

Interview by: Susan Flokos
Interview with: Jack Olinsky

Date: June 26, 1984

PERSONAL DATA

Jack Olinsky

Interviewed at Battery Park Drive, Bridgeport

Born: Springfield, Ma.

Spouse:

Children: None

Education: Springfield Grammar School,

Employment: Self

Temple: Park Avenue Temple

Organizations:

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Flokos: Today is June 26. I am Susan Flokos and I am interviewing Mr. ...

JO: Jack Olinsky.

SF: Mr. Olinsky, O.K., how old are you?

JO: Eighty-four.

SF: Could you tell me a little bit about your family?

JO: My present family? I have a wife and myself - that's all - no children.

SF: So it's just two people in your family. Were you originally from Bridgeport?

JO: No, I'm originally from Springfield, Massachusetts.

SF: What made you come to Bridgeport?

JO: I became the manager of a retail shoe store here, and they asked me to come here to manage the store back in 1925, I guess it was. It's the day before you were born.

SF: O.K., what grammar school did you attend?

JO: Springfield Grammar School, Springfield, Mass.

SF: What grade did you attend to?

JO: Well, till I graduated; ninth grade.

SF: So you didn't come to Bridgeport...when did you come to Bridgeport? What date, do you remember?

JO: In 1925, I think it was. Yeah, I came here to manage

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JO: the store.

SF: What kinds of things did you do for fun in Bridgeport?

JO: Well, the fun I did in Bridgeport was earn a living. I played baseball, played a little golf, things like that, danced, went out once in a while.

JO: Do you remember World War I and World War II?

JO: Yes I do; both of them

SF: Could you tell me a little bit about them?

JO: Well, I was drafted November eleventh - the last day of World War I. I was drafted that day and sent home an hour later; the war was over!

SF: Oh, gosh!

JO: November eleventh, whatever the year was.

SF: Were you scared of going into the war, or you thought it was our duty?

JO: Sure, everybody was scared.

SF: How was it about the Depression? Were times hard then?

JO: Well, it was hard for a lot of people; it wasn't for me, because I went in[to] business in 1927, and the Depression came in 1932 and I built the business during the course of the Depression.

SF: Could you tell me a little bit about the neighborhood you live in?

JO: Well, it's a peculiar neighborhood. I think it's a very

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JO: lovely neighborhood; we live facing the water, and it's the home we built twenty-one years ago; it was my wife's dream house.

SF: You built all this?

JO: What?

SF: You built your home?

JO: Yes.

SF: You did a very fine job on it.

JO: Thank you.

SF: What religion are you?

JO: What?

SF: What religion are you?

JO: Jewish.

SF: What church do you go to?

JO: Park Avenue temple.

SF: Do you remember what Beardsley Park and Seaside Park were like years ago?

JO: Yes, sure; I used to play golf at Beardsley Park. At Seaside Park we used to go there and have our dates, take our girls there and maybe smooch a little!

SF: O.K. So what other kind of sports were there in Bridgeport? ...what other kinds of sports did you play besides golf?

JO: Well, I played golf and I played recreational basketbal.

- SF: Were you ever a coach for a team or anything like that?
- JO: No, I wasn't. Mostly a player, not a coach.
- SF: Did you ever want to become a coach?
- JO: No, I had too much to do [trying] to earn a living.
- SF: Your wife is originallyj from Bridgeport?
- JO: She was born in Bridgeport.
- SF: She was born in Bridgeport - whaereabouts?
- JO: On the East Side of Bridgeport, which years later became a slum area - much later.
- SF: So you came to Bridgeport because you were in the shoe business. What kind of industries were around then beside shoe businesses; what were the major industries?
- JO: Well, General Electric and the ammunitions areas, and the manufacture of guns and so on. And a lot of industry in Bridgeport back in those days.
- SF: How would you get around to going to work; did you take the trolley cars?
- JO: I'd take the trolley car or a bus or walk. There were some cars, but I didn't own one then, at first.
- SF: When did you get your first car?
- JO: Oh, I'd say 1927 or '28.
- SF: What year car, do you remeber?
- JO: It was a couple of years old, I guess, at the time.

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SF: Did you ever go to the theater in Bridgeport?

JO: Oh, yes; I love the theater. There was vaudeville and there was regular theater - musical comedy or drama.

