Narrator: Ed Weinberg
Interview Date: January 7, 1987
Interview Place: Interviewer's home
Interviewer: Priscilla Godeman
Recorded For: Morton Grove Historical Society
Transcribed For: Morton Grove Public Library
Tape Running Time: 42 minutes

INTRODUCTION

Ed Weinberg was born in 1909 in Chicago and moved to Glenview with his family when he was two years old. Although Ed lived in Glenview when he was young, he remembers much about Morton Grove such as swimming in the river and then skating on it when it froze over, from Glenview to Morton Grove boys, and his wife is also from Morton Grove. Mr. Weinberg recalls his wife working at a stand at the airport off of Dempster Street, the unpaved dirt roads in town, and Dr. Drostenfels from Morton Grove as the Weinberg family doctor.

EW: Ed Weinberg

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Priscilla Godeman

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: Ed, it's my understanding that you were born in Glenview. Is that right?

EW: I was born in Chicago -- 722 Dewey Place in Chicago. That's right on Diversey and Clark Street. Right near that vicinity. At two years old we moved to Glenview. The way we moved was by train, and I rode the train, but being two years old, I didn't know what Glenview was. (laughs) We got off at Glenview and my dad had purchased a five-acre tract of land with the old farm house. He bought a white horse with an old wagon. I remember stepping off in the mud puddle with my white shoes. (laughs) My mother was used to brick streets in Chicago, and she wasn't used to mud like in Glenview. We traveled about a mile to our place, and that was . . . I remember the woods and the land that we had.

Q: Your father did farming -- is that what he did for a living?

EW: No, he said at that time Chicago wasn't a place to raise boys, so he moved us out of Chicago, and he worked for the *Chicago Journal*. That was a newspaper. He was a photo engraver, and he would take a train at six o'clock in the morning to get to work. My mother would have to milk to cow in the morning, and he would work until four o'clock and come home on the four o'clock train and he would milk the cow at nighttime. So we had a little land there, and we'd farm it by hand.

Q: Well, how about your grandparents? Were they with you at that time or do you remember them at all?

EW: My grandparents were both -- on my father's side -- was Louis Weinberg and he came from Germany in about the 1870s. I have his citizenship papers here -- he became American citizen in 1881. They were very strict about it, so he possibly was more than seven years. Usually have to wait seven years and you had to learn the English language before you would get a citizenship. So on this application, a questionwas saying, "How now in open court and subscribe the oath required by these laws supported by the Constitution of the United States and to renounce all adjured or alliances with fidelity of every foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, whatever or may particular all alliances he may in any wise owe to Emperor of Germany."

Q: Ed, I notice you have a certificate there from an undertaking parlor. What is that about?

EW: Well, in those days you had to guarantee the funeral expenses. The undertaker was Kertcher (?) Undertaking Company. All the family was responsible for the funeral expenses, so in the contract is my grandmother, Elizabeth Weinberg, William Weinberg, Washington Weinberg, Louis Weinberg, Hedwick Weinberg, Agnes Weinberg, and Rosie Weinberg. They had to guarantee to each pay a dollar per month for 36 months to pay for the funeral.

This included the complete burial, the gloves, the carriages, the funeral hearse -- and the crepe on the front door. They used the crepe on the front

door, which they do not any more. The funerals were from the homes at those days.

Q: Now, one of these children you just mentioned was your father, right?

EW: Yes.

Q: What was his name?

EW: My father's name was Washington Weinberg.

Q: So you grew up in Glenview?

EW: Yes.

Q: And you attended school in Glenview? You want to tell us what kind of a school it was?

EW: It was one of these country schools -- three grades in every room. We had three teachers.

Q: Were any of the teachers from Morton Grove?

EW: I don't know if this Miss Mulvey might have been form -- I think she worked in Morton Grove. I'm not sure, but maybe some of the old timers might remember her.

Q: Well, as you grew up did you get to come to Morton Grove? That wasn't too far, was it?

EW: Well, no. everywhere you'd go, you'd walk. I caddied at the Glenview Golf Club with all the Morton Grove boys, so you got to know the Morton Grove boys -- Art Loutsch and a few more of them. I cant remember names, but Arthur Loutsch was the main one. Oh, John Godeman -- I'm lost for words. (laughter) There were a few more -- oh, the Peterson boys. The two Peterson brothers; they were twins, I believe. And Hammy (Willard Hand) from Morton Grove. That should cover all those boys.

So we would go swimming sometimes and we would usually go to the river and swim. It was a little muddy river. Our chains got full of mud, but we liked the water and we entered to swim.

