# Julius Simon Transcript

JULIUS SIMON: – died just before I went overseas in the service in '42. [This is a response to a question about Julius Simon's father, Maurice B. Simon.]

ROSALIND HINTON: Wow. Are you ready? Okay. Hold it. I have to do that little speech again, this time.

JS: I lived with my aunts and uncles after my mother died. We moved across the street. They just lived across the street. You can still see all the old addresses in New Orleans. We lived two blocks from Touro Synagogue on General Pershing [Street], between Baronne and Carondelet. The aunts and uncles lived on the other side of Baronne on the corner of Baronne between Baronne and Dryades.

RH: Okay. So, I'm going to do this little speech again. You ready? Go? All right. This is Rosalind Hinton interviewing Julius Simon at his home, 307 Champs Elysee, in Lafayette, Louisiana. Today is Saturday, July 14th. I'm conducting the interview for the Katrina Jewish Voices Project of the Jewish Women's Archive and the Goldring / Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Julius, do you agree to be interviewed and understand that the interview will be video recorded?

JS: Yes, I do. Excuse my throat; I have a little problem with it right now.

RH: Because you just had some surgery?

JS: No, I was in the hospital as a result of the operation that was performed two days before Katrina passed through. I had scar tissue and adhesions that was causing me a blockage in the stomach, and they were trying to avoid operating. So, they evacuated it through a tube up my nose, down into my stomach, and sucked out –

RH:  And so that's why your throat's a little rough, huh?

JS:  Yeah.  There's no pain, but it's the aftermath of that tube down the throat for two days before they took it out.

RH:  So, tell me what year you were born and a little about how your family got to New Orleans.

JS:  Well, I was born on a Friday, May the 13th, [laughter] of 1921, at Hotel Dieu Hospital on Tulane Avenue.

RH:  And your family – do you know how long they've been in New Orleans?

JS:  My father was born in New Orleans.  His father, that was Grandpa – actually, he had two wives.  He had two wives – he married sisters.  I think it was fairly common.  After his first wife died, he married her sister.  The father's family was – most of the children came by way of the second wife.  There was about four of them.  [laughter] He was pretty prolific.  There was an Uncle Jake and Uncle Sam who was murdered.  He was bringing ice cream to the sisters of the Sacred Heart at the convent every night.  He would bring them ice cream from the concession stand at the theater – you know where Manale's is, the restaurant?

RH:  Yes.

JS:  The next block, my Uncle Sam had a movie theater, the Dixie Theater, that we went to silent movies – I mean, you got some piano player to accompany to the movies, and ultimately, they got sound in there.  He was murdered.  He was bringing back the excess ice cream and Eskimo pies and stuff from the theater to the sisters at the Sacred Heart, and he was held up and murdered on the side street – Cadiz, I think it is.  Either Cadiz or Jena, alongside the Sacred Heart convent.  But that was his side business.  He was an employee, a buyer, and an executive at Maison Blanche department store.

RH:  Do you know what part of the world this family came from?

JS:  Yeah.  Beginning with my father's side –

RH:  What was your father's name, by the way?

JS:  Maurice – M-A-U-R-I-C-E, B, which had no – it was Beans, his nickname – Maurice B. Simon.  He was born in New Orleans, down around, off of Jackson Avenue and Magazine, in that area – that was a heavily Jewish populated area.  The Newmans, who owned Maison Blanche, lived virtually across the street from where his family lived.  He had gone to the Jackson – he went as far as Jackson grammar school, and he finished his secondary at Jackson High School on Magazine Street, near Felicity, one of the [inaudible] down there.  And his family immigrated here from Alsace.  From Alsace, which, acey deucey – sometimes it was German; sometimes it was French.  I mean, they kept fighting over the thing for ages, and he came over; I guess it was shortly after the Civil War.  I guess it was right after or just before.  I don't know.

RH:  Do you know what synagogue that your father, or your father's father –?