SF: Did you ever go to the theater around Bridgeport? Like the Ritz?

JO: Yeah,, the Ritz was not a theater; it was a place to go dancing - a very nice place, where nice people went there for dancing with the best bands in the country would be brought there to play music for us. And the people that owned the Ritz became very good friends of mine: McCormack and Barry owned it.

SF: So you must be very happy that you had friends like that.

SF: What kinds of activities did they have at your church for young people?

JO: Activities for young people - I don't know; I suppose the dancing, meetings...I was always active in things like that. I was very active in civic things and charitable things and philanthropic things. There's a long list I could give you for that, if you wanted it.

SF: What other kinds of businesses were there in Bridgeport?

JO: The usual; retail, wholesale, manufacturing, industry, war products.

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SF: What did you do for fun in Bridgeport when you just came here?

JO: Well, I went to the theater, went to the vaudeville shows

SF: Were your parents originally from Bridgeport?

JO: No, no; my parents were not. I was born in New York City and my parents lived in Springfield, and then I came here, I came alone to manage the store.

SF: Did your parents ever think about coming to Bridgeport?

JO: No, not at all.

JO: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

SF: Oh, yes, I have two brothers and four sisters.

SF: What was it like for them growing up?

JO: The same as anybody else at that time of the age area - some were old[er], some were younger than I am, and they went to school and they went to playgrounds and they did studying and had their recreation...my brothers happened to be more athletic than the girls - they weren't so athletically inclined.

SF: So, you had how many brothers and how many sisters?

JO: I had two brothers and four sisters.

SF: Big family.

JO: Seven people in the family.

SF: So, you're the only one out of all of them that moved to Bridgeport.

JO: Well, I had one of my brothers eventually come to work

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JO: with me in my place of business that I went in business with. And he was the only one. Otherwise, the others visited me occasionally.

SF: What kind of shoe store did you own?

JO: Mens' shoe store; do you want the name of it?

SF: Yeah.

JO: Jax, Inc.; I was in there fifty years. I owned the business fifty years and retired about a little over ten years ago.

SF: You made the shoes, or you were in shoe repair?

JO: No, no shoe repair; I sold shoes, I bought shoes and I designed shoes and I was on the National Style Committee of the mens' shoe industry, and I was the only individual shoe store in the United States on that committee, and I represented twelve thousand retailers in the country on the style committee. It forecast shoes for men for a year later, what they would wear.

SF: Oh, my gosh - that must...

JO: And there was only twelve men in the United States on that committee; it comprised retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers and design experts, and I represented these individual retailers in the whole country on that

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JO: committee.

SF: And your store was in Bridgeport?

JO: My store - yeah. That was where the Stratfield Hotel is, right on the corner. It was a very lovely store.

SF: If you had a chance, would you go back to the store?

JO: If what?

SF: If you had a chance to go back to work, would you?

± JO: Not at this age, no; I'm retired, as a I say, a little over ten years ago.

SF: But I mean if you could go back in time...

JO: If I could go back in time - I enjoyed the business very much, that's the best I can tell you - I'm not going to go back at this age.

SF: Oh, no, no. But I'm saying like, if you could go back in Bridgeport the way it was compared to the way it is now, would you go back?

JO: Yes, because I think it was very nice then. Main Street, downtown was like a holiday; Thursday nights, everybody would come downtown - there were no shopping centers in the outskirts, so everybody met downtown; they came to buy the things that they wanted to buy, and on Saturdays the same way; everybody would come down to Main Street to do their buying - whatever they needed. And as I say, it was like a holiday spirit; people met

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JO: their friends downtown and they enjoyed doing it.

SF: How about the prices. Were they a lot cheaper than they are now?

JO: A great deal cheaper, yes they were. They were probably one-fifth of what they are today.

SF: So, do you think if you went down to Bridgeport now - downtown Bridgeport now, it wouldn't be like it was a long time ago.

JO: Well, it's entirely different, but people have to earn more money and they spend more money because prices are higher and so are the salaries. So I suppose everything equalizes itself.

SF: How about the mayors of Bridgeport?

JO: How about the mayors; I knew them all very well. In fact, one mayor appointed me the head of the parking authority.

SF: Who was the mayor then?

JO: Tedesco.

SF: What do you think about the mayors; do you think they did a good deal for Bridgeport?

