

PREFACE: In 1993 and 1994, Toby, Mike and Reed interviewed their parents about their lives. Reed captured the interviews on video. All three children asked questions. We did not have a plan ahead of time, but asked what was on our minds and what was in the context of the conversation. What follows are Mike's notes on highlights of the interviews. It is wonderful to see the actual interviews, to catch the humor and warmth, to savor the personalities singly and together. Milt was 82 on July 2, 1994. Irma was 79.

Milt Maidenberg and Irma Maidenberg interview July 2, 1994, notes.

Henry Fleck knew Stanley Valinet, also Arthur Sachs. Same fraternity at IU. He got the other guys to go across the lake in a rowboat to visit the Valinet cottage.

Tall lanky skinny, wearing white duck pants, no shirt, no shoes

Dad: I only weighed 165 pounds then.

Mother: He seemed to be such a natural-looking person.

Dad: Did I feel obligated to marry a Jewish girl? Oh, definitely. My parents sat around crying with the other marriages. I made up my mind that the next marriage in this family was going to be a Jewish marriage.

Rose: Make up your mind or don't come around here anymore.

Sonny Dobrow saw Milt at a convention, said to him, I hear that Irma is going to get married. So on the way back to Marion he stopped in Indianapolis. It wasn't true, I wasn't going to get married. I was going with some guy. It was a nudge.

Mom: our family was not German-Jewish.

Arthur Valinet was a great checkers player.

We had a little china store on the Square in Marion. It was the time of the advent of bars after Prohibition. We started pushing into the commercial field. Frank found the building that National China became, we moved into it.

Meyer came into the business during the war, when Frank was in Italy. Meyer was in Youngstown, Ohio then. Selling shoes I think. He had a tough life.

[Ted and Dan call from Camp Nebagamon.]

Michael was the accident. We didn't expect him so soon after Toby. He was a bit of a surprise.

Frank started the retail business that would develop into National China.

Milt: Frank was close to our father. He was the one child who helped him all the time. He learned from him too. My father used to fool around with real estate. Frank used to drive over to Ohio to get odds and ends, sell them in the store. East Liverpool, Ohio, Sterling China Company.

Arthur's store was Lincoln Jewelry and Loan Company. All sorts of loans.

Father was remote to his own sons. But he lived for Michael and Toby.

Mike's intense memories of driving down to the farm. Windscreen on the car blew off. Very scary. Philip Morris billboard. Hare billboard. Noblesville buy popcorn at Grandma's. Grandpa Val with his plastic poops. His stories of the Chinese pirates.

Grandpa's father died when he was 13. He left home, used to bum around, lived like a hobo.

Grandpa Dave came because of the opportunity. There was a lot of business to be had. The word got around among all the peddlers. Marion had quite a number of Jews, welcomed him.

Ben's story about Marion Ohio and Marion Indiana wasn't true at all. My father knew where he was coming. He came to take advantage of the big gas boom. He had horse and buggy. Bought stuff in Indianapolis, sold to the farmers.

Always went on Saturdays to the store.

I was the first to go to college, went in 1929.

My father was not tall, maybe 5-9 or 5-10. But his father was tall.

Rose was pregnant with Meyer when they came to this country. He was born in Hagerstown, Maryland.

My mother spent a whole lifetime learning how to write her name. She may not have been able to read or write but she had great instincts. She could go to a movie and tell you the whole story in detail.

Mike: happy memories of Passover at Grandma's, also the farm.

Keiners were the ones who wanted to build relationships with gentiles. This was how we met the Wilkinsons, Bud and Connie Gartland.