JS:  Yeah, yeah.  They were members of Temple Sinai before it moved uptown.  I mean, it was down on Carondelet just a block [or] two up from Howard Avenue.  And they were members – all of his sons were members of Temple Sinai, at least my father was.  Because I think my aunts were not.  They were members of Touro Synagogue.  I was confirmed at Temple Sinai, which was newly built on St. Charles Avenue, because I had attended – they were holding Sunday school classes in the younger grades when I started because they were constructing Temple Sinai up on St. Charles Street, but they were holding Sunday school at Newman, Newman School.  At Newman School, they held the Temple Sinai Sunday school until they could move into the new buildings – the school building and the temple was built.  I don't know what class I was in when I was confirmed, but it was one of the early classes.

RH: What was it like being Jewish in New Orleans at that time, in the ‘30s?

JS: At that time, there was a large Jewish population; they had a whole number of Reform and Orthodox and Conservative synagogues. Both sides of the family had always been Reform. They came over here as Reform from Alsace. They never observed any of the dietary laws or anything. Actually, to be perfectly honest with you, they were Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur Jews. They put on their finery and showed up for that, and that was about it. Before I was confirmed in my younger years, we observed. We lit the Hanukkah lights. We didn’t have a seder. Nobody conducted a seder. If we went to a seder, we went to the community one up at Sinai. I guess they ate matzah on Passover. [laughter]

RH: Now, did you say your father worked at Maison Blanche, or was that your uncle?

JS: No, that was my Uncle Sam.

RH: And so, what did your father –?

JS: My father was a manufacturer’s representative for traveling salesmen. Peddler for piece goods. Fabrics.

RH: Fabrics?

JS: Fabrics, yeah. I mean, because that was the big thing. Ready-made clothes were looked down on – you had dressmakers, or you made it yourself. We went out and bought the material and the pattern and stuff. We would have a dressmaker come into the house and use a sewing machine at the house and make dresses. She'd finish them at home and that sort of thing. But ready-to-wear clothes wasn’t really something that people thought they should have.

RH: Interesting.

JS: He also went into a business along with the traveling. He traveled extensively. He traveled [to] Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, and he was gone all week. I didn't have a close relation with him. He was gone all week from Monday through Friday, and he always came back for the weekend. He never drove [inaudible]. He never drove a car. Of course, when he started out, he traveled by train and went to the livery stable, and got a horse and buggy, and made it to all the country stores, including here in Lafayette [inaudible] and all up and through the area, as well as Mississippi and Alabama. We never played ball together or anything like that; he was out most of the time. We had domestic help, and my mother – he had a chauffeur. When automobiles came into use, he had a chauffeur that drove him. As a sidebar on that, Mae Jane's father –

RH: And that's your wife?

JS: Yeah. Her father, who was a shoe man representing shoe manufacturers – they would share a car during the Depression so as to save money. They would make their routes concurrent. [laughter] But as far as Jewish observance, it was very little, very little. [laughter] I used to get a kick out of my aunts. As soon as bad weather came in, the thunder and the lightning started, they went and dug out a prayer book and opened up a prayer book, which I never knew what that was going to do, but that was about it. [laughter]

RH: She just opened it up?

JS: Yeah, just opened it up. [laughter] I always thought that was kind of odd. But those are my memories of the younger days until I started high school.

RH: Where did you go to high school?

JS: At Fortier.

RH:  Fortier?

JS:  Yeah.  2,500 boys.  No girls.  2,500 white boys.

RH:  White boys.

JS:  [laughter] I went through Fortier High School –

RH: Were you in any fraternities or Jewish fraternities?

JS:  Yes, in high school, I was in SAR [Sigma Alpha Rho].

RH:  SAR.?

JS:  Yeah.  You know of it?

RH:  Well, I've heard a couple other people talk about it.

JS:  Yeah.

RH:  What did you guys do?

JS:  Sigma Alpha Rho.  It was a Jewish fraternity – Reform Jewish.  The Orthodox and the Conservatives belonged to a – for the Jewish Reform; they went in either – in high school, TD. [Tau Delta] Phi or SAR.  The Orthodox and Conservatives went into their own DNS or DAS or something.  I don't [inaudible] Greek letters.  I was disappointed.