JO: Did they do well for Bridgeport? Sometimes yes, sometimes no. But, I mean, like the mayors in the nineteen forties...do you think they handled it good?

JO: Well, I don't think any of them are perfect; they do

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JO: the best they can and sometimes the best they can is not good enough and sometimes the people are satisfied and they re-elect the mayor.

SF: Was there any mayor, governor that you really liked, that you feel did a good deal for Bridgeport?

JO: Well, I can't think of the governor's name right now, but again, some of them are pretty good and some are not so wonderful; none of them were great for Bridgeport as far as governors are concerned. And the same for mayors; some did pretty fair, some did worse than others and some did better than others. But by and large, they try to do a good job, I guess, and it works out as well as they can. I don't hate any of them and I'm not in love with any of them. I vote for whoever I feel will do the best job; I'm an independent voter.

SF: So, the way you feel about it you would like to go back into the past but at times you feel that the future may hold something better.

JO: There's always hope for a better future.

SF: In Bridgeport?

JO: Everywhere; also in Bridgeport...

SF: How long have you been living in Black Rock?

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JO: Twenty-one years.

SF: How do you like Black Rock?

JO: I love it; you can see why I love it. It's the house we wanted to build, the way way we wanted to build it, so we enjoy it.

SF: Why did you pick Black Rock to build a house in?

JO: Because of the view and because of the location and the chance to get the land where we wanted it, because my wife always wanted the water view and we have it one hundred percent.

SF: What do you think of Black Rock now; do you think they're trying to restore everything to the way it used to be?

JO: Well, I think they're trying to improve it; I think we have a Black Rock council here that are doing a very good job trying to improve the area,, and they're very alert and they are real lovers of the area; it's like a little town within the city of Bridgeport that's entirely different than any other section of Bridgeport. You live in Black Rock?

SF: Yes.

JO: Well, you know what I'm talking about then, that we're all trying to improve it. The council is a very active countil.

kJSF: So you think Black Rock is really up on its feet then?

- JO: Oh, yes, I have great confidence in it.
- SF: So you must like living in the community then.
- JO: Oh, sure, I like it very much; I don't know of anybody anywhere has a more beautiful community than we have where I live. Maybe you've seen something more beautiful; I don't. I shouldn't interview you, though, should I?
- SF: Me, myself, I've been here for seventeen years; there's been a lot of changes for that.
- JO: Well of course this is the ideal little spot in Black Rock; it's unusual, because we're the first house that was built here in this area. And we lived here alone for about three or four years until finally a neighbor moved in, built a house and then another one. There's about six houses in this area.
- SF: So, what do you do in Black Rock for fun? What do you do around here?
- JO: Well, I've been a golfer till I hurt my leg and I don't do much for fun any more, because I'm a little limited in my ability to walk around a great deal. But I've been a golfer for years and always enjoyed it.
- SF: Were you ever in a tournament for golfing?
- JO: Yes, I used to play in tournaments. I did win one or

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JO: two of them. In fact, many years ago I won the silver cup for...the retail division had a tournament

SF: You must be pretty good...

JO: Well, as much as the average person is that plays it a lot; I played a lot for fifty years.

SF: Oh, wow. So you must have really enjoyed playing that sport then.

JO: Well, I was very active civically as well; I don't know whether you're interested in that or not.

SF: Sure, tell me about it.

JO: Well, I was chairman of the parking authority in Bridgeport for fifteen years. I was the head of building the municipal garage downtown in the plaza and in fact, there's a bronze plaque with my name on it as chairman of it - a three and a half million dollar garage, five hundred cars. I was, I told you, a member of the style committee of the shoe industry, I was a member of the board of directors of the United Fund and the Community Chest. I was also chairman of the UJA - that's the United Jewish Appeal, I was president of the Jewish Community Council, I was a member of the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce, I was chairman of the retail division of the Chamber of Commerce, you want more?

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SF: Yeah, go ahead. It sounds very interesting...

JO: I was very active civically and philanthropically; I can't remember offhand how many I gave you...I was a member of the board of directors of the Park Avenue temple, did I tell you that? I used to lecture to the people who went out for money for the United Fund, Community Chest, teach them how to go out and get money. KAnd they presented me with a silver platter...at the annual meeting...

SF: How do you feel about Junior Achievement in Bridgeport?