Q: But it was a clean mud.

EW: Clean. Yes, right, it was just plain old mud.

Q: Well, how did you meet your wife?

EW: Well, my wife I met her at a wedding. Oh, it was in 1936. I met her at John Fichtner's wedding. I dated her once, and . . .

Q: She was from Morton Grove?

EW: She was from Morton Grove, yes. She's an old timer in Morton Grove. I wont tell you the year she was born, because (laughs).

Q: You had told me earlier something about your wife, Helen, that I think is very interesting about the airplane ride. You want to include that in here?

EW: Oh, yes. She worked at the airport at a stand there.

Q: Where was the airport?

EW: The airport was in Morton Grove on Dempster Street. They took her for a ride and they gave her the loop-the-loop. I think she was one of the first girls from Morton Grove to ride in an airplane. I'm not sure on it, but very close to it. But I think that was the last ride she took in Morton Grove, (laughing) because he gave her the loop-the-loop.

Q: Well, now you went through the Depression?

EW: Yes, through the Depression. It was rough. For a few years I went to Wisconsin on a farm and worked up in Wisconsin until the Depression ended. I got halfway through, then I came back and I worked for Bowman Dairy, driving a milk truck, a milk wagon. It was a horse and it was down Irving Park Avenue and we drove all the way to Narragansett.

So my horse's name was Bob, and he taught me the route -- told me every stop. But at first he didn't work with me. So I had to go to the candy store and get him some sugar. I gave him some sugar and bribed him. I'd maybe do a

couple homes, I'd get on the street; I'd say, "Bob, come here! He'd come up. Finally I didn't have to say anything to Bob. When Bob saw me he came up. (laughs) So I did learn -- I had a man teach me the route, but I think I learned more from Bob than the fellow that taught me the route.

Q: Well, how did you get to work?

EW: To get to work I had an old car, and I would drive from Glenview to Kostner Avenue and Irving Park. It's in that area.

Q: Did you ever take the train through Morton Grove? What train was that?

EW: As a kid, my mother would take us shopping once a year or to a circus. That was a big deal -- that shopping. We would pass through Morton Grove. You'd sort of smell a little aroma. The conductor would call out, "Manureville, Morton Grove." (laughs) "Hold your nose." So I got to know that Morton Grove had these big greenhouses, and all this manure that they used for the greenhouses had quite an odor. So it became Morton Grove, Manureville. But I finally ended up in Morton Grove, but they didn't have any more greenhouses, so I could take the odor. (laughs)

Q: Now when did you get married?

EW: We got married -- well, I went with Helen off and on. Then she wouldn't see me for a while, and I'd come again, so finally we started going steady. We got married October 11, 1941. Two or three months later World War II broke out.

Q: Well, let's back up a little bit and tell me what you remember about Morton Grove? Were there streets here at the time or about when did they start getting paved?

EW: I believe in the '20's, around the '20s. some of them did it. A lot of them were a dirt street. I remember when Lincoln Avenue was a dirt street. Dempster was a dirt street. Waukegan was a dirt street. I believe it was after World War I, they started to pave, put pavements in. Waukegan Road was paved -- a two-lane road. Traffic became pretty heavy those days, we thought. But it's changed. (laughter)

Q: Yes, it has. Did you have certain things that you had to do at home?

EW: Well, everybody had his chores. My mother cooked with a wood cooking stove, so we had to get the wood in and split it and saw it. We had the woods there, so we cut the trees down. We all had something to do. Even going to the store. One of the boys would have to go to the store, because no refrigeration and get the meat from the butcher shop. So it seemed like it was in the warm weather it was almost a daily job, because you had no way to keep your perishable foods.

As far as the garden, we had a garden. Each one had it. I belonged to the 4-H Club. I don't know if that was the correct name in those days. I had the button and I was going to bring it and show it to Priscilla. Maybe some old timers will remember what the first name for 4-H Club was. It was Civic something. But I have two starts on that pin, and there's places for cooking -- you'd get a star for gardening and whatever they might ask on the club. I wish I

could remember the real name of it before it -- maybe it was the 4-H. I'm not sure.

Q: Okay. What kind of food did you grow in your garden?

EW: Well, we grew a lot of vegetables -- potatoes. And during World War I, everybody seemed to -- navy beans. That was the thing. My dad brought navy beans and we ate (laughs) navy beans until they were coming out of our ears. But I do remember planting those, and those beans produced real good. We had apple trees also. We sold nothing, because my dad worked. His income was in Chicago in his job, so we had no reason to. Just to have our milk, make our own butter and our vegetables.