RH:  Why?

JS:  Hypocrisy.

RH:  Oh, tell me about that.

JS:  Huh?

RH:  What do you mean, hypocrisy?

JS:  Well, I didn't expect it to be as Jewish as – I mean, with all the ritual of the initiation and that sort of thing – I thought it was going to be a social affair.  That's how naïve I was.  And the pettiness of blackballing people for the silliest reasons that you could ever hear of.  For instance, I had a cousin who was my age.  We went through grammar school together.  We were close.  His father had a market, a meat market.  His father, also my cousin – made sausage, wieners, and they were kosher.

RH:  They were kosher?  [laughter]

JS:  They were kosher.  Supposed to be, anyway.  Behind the market – I don't know what the Board of Health or anything would say about the contraption then.  Anyway, they lived up above the store, the family.  And they blackballed my cousin because they lived above the – he operated a market, and they lived above the store.  They lived upstairs.  That was enough to blackball us.  Okay, that's it.  That does it.  So, I didn't have a whole lot to do with it after that.  I went to the dances.  I went to the dances.  I went to the meetings, too.  We had our meetings up on Lowerline Street near the Tulane campus.

RH:  Did they have dances that were strictly Jewish dances?

JS:  Yeah.  Well, most of the girls were that the boys invited [and] belonged to one of the Jewish "Reform," so-called sororities – LT, of which she was a member – Lambda Tau.  I think that was the only Reform – no, they had another one.

Mae Jane Simon:  DNS?

JS:  DNS was mostly Orthodox. [inaudible] Conservative.  They had their own dances.

RH:  They had their own dances separate?

JS: Yeah, we would have dances at the – I mean, they were – we had dances at the (Orleans?) Club, and we had dances at the old Audubon Tearoom. The social end was fine, was okay, but there was a lot of hypocrisy and everything. I mean, pettiness. So I attended the meetings and that stuff, but I didn't do any rushing or going after pledges or anything like that.

RH: So, you said your mother died when you were young?

JS: My mother's family came from England. They came from England, the name of Hammel.

RH: Hammel??

JS: Hammel. And they emigrated from England – my grandfather, I have – on her side, I have just the barest memory of him; Eugene Hammel was his name. He came over here himself. I think he married while he was still over in England. I'm not sure. My grandmother was Caroline Gratz from England.

RH: G-R-A-T-Z?

JS: G-R-A-T-Z, I think. Just as a little side story of that, Ivanhoe – Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe? Where they had the character in there of the fair Rebecca, the Jewess? Are you familiar with that story?

RH: Yeah.

JS: Yeah, of the Jewess in there. She was one of the ancestors. Her name was Gratz, Rebecca Gratz. This is according to my grandmother's stories. She was able to – I don't know how far back down the line it was, but Rebecca Gratz was the inspiration for Scott's "the fair Rebecca." She was supposed to have been the raven-haired Jewish beauty of the day. Pale skin, black hair.

RH: You were talking though about – you said you really lost both your parents before you were very old.

JS: Yeah. I guess it was a year after I was confirmed. I was about fourteen, I guess when my mother died. She was very active in the PTA [Parent Teacher Association]. She was a lifetime member of the PTA in grammar school, not in high school. In grammar school, she was president and president of what they called the Presidents' PTA, which was made up of all the presidents of the elementary school PTAs. Of the white PTAs, let's say. Yeah. Because everything was segregated.

RH: Right.

JS: Heavily segregated. She was the president of the presidents' club. And she was made a lifetime member and all this. Mae Jane is a lifetime member.

RH: You said your father died, too.

JS: My father died in 1942 when I graduated from engineering school at LSU [Louisiana State University], and I had orders to – greetings to the Army that was deferred long enough that I could graduate. I took the final exams, and I never did attend commencement. I was off to Fort Benning, Georgia. [laughter] By the time I saw my diploma, they mailed it to me. It was at my aunts and uncle's home on General Pershing. The chronology of it was – it was in May when I went into the service. I went into the service, and I went to the 90-day Wonders and got a commission in the Corps of Engineers. The picture is up there, incidentally.