JO: I think it's a wonderful idea to teach kids to do something for somebody besides themselves...I think anything that'll bring children together to do good things instead of bad things, or give them an opportunity to get involved with [prevention of] drinking at the wrong age or dope or opium or any of those things and that they...give their time to good effort, they wouldn't have time for the bad things. That's my feeling about Junior Achievement or any activity that a schoolgirl or schoolboy occupies time for good, then they don't have time to occuopy time for bad.

SF: So you feel good about the opportunities that Bridgeport's trying to find things for the kids to do?

JO: Yes, I hope they can do even better than they're doing - there never is enough.

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SF: So you feel that if Bridgeport can ...actually do something for the young people that it would be a better community?

JO: No question about it - they need it very, very badly. To steer children on the proper course of human events or living a decent life and a good life, because nobody will ever tell me that a kid who does well isn't a happier kid. I don't mean to lecture you, but this is definitely any important thing if we can get the children in the right channel - doing what's good for themselves and good for others; they won't have time to do bad things for themselves .

SF: When did you get married to your wife?

JO: Fifty-four years ago.

SF: God bless you...

JO: We celebrated our fiftieth anniversary four years ago and we all came to the house and they surprised us and gave us a big party, and they brought everything and did all the work themselves and we didn't have to do a blessed thing.

SF: Oh, that was nice. So you met your wife in Bridgeport?

JO: Yes, I did. She's [from] a well-known family in Bridgeport; they've been in Bridgeport. They've been

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JO: in business for ninety-odd years; Henry Bresky and Sons, that's the wholesale food people. They're going to celebrate their hundredth anniversary.

SF: Oh, wow.

JO: So this is an old-line Bridgeport family.

SF: Bet she could tell me a lot, too! So you met her in Bridgeport; where did you meet her, may I ask?

JO: Where did I meet her?...I think possibly at a dance or some social function...we were introduced and we got to know each other and fell in love; we're married fifty-four years ago.

SF: No kids?

JO: No kids; we we had some, but we didn't.

SF: So, what kind of business was your wife in?

JO: Well, she worked for her father in the wholesale food business - Henry Bresky and Son, and she worked there till we got married and that was the end of her working.

SF: So she didn't work since then; you've been the major supporter of the family...You mentioned that she worked for the frozen foods and you were in the shoe business -

JO: Mens' shoes - retail, yeah.

jSF: And then you were saying that you were running for parking attendant in Bridgeport, too?

JO: I wasn't working for them; I was appointed by the mayor as head of the parking authority - a commissioner of

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JO: the parking authority of Bridgeport.

SF: Where did you get the authority for that?

JO: ...the mayor appointed me.

SF: What made him appoint you?

JO: Because he thought I was an outstanding person at that time as one of the heads of the Chamber of Commerce in Bridgeport, and I was a member of the board of the Chamber, and they felt they wanted a businessman, which they don't usually have on the parking authority. So I was appointed by the mayor because of my activity in the Chamber of Commerce, I presume for that reason because he called me up and he asked me if I would accept the job and I said: "well, I'm not a democrat". And he says "that's all right. You can be an independent as far as I'm concerned, but you'd be very valuable to the parking authority to arrange all these things." And he was thinking of building a three and a half million dollar garage, ... so that's how I was appointed, and I lasted fifteen years on the parking authority and then it was time for me to give it up...we built that garage and we got a lot of parking lots.

SF: You helped build it?

JO: Oh, sure. I had to sign every paper to build that.

SF: Oh, wow. You had a lot of authority, then.

- JO: Oh, I had a lot of authority; we chose the architects we chose the builders and we had constant discussions about certain things that should be done and shouldn't be done. I was very active...
- SF: So what did you do when you got done with that job? Did you go on to something else?
- JO: Well, sure. I've always [worked] until I retired. I told you I was active in the Chamber of Commerce, I was active in the Better KBusiness Bureau.
- SF: What did you do in the Better Business Bureau?
- JO: I was president of the Better Business Bureau, I forgot to tell you that one.
- SF: ...what did you do as the president?
- JO: Well, we had committees appointed to take the complaints from people who were having trouble with their retail purchases and we had an organization put together that would help them where we could, and try to keep the city running as cleanly and neatly as possible in manufacturing and in retailing. It's a big organization today, the Better Business Bureau; I was president for two years of the Better Business Bureau.
- SF: Wow, it must have been a pretty good job.
- JO: Well, no pay.
- SF: No pay? You didn't get paid for it?

JO: No, I didn't get paid for any of these jobs I told you about.

SF: They were all volunteer?

JO: They're not volunteer, but I offered my services when I was elected to these different things, or appointed. But they were non-paying jobs; I never received any money for anything I did outside of my business. It was all done for nothing; for goodwill and for the benefit of the city of Bridgeport or the United States. I mean, with the National Style Committee or the city or the state.

SF: So you did all this Bridgeport? What did they do for you?

JO: Oh, they gave me planters, they gave me seals. Oh, I also was one of the originators of the Barnum Festival.

Oh, wow.
SF: Oh, wow. Tell me about that.

JO: Well, it started off - it was a very wonderful thing. It's going down some, now; it's not as popular as it was. Over in the corner there, near the library, you'll see a plaque there that the Barnum Festival gave me just a few years ago in recognition of the work I did for them. If you want to walk over, you'll see it in color; I forgot about the Barnum Festival - that's right. It was wonderful in those days; when

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JO: we started it was very popular and I was the head of the hospital visitation, so I used to take about fifty to a hundred people with me once a year during the Barnum Festival and I'd take them to all the hospitals and we'd put on an hour's show in each place, one after another and I rehearsed them alongside my store, Stratfield Hotel, I told them "do what I tell you to do; put your act on when I call you, don't talk when somebody else is performing. You put on your act and you listen to me and do exactly as I tell you". And that's the rehearsals I ever did with them. And we put on an hour's show with the band and clowns and balloons and ice cream and we used to go visit the sick in the hospitals even, and they'd come out there and come in through the windows, and we'd put on a one hour show at St. Vincent's and Bridgeport Hospital and Home for the Aged. We made four or five trips - an hour each one, and three of the years that I did it I had Miss America with me...

SF: Oh, wow.

JO: And I have pictures somewhere of Miss America who came with us; they were sent to us by certain connections that I have. Oh, I also did the Christmas

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JO: lighting program for the City of Bridgeport. And at that time we used to get five to ten thousand people to see it; I put on a big star that I brought in from New York through the Columbia record people and we had these stars who'd sing and we'd have everybody sing together for Christmas songs. And it was very beautiful. I also did that -
Oh wow
Christmas lighting program for the city of Bridgeport.

SF: You must have really been up on Bridgeport.

JO: Well, I was somewhat of a ham actor, I guess, that let me do those things, and I was rather professional, the way I did them. And some day when you have a lot of time, I can open up a book that's about four or five inches thick - a scrapbook of pictures of me the newspapers used to run and so on. So you have a lot of background then that you don't usually get. How many people are you interviewing?

SF: Two so far.

JO: Two? I don't think you'd get the same kind of an interview from the other person you talked to...

SF: Well, I interviewed my grandfather and he came originally from Greece, so it's a little bit different for him.

JO: I mean, you have a lot of background with mine.

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SF: Yeah. It's really good that you're so up on Bridgeportport.

JO: Well, I earned a living here and I was supposed to give something back to the city, so I gave back services in payment for my ability to come here as a stranger and earn a living, build a house, get a wife and I think everybody owes something to the city they live in; give a little effort to help improve the city and make a better city out of it then they're paying back the obligation that they do have for earning a living here, and what kind of a living yyou earn is entirely your own; you either can be successful or have just a job in a factory, which is good; they're all honorable jobs, but everybody should try to give the city a little attention if it's possible. I've been civic-minded.

SF: You said that you were doing a lot of stuff for th Barnum and Bailey -

JO: The Barnum Festival. Well, in the first few years we started the Barnum Festival. We arranged the program of the Festival and then I took over - it was my suggestion to have the hospital visitations shows where we'd bring Festival people in the hospitals and I entertained those people and made

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JO: them forget their illnesses for an hour and enjoy the singing and the dancing and the kidding around that I was able to do, because I'm a little glib in doing that sort of thing, so that's the Barnum Festival. Of course they always have the big Fourthj of July parade - it was early this year.

SF: What was it like, the Barnum Festival?

JO: My wife got the greatest kick out of it because during the course of those parades, because I was an official I rode in an open car and she was my driver with a big sign that said "Jack Olinsky" on the side of the car, designating who was in all the open cars - the officials, and that was an official event.

SF: Oh, gosh. She must have been very proud of you.

JO: She got the greatest kick of her life out of that; she enjoyed it so much. At that time we had maybe a hundred-thousand people watch the parade.

Oh wow

They're not getting that many nowadays.

SF: What kind of things did they have in the parade? Did they have as big a parade as they do now?

JO: Oh, much bigger than they have now. Big parade. And we had floats, we had a lot of bands, a lot of clowns and a lot of cars with notable people like the governor, mayor and the congressmen, the senators,

JC: they all came to be in the parade.

SF: Now I don't think they have as much as they had then.

JO: Now? I don't know. They said it was a pretty good parade this year; I haven't seen it since I've been out of it.

SF: ...have you sen the Black Rock Day parade?

JO: No, I haven't, because I have a little trouble walking; I walk with a cane, and I find it a little difficult for me to get down to places where crowds...

SF: They said it was nice. I think Black Rock's a wonderful little community in itself; it's like a separate part of Bridgeport.

SF: When my cousin writes a letter, she writes "Black Rock, Ct."

JO: Well, a lot of people...a fellow was asking me, a fellow who lives down the street here, he said "why don't we, instead of writing 'Bridgeport, Ct.', write 'Black Rock Point, Ct.'" The people who mail them (the mailmen) will find it; even where we live call it Black Rock Point. Because Black Rock sounds nicer than Bridgeport. And it is nicer.

SF: If they could separate Black Rock from Bridgeport and just say plain old Black Rock.

JO: Well, there's not enough people to have a city

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JO: or a town unto itself. But it's a nice neighborhood in the city of Bridgeport, I think, and I'm not talking about ours, which is an exceptional neighborhood, but by and large I think Black Rock is a nice place to live; a lot of nice homes here, and people own their own homes. There's not much real poverty in Black Rock, I don't think, do you?

SF: No, I don't think so.

JO: So it's a nice area to live if you have to live in Bridgeport; I could practically spit into Fairfield - it's that close to us. Nice to see those sailboats out there.

SF: Where's this closest to - St. Mary's, right?

JO: Well, St. Mary's is right there - you mean the water? If you stand up - see, we have a fence there - it's a stone fence, then twenty feet below is St. Mary's by the Sea - the road, and the Sound is right there. We never get water up this high, but we're about forty feet above the water.

SF: Oh, wow. Was there any problem when we had the rainstorm in Bridgeport?

JO: The last one? We got a little water ...

SF: Were there any bad storms in Bridgeport that you

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SF: remember?

JO: Oh, yeah. I remember the one in 1935. It was a very, very bad storm; it was a hurricane, and we lived in a different place in the North End of Bridgeport and a tree fell down and stopped my wife from getting out of the house; I was in Boston at the time, buying shoes and I flew back in a chartered plane. And on my way back from Boston we went over Providence; it was flooded; you couldn't find Providence and the guy who was the aviator of this chartered plane couldn't find his way back to Bridgeport. We finally got back to New Haven and there was water on the runway in New Haven when we got off, but we got back to Bridgeport, so it was a terrible hurricane. That was 1935.

SF: Never want to live through something like that again.

JO: No, I don't ever want to see it again. I've seen whatever hurricanes we've had in fifty years. That was the worst one; she finally got out of the house; the tree covered the whole front of the house.

SF: Oh, gosh. That must have been dangerous.

JO: It was very dangerous. I couldn't reach her on the phone and another fellow and myself who went

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- JO: there to buy the shoes, he was a wholesaler, and we had to find a place to sleep. We finally slept in a hotel - it was like a warehouse part of the hotel; they had no rooms left and everybody couldn't get home to where they lived. So I've never forgotten it.
- SF: So there must have been some really bad situations in Bridgeport, but there were also some good things about Bridgeport.
- JO: That's right; every city has its bad and its good events that come up; hurricanes, floods, fires.
- SF: What do you think Bridgeport will be like maybe ten years from now?
- JO: Well, I'm hoping it'll be better; I don't have too much hopes for it, myself. I don't think it's going to advance very rapidly in the next ten years. That's my honest opinion.
- SF: But I mean factory-wise, job-wise.
- JO: JO: Well, we're losing factories; I'll think we'll gain some corporate headquarters here in the next ten years. Corporations like General Electric opened their corporate headquarters in Fairfield right off Black Rock Turnpike - you know where it is, I presume. And we'll

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JO: get more corporations here, I think. As it stands now, we're not getting industry, which we could use. I'd like the city to have a progressive mayor, progressive city government to fight for organizations to come here. That's the hope for Bridgeport.

