have a snack?

**Bert:** I guess about 25 cents.

---

<sup>33</sup> A youth organization in the United States. It was founded in 1910 to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of outdoor activities, educational programs and at older age levels, career-oriented programs in partnership with community organizations. They wear a uniform and earn merit badges for achievements in sports, crafts, science, etc. The boys start as a Cub Scout until age 11 and can move up to be an Eagle Scout.

**Sandra:** Did you go every Saturday?

**Bert:** Yes. There was a place downtown that had a little hot dog stand and my daddy would give me quarter and I'd [go to] the movie and the serials two or three times.

**Sandra:** What else did you and your friends do for fun?

**Bert:** We were kind of bad. One night my friends, we got a watermelon, and went out and cut it. After we finished eating the watermelon, we threw the rinds at a car. I got in a little trouble about that. Then we'd . . . just kids . . . we would . . . just racing, you might say. You know we'd . . . we didn't do anything bad . . . we didn't take any drugs or do anything ugly. Just kids . . . we liked playing. During the summer I'd put peroxide on my hair and turn it a different color, and play tennis, and just that type of activities.

**Sandra:** Was there any friendships forged between the white children and the black children at that time in the 1940's, 1950's, do you remember?

**Bert:** No, we never, never . . . they'd have their activities and we'd have ours. It was a good relationship, but it was just two different . . . They'd go to their school and their dances and we'd go to our school. The swimming pool was segregated. It was just two different groups.

**Sandra:** Have I missed anything? Is there anything that you would like to talk about that I perhaps have not mentioned?

**Bert:** Maybe my wife could say a few words.

**Sandra:** She's saying, "No, no." Was there ever a favorite customer at the furniture store? Somebody . . . good or bad. Or a customer that you just . . . have a memory about?

**Bert:** Not really. We had a lot . . . when I started out in the furniture business, my daddy bought a 40-passenger Ford bus and converted it into a showroom. I'd go from house to house selling furniture. I'd go all over this part of the country, selling furniture.

**Sandra:** In a bus?

**Bert:** Yes. People would . . . I'd stop at a house and they'd get on the bus and see if there's something they wanted, and [I'd] sell it to them on credit. Some of the sales I made were bad sales and [we] never collected for them and some of them were good.

**Sandra:** How long did that go on?

**Bert:** I don't know, maybe a year or two. Then some of the towns I'd go to . . . I'd just go in a pickup truck and take all those . . . deliver the merchandise later. It was just a way of

doing business.

**Sandra:** I did have one final question. You mentioned you had, or you have a sister. What's her name?

**Bert:** Her name is Bette Wallerstein. She left Demopolis in high school and never came back. We have a good relationship, we talk to her on the weekends, but she hasn't lived in Demopolis in . . . 50 years.

**Sandra:** Did she leave for marriage or did she just leave Demopolis?

**Bert:** My daddy sent her off to school in Virginia and then she met a man and married him there and just never came back.

**Sandra:** I was just wondering . . . so I think we're just about finished.

**Bert:** I thank you for the interview.

**Sandra:** Thank you so much!

**Bert:** Maybe it won't be too boring for the people that listen.

**Sandra:** No, no! I'm so glad I asked that final question because you never told me you drove a bus around these small towns! That's great! Thank you so much.

**INTERVIEW ENDS**

<End Disk 1>