Q: I suppose your mother canned.

EW: Yes, she canned, I think, sometimes as high as five, six hundred jars of things. Even sauerkraut. We made our own sauerkraut. Pickles.

Q: Now, when you got out of grammar school, was there a high school near you?

EW: No, we had no high school, so we had our choice to go to Schurz or New Trier High School. Usually there was a leader, and you'd follow the leader. So most of the kids decided on New Trier, so I went to New Trier.

Q: So how did you get there? What transportation did you use?

EW: We had a bus from Glenview to Wilmette. From Wilmette, we had to take the North Shore Electric, so we had a lot of traveling and the cost was high. In these days, it would seem like peanuts, but it was expensive.

Q: But anything was high then. I mean, compared with today, so we cant compare salaries or anything else. Do you remember your first salary -- how much you made, the first salary?

EW: I worked for the Glenview View -- a newspaper, I got twelve dollars a week starting and I got up to fourteen, I believe, or fifteen. Then Depression came along and that changed things.

Q: What kind of medical attention did your family receive?

EW: Well, we had no hospital. We had one doctor in town and he died. But then we had to call up Dr. Drostenfels. He was from Morton Grove. So he would come down either by train or walk or horse. And he'd bring his little satchel, and I remember he always called us the Katzenjammer Kids. (laughter) But he was great on liniment -- Sloan's Liniment. Strong liniment. And then mustard plasters. That was another thing. You'd get a cold and you'd get the hot mustard plaster on you.

We were a pretty healthy family. My mother cooked real good. She didn't skimp on food. You had to eat a little bit of everything. She wouldn't let you get off that table without a little bit of everything. If you didn't like something, and we were kids that liked spinach and nobody else liked spinach. So she was happy about spinach. (laughs)

Q: Well, as you grew older and you started dating Helen, what kind of recreation did you have? Do you remember the nightclubs in Morton Grove?

EW: Well, as far as the nightclubs, I wasn't a dancer. Helen was the dancer. We usually went to shows. We saw a lot of movies. I don't believe Helen and I -- well, we might have went to one or two dances, but she probably felt this guy cant dance very good. Better not take him any more. (laughter)

Q: Do you remember any of the events that took place on the river like fishing or skating, sledding?

EW: Well, yes. We would skate the river from Glenview to Morton Grove and back again. Those are the Sunday afternoons. All the kids, boys and girls, would all skate to -- if the river was frozen, you know, solid. But I don't remember any kid ever drowning or, well, maybe got their feet a little wet. And we'd have a bonfire on the bank when we'd get back to dry out, but we had no modern skates. We had the old-fashioned clamp skates. So, if you had to walk, you'd take your skates off and walk.

Q: Well, do you remember in Morton Grove Hobo Island?

EW: Yes, I remember Hobo Island. That was quite a place. Hobos used to be there and they would bring their canned heat and have their fires and make their coffee. We used to go tobogganing on that little hill there by Hobo Island. The hobos had finally left town. I mean there were very few then. They sort of lost that

spot of Hobo Island. I think the kids maybe took over, and they didn't like it. They probably weren't used to kids making noise.

Q: Were there very many restaurants around Morton Grove at that time?

EW: Well, I don't remember restaurants. In those days it was all mostly taverns. I think Dilg's, you could get sandwiches in there. How much food they served you, I don't know as far as a hot meal. It was a quick lunch. There were some on Dempster Street, but I don't recall the names of them. I never ate in there.

Q: Did you have anything unusual happening to you at Christmas time or the holidays? Did you do any special traditional things?

EW: Well, it was always services in church, which we partaked in as kids. We had some programs to speak. It was very interesting. We got something from the church. They had candles on the trees, so they would light the candles and about six men with buckets of water would stand there in case of a fire. They didn't let the candles burn very long. They said, "Out. They got to go out." And they went out.

Q: You can imagine that today. (laughs)

EW: That's right.

Q: Did you belong to any other organizations?

EW: I belong to the Glenview Masons. I've been there almost 50 years now.

Q: Did you ever transfer over to Morton Grove?

EW: No, I never did. I stayed in Glenview. Seems like you want to stay in the home lodge, you know. I was tempted to at times, but never did.

Q: What kind of newspapers did they have around this vicinity?

EW: Well, that was the *Glenview View*. That was started by Preacher Anderson in Glenview, and it would cover Morton Grove, Glenview, Deerfield, Northbrook, and it was quite a popular paper.

Q: Was there any other paper that you know of in Morton Grove?