SF: So you think, you would like more employment so that people would be hanging around...

JO: That's right. That's the answer to everything is employment and people earning a decent wage for a decent job, but the people have to do a decent job themselves. They have to have pridea in their city, they have to have pridea ijn the work that they do to make a better city. I don't mean to lecture you, but I don't know how many girls are doing this will get the kind of answers I gave you.

SF: No, you're really doing a good job. When you came here, were the houses the same, did you have refrigerators or...

JO: Yeah, wehad refrigerators. I roomed out with people, then I went in an apartment after the first year and then when I got married I went into a private house. We bought a house to live in, and we lived in that house up until twenty years ago, and then we built this

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JO: house, so I only had two moves, really, in the fifty-odd years I've been here, so I haven't been a mover.

SF: But overall, you wouldn't move, would you, if you had a choice to...

JO: No, this is the last move I'll ever make. My next move will be a permanent move.

SF: So this is it; this is your house forever.

JO: I hope so. The taxes are going up, and the new assessments are difficult for a lot of people to handle and difficult for me, too. Assessments are very, very high; they tripled our assessment on the value of the house.

SF: Do you think that they should have more opportunities for senior citizens in Bridgeport?

JO: Well, there's a lot of things to get involved in if the people want to get involved; there's always things to get involved in.

JO: But do you think there should be more?

JO: Well, opportunities are there; if people want to do something for the city, there's always room for improvement, and there's always room for an opportunity to do a job to help your city be a better city. But you have to want to do it; when you take on an ob-

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JO: ligation you've got to follow your obligation and do the job as best as you know how or what you can do. When I headed the parking authority I made it my business ...I ran the meetings, I did everything I could to do as good a job as I knew how. That's why I lasted fifteen years in the parking authority; the same with the United Jewish Appeal; I was also president of the Jewish Community Council for two years. And you attend the meetings, try to do the best job you can, appoint the proper committees to do the job. If you're going to take on an obligation, follow it through and do the best job you know how. You don't just take it for the appointment that you figure it's an honor to get the appointment and then you forget about it and not show up at the meetings, which isn't fair; it isn't right.

SF: Do you think that young people would do a better job for the city; like if they put a teenager in the governor's place right now, do you think that a teenager or a young person my age would do a better job of running the city than mayors would?

JO: No. I think to be the mayor of a city like Bridgeport you've got to be matured enough to know what the responsibilities are, to know what has to be done to keep your taxes down as low as you can keep them, and

OLINSKY m

JO: do the best job you know how to do.

SF: But I'm saying if you were to put a young person into office just for one day and they were to run the city for one day, don't you think that there would be a big change from...

JO: Well, they do that; there happens to be my nephew, Harold Bresky of this Henry Bresky and Sons that I was telling you about. He was elected the mayor of the city of Bridgeport for one day. You know, every year they appoint one person as mayor of the city.

SF: From the cub scouts or something like that?

JO: Cub scouts, no. He was chosen because he had good marks...so he had the appointment as mayor of the city of Bridgeport for one day, and he was the mayor; he signed whatever papers had to be signed that day and he acted as mayor for one day. It was an experience he's never forgotten. The fellow today, he's sixty-odd years old today. But in high school he received the appointment of mayor of Bridgeport for a day. And it was very interesting to him and he's never forgotten it.

"Excuse me a minute; I never ended"

Sue Flokos/ Jack Olinsky

Good listening skills. Same questions asked several times - be careful. Mr. Olinsky advised her on interviewing techniques - speaking slowly and loudly. You need to practice lead questions. Interview slightly too long. You show good interest. There are more "Oh, wow's than are on the transcript. Be careful!
Sue/ Mr. Flokos

Good rapport. Be sure to ask questions clearly

Sue/Helen Johnson

You show good, personal interest; you listen well. Be careful of "oh, wow's"! A lot of good historical facts. A long interview, but not dragged out.