RH: Okay. We'll look at it in a little while.

JS: My ID [identification] card.

RH: Where did you end up serving [during] World War II?

JS: I was on the water in 1942. I was on the water in December on the way to North Africa. I was real jittery, thinking I was going to be sent up to the ALCAN [Alaska-Canadian] Highway if you recall what that is. They were building from Alaska through Canada to make the connection there to transport because of Alaska up there. The ALCAN Highway. That's where a whole bunch of the people were getting posted to, and I didn't want to go there. I really didn't want to go to the South Pacific either. So, I lucked out – I didn't know where I was going until they said, "Go out and get yourself khakis. Go to the post exchange and get light clothes." Well, we could have still gone to the Pacific. I still didn't know until I was onboard ship when they told us where we were heading for. To North Africa.

RH: Well, I was just trying to bring us up a little further. When you came back from the service –

JS: Yeah, in '45.

RH: – and you stayed in New Orleans?

JS: I moved into my aunt's and uncle's, back where I had left. I had left to go to school in Baton Rouge, so I hadn't lived there for eight years or so. I went back there, and I stayed with them until – because I had terminal leave that I had accumulated [so] I could loaf, so to speak, from December of '45 when I was discharged until April of '46.

RH: Wow.

JS: So I did mostly loafing. I did look for a job. People didn't send out resumes then. They got employed in agencies to locate jobs. I got a position pretty quickly with Schlumberger, the oil field [inaudible] as a junior engineer, field engineer.

RH:  And you switched after that.  Is that right?

JS:  After I married because I wasn't staying in one place long enough.  I mean, I think it was part of the policy to see if you were going to be acclimated to that life of continual [moving] because oil fields change and locations change.  Heck, I started out in Jackson, Mississippi – no, Laurel, Mississippi, then Jackson, Mississippi after a couple of months, and then I was sent over to open up an office over in Alabama.  [laughter] No, that was after – I'd been sent over to here – not Lafayette, but Lake Charles, to the Schlumberger office over there, and stayed there for about six months.  Then they sent me over to Chatom, Alabama –

RH:  I know that.

JS:  – to open a Schlumberger office over there.  I was a big shot, and I was in charge of an office, a two-employee office, [laughter] me and the truck driver.  When I came in – I'll never forget this – people over in – you know where Chatom, Alabama is?

RH:  Yes, I do.

JS:  Off near Mobile?

RH:  Yes, I do.

JS:  Well, because there was oil activity in northern Mississippi, Union County, and in there.  I might have the chronology of it a little mixed up on all the places I was shifted to within a period of about two and a half years.  It was no [inaudible], I tell you.  When I got to – I drove the car to Chatom, got to Chatom, drove into Chatom, and I went to the hotel, the Taylor Hotel, which really was a boarding house.  They only had a population of about five hundred at that time.  It was the county seat for Washington [County].  I drove into there, and the Schlumberger panel truck – the truck driver drove the truck, following me in there with the equipment and the wire lines and stuff they used to go down the

wells for surveys.  I went into the Taylor boarding house – I mean, hotel, which was a boarding house – and got a room, and I came back to the porch there.  And on the porch there, there are these characters rocking back and forth on the porch there, and they're these rednecks [laughter] rocking back and forth, and one of them said to the other, pointing to the blue panel truck, Schlumberger on the side, painted across the side of the truck – one of them said, "Must be some Jew bakery down in Mobile.  Schlumberger – they pronounced [it to rhyme with hamburger] – "That must be some Jew bakery," they said, "down in Mobile."

RH:  Welcome to Alabama.

JS:  Yeah. [laughter] So, I stayed there at the hotel – at the boarding house, and I was on call twenty-four hours because the oil was operating twenty-four hours a day – the drilling operations and the wells, so I was on call all the time.  In the meantime, I had hired – the driver of the truck went back over to Houston or wherever the truck had come from, and I got a driver.  I hired a man to drive the truck and to operate the equipment, the wireline, and that stuff because it had electronic equipment in there that recorded surveys on film.