EW: Well, the *Cook County Herald* was another one. It covered all the towns. It was more expensive, so they didn't have too much news about Morton or Glenview. It seemed like it was over Arlington Heights way and places like that, so it wasn't too popular.

Q: Well, how about a police force?

+

';I

EW: Well, I can tell you about Glenview's police force. Mr. Ernest Schultz from Glenview, he was the chief of police and he dug the water mains and he did all the maintenance or whatever the village needed.

Q: There was only one policeman?

EW: Well, he had a helper, and he was kind of -- had a trick that he played. Dilg's Tavern in Glenview -- they'd be sitting out there talking and smoking. So Ernst Schultz would get in front of the tavern and a car would come along. Well, very few cars came along. So he'd stand out there and stop a car once in a while and tell them they have no tail light. Schultz had them all guessing in Glenview how he did it. Well, anyway down about two blocks was his helper and he had a flashlight, and he'd flash that flashlight. And that meant that car had no tail light (laughter) until they got wise.

Well, then his one of his boys was on the police department in Morton Grove, and that was Norman Schultz. Now Norman Schultz is retired, and I believe two of his sons are on the police force in Morton Grove. I don't know their names, but they're Schultzes.

Q: How did their fire department compare with Morton Grove?

EW: Well, I tell you. I think Morton was a better one, because we had a big fire in Glenview and everybody that watched the fire said Morton Grove knew how to get in there. They had Joe Gabel. He was fire chief, and he went right into this big building where the Glenview Fire Department, they wouldn't go in there. He had more, more brave men. He took his men and he went right in with them with the hose. They got the fire out, but that was one of the biggest fires in Glenview. It was Dilg's Tavern -- a brother to Dilg in Morton Grove. So it was a

three-story building and the top was completely burned out and they made it into a two-story building. It's still standing in Glenview.

Q: Now this may be before your time, Ed, but do you remember any of your family members being involved in World War I?

EW: My father was ready to go with four children. We had this building in Chicago. It was vacant, so he boarded up the Glenview place and we moved to Chicago over the winter. The war ended the day we moved to Chicago. So he didn't have to go in. We were so glad. My mother didn't like Chicago -- she wanted to get back to Glenview so bad. So we moved back to Glenview.

Q: You were very fortunate there. Do you remember during Prohibition the roadhouses in Morton Grove or anything about them?

EW: Yes. I know there was many of them. There was a lot of these taverns in town. There was one from Morton Grove, and I don't think I better mention the man's name from Morton Grove that run the tavern. (laughs) Do you think it would be a good idea to mention his name?

Q: Well, I don't see anything wrong with it,

EW: Well, the man is dead. Julius Meyer, the one that has the funeral home. He had it with Bernie Hoss. He had a speak-easy in Glenview. I don't know how long he was in the business, but not too long.

Q: Do you remember the W.P.A.?

EW: It was hard to get on W.P.A. I saw them working, and my father had a job so you couldn't get on the W.P.A.

Q: Their sons couldn't either?

EW: No. None of his family, because if your father was working, you didn't get on.

Q: No matter how old you were?

EW: No, I suppose if you were married and you had a family to support, maybe you could then. Because I do know a few that did get on. Everybody thinks, well, it's a little political.

Q: Now we're going to get to World War II. I know that you were involved, so can you tell us a little bit about that?

EW: Well, yes, I was drafted. I didn't enlist, and my first basic camp was in . . . (pauses) . . . it was Rockford. From there I went to Jefferson barrack. They gave us aptitude tests and I was lucky enough to get in the Air Force. So I went to school in Illinois in Belleville. I went to radio school. From there I was sent to Florida, and out of Florida I was transferred to the AT & T and I went to Brazil for a while.

Q: Were you married at this time?

EW: I was married, yes. Helen, we were both sick about it, but what could we do. There was a lot of other married people in there, so I dint get any deferments. But I finally ended up in British Guiana, about three degrees above the equator, which is a hot spot.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

Q: . . . (remarks joined in progress) . . . that you were in a hot spot, so you want to go on from there?

EW: Well, I was in British Guiana then, and we serviced all the planes that went to the European and the east Japan area. So we would take sometimes 75, a hundred planes a day to service. So I was in the radio department and I worked on airplanes for all their radio equipment. It seems like every one had radio equipment coming over. I remember one case of five planes in from over Bermuda and their compasses were all spinning. They didn't know why they were spinning, and I told them -- I didn't realize about the Bermuda Triangle at that time. So I tested all these planes, and they were all perfect. Couldn't understand it. I said it was cockpit trouble. I blamed them. (laughs) Which they didn't like very much. After years when I come back and heard about that, I said I wished I could apologize to these poor guys that said . . . (laughs)

Q: They probably remembered, too, you know.

