



Interview Summary and Index

Interviewee: Pete Schwager

Interviewer: Joe Zeidner

Date: April 20, 2015

Location: Salt Lake City, UT

Summary

Pete Schwager and parents moved into 1817 Logan Avenue in 1949. He describes the early housing development east of the Gully. He talks about bicycling on the east side of the Gully and shopping at 17th and 17th. The history of the Jewish synagogues to which he belonged is mentioned.

Pete was born in Regensburg , Germany, of Jewish parents. He gives his life story beginning with his family’s departure from Germany for England and the United States just before Jews were not permitted to leave the country in 1939. His maternal grandparents were unable to leave and died in the Holocaust. He tells of the family’s brief stay in England, its migration to America, and settling in New York City followed by Allentown, PA. At the invitation of an uncle in 1944, his father moved the family to Salt Lake City where he became a partner in a clothing business and eventually purchased and operated his own store.

Pete remembers his friend Bill Beck and learning to type at Bryant Jr. High. He talks about getting along with Mormon neighbors and joining in some of their social activities.

Pete tells about his military service during the Korean War which was followed by graduation from the University of Utah in mechanical engineering. His first job was working on the Minuteman Missile project. He ultimately took a job in altitude training for pilots at Hill Air Force Base where he remained until retiring in 1999.

Pete shares his experience as a volunteer for civic and religious organizations. He remembers fondly his mother who was an accomplished weaver, Westminister College graduate, and artist. She passed away at age 101 in 2013.

Pete closes the interview stating that he is fortunate and proud to be an American then reminisces about travelling to Europe with his mother.



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Time	Brief description
00:00:00	Introduction
00:01:30	Landscape. Alfalfa field on 1900 east. Sidewalks, but no curb and gutter, which affects flow of rainwater. (See images 04-06)
00:03:30	Gully. Rides bikes along 1700 south hill for speed. Rope swing on a tree above river.
00:05:00	Shops. 1700 south and 1700 east—sporting goods store. Buys first pair of skis and boots.
00:06:00	Schools. Bryant Jr. high for one year. East high—Highland opens, but stays at East. Graduates 1953.
00:06:53	Church. Two Jewish synagogues downtown: B'nai Israel, a reformed synagogue; and congregation Montefiore, a conservative synagogue. Starts out in reformed, and by 1949, in conservative synagogue. Late 60's, early 70's—both merge into one.
00:09:30	Transportation. Moved to SLC in 1944. Watches city tear out and later put in tracks.
00:10:21	Family. Born in Regensburg, Germany. Nazis gain power. Parents try to leave, but limited spots available. Lucky. Make it to England. Grandfather loses leg in WWI, feels loyalty to Germany. Pete—three years old when leaves country. Comes to U.S., arrive in New York harbor Dec. 31, 1939—disembark on Jan. 1. Settle in NYC. Family finds jobs. Uncle finds job playing organ at synagogue in SLC. Parents start chicken farm. Father takes job in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Uncle invites brothers to SLC. Beatrice Foods buys Uncle's company. Pete starts school in Allentown. (See images 08-09)
00:22:22	Pete's Dad comes to SLC. Father makes parts for Norton Bomb Sight, goes to classes at University of Pennsylvania—boss is pompous Harvard grad. Uncle invites father to SLC (1944) to partner in clothing company. Father accepts.
00:23:14	Uncle runs music at Westminster. Episcopal college, unless uncle converts—no tenure. Uncle's move to California.
00:24:23	Family business—The Golden Rule Store. On 216 South State Street. "Mr. Raymo" sells to father. Successful. Couldn't renew lease. Partners part ways. New store on 45 East 200 South, named "Schwager Store for Men." (See image 07) Move to 212 South State. Father passes away in 1964.
00:27:30	Friends—Bill Beck. Thirteen years old when comes to SLC. Goes to school



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	with friends. Dr. Beck and kids move in—Bill Beck convinces Pete to ski at Alta. Beck daughter lives in SLC—marries Maurice Abravanel; son, Bill, in Reno, NV.
00:30:20	Teachers—Washington Post March. “Relic of days past”: Bryant Jr. high typing class. Wind up “Victrola,” type in rhythm to Washington Post March. Pete types everything today.
00:32:20	Activities—Neighbors. No problems with majority Mormons; weren’t invited to homes, but congenial. Friendly neighborhood. 70’s—neighborhood picnics. Christmas functions at Mormon Ward.
00:35:20	Korean War. Joins army reserve, wants to finish college—rank would transfer in event of draft. Transfers to medical unit, 328 General Hospital, until finishes college in 1958. Korean war over. Finishes reserve years in hospitals. 11 yrs in reserves.
00:38:20	College. Graduates in 1958 from University of Utah. Degree in Mechanical Engineering.
00:39:00	1st job—Minuteman Missile. Accepts job with Autonetics Division of North American Aviation in Downey, California. Project on Navigation System for Minuteman Missile. Hired by Electromechanical Packaging. Works for two years. Life in Southern California—weather and crowds.
00:41:00	Moved back to SLC 1960 to HAFB. Sees advertisement in Utah Alumni Magazine. Applies and accepts job at Hill Air Force Base. Back in April, 1960.
00:42:40	Job at HAFB—altitude training of pilots. Stays in altitude training. 1960 to 1999 works at base and travels for base. Altitude chambers, ejection seat trainers, spatial disorientation trainers—all to train pilots. Air Force buys devices. Aerial tow targets training. Involved with Human Centrifuge. Retires in 1999 at 63 years old.
00:46:14	Volunteering. Mother in American Association of University Women (AAUW). Friend involved in reading room for the blind. Became a driver. Now called “Club Vision”—still drives for them. Helps Cemetery Association. Passover wine sales at Synagogue, helps once per year.
00:48:30	Mother’s Occupations. Moved into house in 1949. Same home. Mom gets job in lotions department at Auerbach’s. Great saleswoman. Demonstrates weaving at Days of 47. Mrs. Beasley (of Pioneer Craft House) seeks weaving instructor—mom works there for 55 years. Takes job at Mary B. Ellen Center for the Blind, weaving instructor.
00:53:05	Father dies at 62. Mother only 52. 1966, mother wants college education. Goes to U of U, irritated by person parking. Goes to Westminster, instead. Enrolls and graduates in 1970.



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00:54:20	Mom's relationship with Westminster. Donated to Westminster—enjoyed time. Mom displays art as alumni. (Major in Art, Minor in Spanish.) Her artwork stolen at end of show. Proud of a “painting worth stealing.” Auctions off paintings for scholarships every year. (See image 10)
00:56:40	Mother dies at 101. 2013. Article in Westminster magazine at age 100. Still auctions off paintings, at least 100 left. (See obituary in documents section).
00:58:15	Final thoughts. Fortunate to have left Germany. Proud to be an American. “Non-political.” But since age 21, never missed a national or local election.
00:59:10	Travel Stories with Mother. Takes vacation with mother through countries behind Iron Curtain, sees horrid conditions. Entire bus claps as drive back into Austria, “back into freedom.” 1966, goes to Israel. Two uncles live in Israel. Fly from Israel to Belgium—Mom uneasy—heads to Germany through Switzerland and Austria. Mom speaks German to locals, visits friends and nanny. Mom more comfortable—both go back four different times; European and, specifically, German travel.
1:05:34	End Time