RH:  You made a lot of people I know wealthy up there.

JS:  What?

RH:  You made a lot of people I know wealthy up in Chatom, Alabama.

JS:  Yeah, yeah.  [laughter]

RH:  That's for sure.

JS:  And I was subsequently – in the meantime, I was going with a girl in New Orleans, who was a nice Jewish girl that lived – actually, they rented from my father – they rented

an apartment my father had. It's still standing there, the General Pershing apartments, which was a fourplex apartment building on the corner of General Pershing and Baronne. It's still there. They're condos now, which he built – I think around 1927 it started, and they finished just in time for the stock market to fall [laughter] on October '29. My father had all the debt on that accumulated from building. Incidentally, we lived next door always before my mother died, and we moved across Baronne to my aunts at double cottages, which we lived in one of them, shotgun doubles, but they had built a camelback, what they called a sleeping porch. The stairs went up from the kitchen to the sleeping porch, and it was quite luxurious in those days and had these windows, five windows on each side with exposures to the river and lake breezes and the ceiling fan in it. The apartment house he built was one of the very first apartment buildings that had automatic heating in it – furnace in it.

RH: Oh, really?

JS: He had automatic heating, oil-fired heating. They were occupied by affluent people because the rent was exorbitant. It was fifty dollars a month with heat, furnished, janitors – [laughter]

RH: This is the place on Baronne and General Pershing?

JS: Yeah, it's still there. It was a fourplex apartment. I think it still has, above the door, General Pershing apartments. But I think now it's all just condos.

RH: Condos, wow.

JS: [laughter] In any case, things were going really nice. His business that he was in with another gentleman that operated the business while he was out on the road every

week, really.  They manufactured – Well-Made Jacket and Apron Company was the name of it.  They manufactured – before the linen supply business was in, all of the drugstores and restaurants had coverings, slipcovers that went over the backs of the chairs, and they did those.  They did men's and boys' seersucker suits.  I was a model, myself and my brother – was a model for the seersucker.

MJS:  Knickers.

JS:  – pants for kids, I mean, knickers.

MJS:  Knickers.

RH:  Knickers?

JS:  Short pants.  Three years younger than me.

RH:  Oh, wow.

JS:  Yeah. [laughter] I'm rambling, aren't I?

RH:  No.  You're doing great because you're giving me a lot of history of New Orleans.  I just wanted to get you to where you switched and said you became a different kind of engineer.

JS:  Well, that was a necessity.  I knew her all my life.  I never had anything to do with her much –

MJS:  I was too young.

JS:  – because she was too young.

RH: [laughter]

JS: And I was going, when I got back from out of the service, with the neighbor – my aunt's and uncle's tenants.

MJS: My good friend.

JS: There were four of them – good friends, and she was very good friends. I mean, they were very close, four girls.

RH: So, you decided when you married that you would have to change jobs. Is that right?

JS: No, I took my bride – I was in Monroe at the time, working in Monroe. I had left Alabama, and I was in Monroe. I was living with a Jewish family. They rented me a room and a bath. I was living with them, and there were two boys – they had two sons. Bessie, the mama, was a very ambitious person – a push, push, push person. I mean, you go where the money is. I mean, two of her own boys were instilled that they wouldn't want to marry any poor people if they could avoid it. [laughter] I was severely ridiculed by her when I told her I was getting married [inaudible]. I said, "I'm going to bring her up here after we go on our honeymoon." So we went on our honeymoon to Havana. We flew one of the first planes that were making the run to Havana. That was pre-Castro, of course, so that was 1948. April 17th of '48. I was severely ridiculed by my landlady Bessie for the foolishness of spending all that money to go for twelve days in Havana on our honeymoon. I think she said, "You could start a business on what you spent down there." [laughter] Of course, that was a fortune to her back then. She wasn't a poor person. There was wealth in her family, but it wasn't hers directly. It was relatives, see?

RH: So, tell me now – because your Katrina experience was really different. You went into the hospital just before Katrina. Is that right?

JS: I went to the hospital, as I recall, on the 27th, I think. They diagnosed me – after the X-rays and everything, they didn't know – they were befuddled as to what was causing

my pain. I'd had pain for two days before that. They were befuddled, but I thought it was something I ate until it got real severe, and then I went to the hospital. I had been in the hospital before, at Tulane. I'd had two and a half hip replacements that have occurred. The first one because of severe arthritis in the hips.

RH: Right, right.

JS: I had the first one operated on, replaced with stainless steel and plastic business in 1989. I'd already retired – because I retired in '83.

RH: So, you were familiar with Tulane and went back to Tulane?

JS: Yeah, yeah. That was my hospital.

RH: Right. That was your hospital.

JS: That was my hospital, and my doctors were all there.

RH: So, you went into the emergency room?

JS: Did I go –? Yeah, I went to the emergency room.

RH: On the 27th of August.

JS: Yeah, and then they checked me into the hospital when they had determined that I had a strangulated hernia in my lower intestines. It had latched on to the small intestine, and they had to operate because it was going to cause severe problems. So, they operated to repair the hernia, which they did. I never had any symptom of hernia in my life or anything else, but all of a sudden, I wind up with a hernia.

RH: Right. Right before Katrina.

JS: That was the 27th when they checked me into the hospital. I don't remember when they operated [on] me – I think, virtually right away, they operated on me.

RH: Yeah. I think it was on the 28th they operated.

JS: Probably the 28th, yeah, the morning of the 28th. I moved into intensive care after the operation. I was sitting in intensive care when Katrina came through, so I have no knowledge of what was going on outside – I could hear thunder. I could hear thunder in there. Then the lights failed, and they went on emergency power, battery-operated lights. They were working on me – they did the yeoman's service, I tell you, the nurses and the hospital staff there. That was wonderful. The head nurse was male. He was a male nurse in the ICU [intensive care unit], and they had told me when the hurricane was passing – he said, "We're going to evacuate you. You've been? – what do they call it? – "triaged." They were triaging for evacuation, depending on age and seriousness of the illnesses. And because of my age, which at the time was eighty-four, they were going to evacuate me as soon as they could after the hurricane. But they couldn't tell me where. So I was in there not knowing where they were [my wife and daughter]. I had thought that they would have evacuated as we always did when a hurricane came and would threaten New Orleans. We'd evacuate to Tupelo, Mississippi, where my sister-in-law – my brother's second wife – is from. Her family and everybody was up there. So, we'd been up there, I think, on two or three evacuations before this one, before Katrina passed through. We had been up there for George, and we'd been up there for one or two others. And the Ramada Inn was very animal friendly; they accepted animals in there. Matter of fact, the hurricane, the one that was before Katrina, it looked like Noah's Ark in there at the Ramada Inn. We had everything from dogs, cats, parrots to iguanas. [laughter] We had iguanas up there.

RH: Well, after the storm –

JS: I thought they surely had followed my brother and his wife up to Tupelo. I had some comfort, at least in my mind, that they had evacuated. So, I couldn't get in touch with them. All the communications – I didn't know how to get in touch with them anyway because I didn't have any of my telephone numbers at all. It flooded in the flood. So, I didn't have any way of trying to reach them. Of course, I was too sick in the ICU to even think about trying to reach them. And when the hurricane had passed through on Sunday, Monday morning, which was the 30th, I was taken – put in the back of a pickup truck and taken to the roof of Tulane Medical Center.

RH: They told you in advance that that was what they were going to do?

JS: No. They just said, "You're being evacuated." I said, "Where?" They shrugged their shoulders. They didn't know. So, they took me up to the roof. By that time, all the communications were out. The generators were out. Everything was offline there. And they loaded me and an eighteen- or nineteen-year-old girl who was severely brain – required neurosurgery for some reason. I don't know – into a two-stretcher helicopter, which was an offshore rescue helicopter that was servicing their rigs out in the Gulf. Stuffed me in that [laughter] and flew me just out to the other side of Baton Rouge, where I was transferred from the helicopter into an Arcadia ambulance along with my helicopter mate, the seriously ill young girl. They delivered me over to Southwest Medical Center here in Lafayette.

RH: Do you remember the whole trip?

JS: I remember the whole trip, yeah. I remember the entire trip. I was talking to the helicopter pilot –

RH: Really?

JS: Yeah, I was talking back and forth with them, and I was talking with the – when they transferred me to the ambulance, of course, they had the driver, and they had a

paramedic that was in the back with me and the girl. And I had my gown – no robe. [laughter] I was in my gown, and they took me to Southwest Medical, checked me in – I mean, I was checked in, and they looked at my records on my chest, opened them up, and they said, “Julius ‘Simone’ coming in.” Up here, I’m “Simone." I'm sure my grandfather in Alsace was addressed as Monsieur “Simone” also. I was registered in the hospital, pronounced as "Simone," into the ICU, in the hospital. I remained in the ICU until the next day; I believe it was. I was only in there the first night. They needed the space, the limited space, because they had people coming in that needed to be in an ICU too, and they deemed that I could be transferred into a room. But I had started asking in the ICU if somebody could get in touch with Tupelo, Mississippi, for me. I didn’t have a telephone number to give them or anything – to Ann Collins, which was my sister-in-law’s maiden name. She was quite a bit younger than my brother by twenty years. She's a Christian, and my brother's first wife was Orthodox Jewish. [laughter]

RH: So, were they able to get –?

JS: My brother’s first wife incidentally died of leukemia at a young age.

RH: So, were they able to get to Tupelo? Did they get Tupelo for you?

JS: They never could contact them. They never could do it. I didn’t have anything for them to go on. So, I still thought they were up there, but they weren’t. As Leslie had told you, they were staying around thinking they could find out where I was going. I would have been very angry had I known that. [laughter]

RH: So, what did you feel like when you first saw your family when they came into the room?

JS: I don’t know. To me, it seemed like – I was here on the 30th – came into the hospital up there on the 30th, and maybe it all seemed such a long time because of the separation. But to me, it felt like it was five days. I don’t know if it was that long or not. If

it was five days – I think Leslie told you the day [inaudible].

RH: Right. So it just seemed like you were not in touch with them. You must have been worrying.

JS: I was totally incommunicado with anybody. I was just Mr. "Simone" in the hospital.

RH: And so when they finally walked in the room, what was that like?

JS: I don't know. I don't know if they called ahead to the hospital or not. I don't recall. Did Leslie ever mention? Did they call in? I don't know. Did I have any inkling?

RH: I don't think you did have any inkling.

JS: No, they just walked in. Yeah, they walked into the room there. And I think I asked them, "Where the hell have you been?"

RH: That's a good question.

JS: Yeah. Tupelo? And they said, "No," and then they gave me the story that they told you. [laughter] Of course, Leslie had said there was no place for them to go, and the hospital was kind enough to let them stay in my room and fed them and nursed them and took care of their medical needs there from them, all the while I was in the hospital. I don't know if I was – I was still not moved to rehab until after they got – which was [inaudible] for a while. I was moved into rehab for physical therapy and that sort of thing. I was supposed to stay there until about the 26th of September. But here comes Rita, and they anticipated that they're going to need bed space, so they threw me out of there on the – must have been about the – what was it? – the 22nd or somewhere, 23rd.

RH:  Okay.  Well, Rita is another story.  I'm afraid we're going to run out of tape.

JS:  Well, I don't know anything.  I mean, Rita, we were not affected by Rita, except losing some shingles off of the roof of our house.

RH:  So, we're going to wrap it up.  I am really appreciative of you kind of describing your childhood for us and letting us know about –

JS:  Have we still got any more tape?

RH:  Is there more tape?

Unknown:  Maybe a few more seconds.

JS:  My father met my mother in Birmingham, Alabama.  She was employed as a secretary at Joseph, Loveland, and Loeb; I think it was a department store then –

RH:  It sure was.

JS:  [inaudible] there.

RH:  What was her name?  Do you remember?

JS:  Louise Hammel.

RH:  Louise Hammel.  Okay.  Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]