EW: Well, maybe they remembered it, too.

Q: Well, if you work on the planes and did they take off right away or did they stay there for a while?

EW: They stayed overnight and they'd leave in the morning. There was one more plane came through, a B-17. He had the same trouble with his compass spinning. I checked it out, and he asked me what the trouble was. I said nothing, it was just cockpit trouble. Well, he was a colonel (laughs) and I told him and he didn't like it very well. So I would like some day if I ever saw him, I would like to apologize. I think it was George Gobel. I'm not positive now, but I think it was he.

Q: It was one of the singers on Debbie Reynolds?

EW: Yes, and I told a few more about cockpit trouble, which after their training in the Service, having cockpit trouble was their own mistake, so I'm sorry. If anybody ever hears this tape (laughs), if it told them that . . .

Q: Okay, apology accepted. Ed, were you ever wounded in the Service?

EW: No, I was in the hospital. We set up a transmitter about 500 miles out in the jungle -- I and one man on this island -- it was just a shell beach. So he just

begged me to stay because he was lonesome in there. I said, "I don't want to stay on this island with the sharks swimming around." So we had a __(?)__ plane when we left. The motor wasn't American. It was rented from the British. We took off and we hit one of those sharks and he fell on the wing, and I thought, "If it goes through the propeller we're going to be with all those sharks." But he did fall off. So I could have landed with those sharks. But we didn't even make it back to our base that night. We got back to the base the next day. I had a pain and went to the hospital, and they have me aspirins and everything first, and about two o'clock in the morning they operated on me for appendicitis. I had quite an experience with it. A high temperature for almost a week -- 105 temperature -- for appendicitis operation, so I just wonder if they operated on the right thing on me at that time.

Q: Well, you're still here, so that's what's important. (laughter) After World War II, you came back to Morton Grove.

EW: Yes, I came back to Morton Grove and the dairy called me up. Bornhoff Dairy -- I was working for Bornhoff before I went in Service, because I transferred jobs from Bowman to Bornhoff Dairy. As soon as they heard I was home, they called me up and they didn't give me any time to rest up. So I did go back to work, and I think maybe it was for the best, because you don't know what to do. I mean, you're kind of mixed up when you come, after four years in Service, you don't know what you want any more.

So I did go back, and I worked there for 30, almost 35 years. I did a lot of routes. Park Ridge, Deerfield, Glenview, and I enjoyed them a lot. I got to

know a lot of people. I still see people, and they'll say, "Hello, Eddie," but as far as names, I cannot remember their names.

Q: Well, where did you and Helen live?

EW: When we come back, her mother's house was next door to her, so we moved there. We're still in the same house yet. Now it will be 40 years. Forty years in the same house. So we rented at first until we were able to buy it. We bought it and I remodeled and changed a lot of things, and now it's too big for us.

Q: Now you and Helen have had children.

EW: Yes, we have Bobby. He was born in 1946. He works for the bank here in Morton Grove. He just got married in the last four, three years. He lives over on Crain Street right near us.

Our daughter, LeeAnn, she was born in 1948. She went to school, college for a while, and changed jobs to secretary, and she went to court reporting school. So she was very good at that, and she's now working for a group of lawyers. She's a legal secretary, which her court reporting comes in very handy with her job. She likes it very well. She married a court reporter also.

Q: Well, they lived next door to you for quite a long time, didn't they?

EW: Yes, when Helen's mother died, then they got married and they moved in the house. It was nice to have them close there, but they wanted a different house, a bigger house and they moved to Northbrook. They seem to be very happy, and that's what the main thing in life is to be happy.

Q: That's right. Do you have anything else that you remember that you want to talk about, Ed?

EW: Well, I got involved in the historical society (laughs) and out of one meeting -- had no idea of holding any officer's job, but Bill Sonne at the meeting said, "We're looking for some volunteers for director." (laughs) And he went around looking at me. I think his wife Lornell was behind me, and she took her finger above my head and he said, "Eddie, would you accept the job?" "Well," I said, "for you, I'll take it. I'll try."

So I'll be four years now, and I think I should give somebody else a turn at it. It was really nice moving the house. We worked hard. We all worked hard and we got something done, and I hope that somebody else will keep it up like we have in the last few years.

Q: Well, Ed, it's been very interesting. You've really given me a very good oral history and mentioned many things that I haven't even heard of before, and I'm sure other people haven't heard either. I just want to thank you and God bless.

EW: Thank you.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS