

Milton Goldberg
An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Ben L. Cohen

COHEN. I am interviewing Milton Goldberg on December 12, 1994. I am happy to be able to interview you today. I want to start with finding out from you, have you been the subject of other interviews on the subject we are discussing today or related subjects?

GOLDBERG. Well, Ben, before we get into the depth of this oral history, I think this is kind of a reversal of positions. About fifty years ago I interviewed you just as you were a young graduate social worker that came from the East looking for a job with the Jewish Big Brothers Association. So now here you are fifty years later interviewing me for this oral history. We have had an interesting association over the years and I am delighted that you are the one who is actually doing the interview. Regarding your question, no I have not had any other interviews in this area before.

COHEN. What circumstances led you into social work as a profession Milt? Tell us a little bit about how you decided to go into this profession.

GOLDBERG. Well, I have to be careful not to get into a long-winded answer to a very simple question, but in many ways it is long winded. It starts back when I was a young Boy Scout living in Boyle Heights. While I went to UCLA, I was a scoutmaster of a troop of the Soto Michigan Center. Incidentally, the executive director of the Soto Michigan Center at that time was Charles Scotland of great fame both in the Jewish community and state and national community in social work as well as the international community. While I was going to school I was scout master and the social workers in the Jewish community kept sending to me kids in their case load who needed special attention, only like a casework approach, to be Boy Scouts. I kind of got an experience of working

with children with problems and also in scouting. I kind of had a feeling that this was the easiest thing for me to be doing. On the contrary, my father wanted me to be a lawyer because I have three cousins who were lawyers in the Rosenthal family, members of the state assembly and, subsequently, judges. I wasn't exactly sure I wanted to be a lawyer, but being a faithful son I took a political science major, but underneath the table I was taking a lot of courses that related to social work. When it came time to decide what graduate school to go to, law school, school of education, or the graduate school of social work, I just chose to go to the graduate school of social work. Having had all these experiences working with a lot of other social workers at the Jewish Community Center, I also had the feeling that I wanted to make a career of working with children. I had visions of being a juvenile court judge someday or something like that. So that is really how I got into the graduate school of social work. I went to Berkeley and thereafter I spent the last fifty-five years working with three different social work agencies in the Los Angeles community. So it was a long answer.

COHEN. That is fine. It was interesting. Your father would have been happy if you had become a judge; he was trying to keep up with the Rosenthal family. Will you tell us more about the positions you held in social work?

GOLDBERG. In the graduate school of social work the recommendation at that time was that the first job you get should be in a family service agency, to get a kind of broad family service experience. I originally wanted to work with children. I first made an application to Vista Del Mar and was interviewed by Joe Bonaparte. At that time there just were no vacancies at Vista Del Mar.

So I took my second best shot and I was interviewed to work as a worker at the Jewish

Family Service with Freda Mohr. She was the executive director who is the “mother” of all social workers in the Los Angeles area. It was interesting because I was the first male to work in the agency. I think I was the first person with a graduate degree in social work. They gave me the job of being the intake worker. Most of the people I saw at that time were homeless Jewish men who had been traveling across the country in boxcars. They would get off at the railroad station, and they needed to get housing. So they came to the Jewish Family Service and then we kindly gave them two dollars and sent them to the original homeless men's service called Ochasnokem. We sent them there and they would get them help for a limited amount of time. The Jewish Family Service was my first experience. It was a good experience, but it didn't last very long because other things happened which I will go into later. But that is how I started, that is where I started.

Then I was very active in the Boy Scouts. I got to know Charles Schottland very well. Charles Schottland became the executive director of the Federation of Jewish Welfare Organizations. At that time I had just gone to the World Scout Jamboree in Holland. When I came back and was going down the gangplank of the ship (they didn't have airplanes in those days) there was a telegram for me. I thought the telegram was from my father. I had run out of money and I wanted to go to see the Rockets. I had been in touch with him and I asked him to send me money. I thought that was a check from my dad. Apparently it wasn't, it was a telegram from the Los Angeles Council of Boy Scouts of America. They asked me if I would stay in New York, not come home, and go to the National Boy Scout Training Center for Executive Directors. I had a ship reservation in New Jersey. I wasn't too enthusiastic about this because I had not

intended to be a professional in boy scouting although I had spent my whole life with them as a volunteer, which was not my interest at the time. So I came back and I called Mr. Schottland on the phone since he was the one who was managing this, and explained that I couldn't make that decision and I would have to come home. Now the reason that Charles was involved in this was that the Los Angeles Council of Boy Scouts was having a hard time financing themselves. They were a United Way agency and United Way had taken a financial nosedive. The chairman of the board of the Boy Scouts came upon a unique way of getting some additional staff. He went to the Jewish community and to a man named Mendel Silverberg of the Jewish Community Relations Committee and asked if the Jewish community would finance the salary of one Jewish young man to be a social worker working for the Boy Scouts. He also went to the Catholic group. The Jewish community at that time and the Jewish Community Relations Committee were very much interested in the whole problem of integrating, not assimilation, but integrating the Jewish community into the overall community. They saw this as a good opportunity to get a Jewish young man on the staff of the Boy Scouts to do a job. After about three or four months of saying no, I was finally convinced by the Jewish community itself and Charles Schottland that this was an important contribution to make in the community and that I was the person that had all the qualifications and training experience for this job. I finally agreed to take the job with one stipulation. I was not going to be a Jewish scout executive. I was going to be a Boy Scout executive with regular responsibilities and I could on the side try to motivate the Jewish sponsorship of scout troops and get Jewish boys to be Boy Scouts. That was agreed upon and I was drafted for that job. That was a good decision at that time.

COHEN. Does that mean you went to New York?

GOLDBERG. Then I went to New Jersey with Mortimer Ship, with a reservation for a one month training course—which, by the way, was the best training I have ever had in social work because it was on the practical level of the learning-by-doing process that the Boy Scouts agreed on. National staff members of the Boy Scouts came as faculty and we went through everything: budgeting, finance, administration; you know the Boy Scouts did it all. We never got much in the way of administration. So these skills were very important for me. It was thirty days and thirty months living in the place. I went to work for the Boy Scouts.

COHEN. Did you work in Los Angeles?

GOLDBERG. Yes. Would you like to know what my responsibilities were?

COHEN. Yes.

GOLDBERG. I had the unique responsibility of being the first Jewish young man to work for the Boy Scouts of America as a professional in the whole country. They had one Rabbi in New York City who worked with some of the synagogues. That was a beginning experience for the Boy Scouts of America, especially for the Los Angeles Council. Because I had this social work training and social work background, they assigned the whole central district, that whole urban area, to me. They only had five executives, so I had one fifth of the county of Los Angeles. We tried to do whatever we could to bring scouting to most of the ethnic minorities. In the black community, they had a district, and so did the Mexican American community. That was my job and I enjoyed that. It fulfilled my mission and feeling about the importance of bringing scouting to these kinds of kids. One of the first things I did, which again was a

wonderful experience, was to employ a Hispanic young man, named Juan Acedevo. I had known him as a Scout. We were Scouts together and he was the first Hispanic ever to work for the Boy Scouts of America. His job was to go out to the Hispanic community and get Hispanic churches and Hispanic institutions to sponsor the Boy Scout movement. I also employed the first African-American man to work for the Boy Scouts of America of Los Angeles. A man named Roger Willis was a former minister. His job was to go out into the black community to get all the black churches and all the black institutions and schools to sponsor Scout troops. I also became aware of the fact that we had involved the ethnic minority volunteer leaders and people into our professional service. I later became director of camping for the Boy Scouts of America, and was responsible for administering four camps. Later on I was promoted to be the assistant Scout executive, which included being the director of camping. The oldest camp and the one closest to town was Camp Arthur Letts named after the man who contributed the camp property. It was in the Hollywood Hills and Arthur Letts was the president of the board of the Boy Scouts for a period as well as being president of Broadway Department Store. The camp was pretty much in that area with most of the campers, white middle-class children from nearby districts. We felt that it was time to employ summer camp director and there was an African-American man named. Hines. He was a very outstanding scoutmaster in a local school. He happened to be the janitor of the school but he was a very good camping person and knew a lot and had a great deal of experience. So we appointed him to be the camp director of Camp Arthur Letts. There were some reservations that bothered some people, but it worked out very well. He succeeded and became accepted by all the people at the camp. That is the early

and minor league history of working with the Boy Scouts of America.

One thing that happened while I worked with the Boy Scouts was that since the Boy Scouts were funded by the United Way, we identified ourselves very much with the United Way and with the Welfare Planning Council. The Welfare Planning Council is an arm of the United Way. The Planning Council was organized by divisions. The agencies which had like functions met together. They organized a group work division and I was a part of the group work division and had a chance there to participate with fellow group work executives, the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fires, the Federation of Churches, and the Federation of Settlements Centers. We became very close and we helped each other a great deal. Out of this came a 1940 experience where the county of Los Angeles was beginning to have Mexican gang problems. Chief Probation Officer Carl Holton organized a gang prevention committee which included him, Dr. McIver, and Captain Denstein who was in charge of the Juvenile Police Department, to try to work on this problem. The police chief's solution was to arrest the leaders of each of the gangs. The rest of us had another approach and that was to do something about providing group work experiences for the younger brothers, the gang members, hoping, in the long run, to prevent the whole thing from spreading and growing. Then, in order to implement that, we organized an agency under the Welfare Planning Council called Special Services for Groups. That agency was funded by the United Way and its major function was to work with gangs and organizations like that so that we took those kids to camp and did a variety of things. Unfortunately if we read the newspapers now we can see that from those small beginning, the gang problem has really gotten out of hand. It is a major problem in this county of Los Angeles. Millions and millions of

dollars are being spent in all kinds of areas. Unfortunately because of poverty and because of drugs and because of guns this is a situation that has gotten out of hand. So it is interesting to reflect upon the current situation and remember the beginnings of this thing way back then.

I also have an experience that is of interest that grew out of my work with Carl Holton, chief probation officer. Governor Warren appointed a Governor's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth. I was nominated to be a member of that, I am sure by Carl Holton, because of our association. I was on that for several years. Our major function was to see what we could do to improve the juvenile justice system, which we did, and to improve on the matter of incarceration of juveniles, which we did in the establishment of the California Youth Authority, taking young people out of prisons and county jails and putting them in a more appropriate setting, and, in general, to work on deterring juvenile crime. This was a great experience and I developed an appreciation of the possibility that when you have smart professional public agency leadership with volunteer involvement, the government can do a lot of good things. I learned to really appreciate government participation since I had spent my whole career up to this point working for non-profit agencies where volunteers were the major focus and the major way of getting work done.

COHEN. That is interesting, Milt. You spent how many years with Boy Scouts?

GOLDBERG. Seven years.

The way you are telling it sounds as if you had a social work position. I don't think that the social work community sees the Boy Scouts as part of the field of social work and yet your experience may be defined by the fact that you had the educational

background and that is where you came from. De you want to talk a little bit about the relationship between social work and Boy Scouts?

GOLDBERG. Well, that is true. As I said earlier, I had this unique experience of being the only person at that time who was a social work trained person, a professional social worker, who came to work for the Boy Scouts of America, who we think of primarily in terms of volunteer scout leaders and of professionals who are not social work oriented but are organization-oriented. They learned how to do a couple of things that are important to every organization. They learned how to make sure they could go out on the market and try to get as many kids and sponsors to be scouts, and they go out and raise as much money as they can to make it possible to hire staff. That gets to be their orientation and their basic philosophy is the philosophy of the Boy Scout movement, which goes way back to the founder in 1910. Much of my life experience is shaped because of my experience as a Boy Scout in Boyle Heights. I was in an integrated troop. That was interesting and had a lot to do with what I was doing. It was an experience for a young Jewish boy living in Boyle Heights who had an Orthodox family and grew up in a community of Jewish kids and people. My experience was of being in a Scout troop called troop 182, which was sponsored by the Euclid Methodist Church. It was near Whittier Boulevard on the edge of Boyle Heights. The Rosenthal family had lived out there: they had the business out there. So we got into that school, Euclid Avenue School, which was not full of Jewish kids. I was one of the few Jewish kids. I got into the Scout troop. Now the Scout troop is where I learned about this business of integration. I belonged to a patrol; Boy Scouts are organized into patrols of kids. I belonged in a patrol that had a Mexican boy in it. It had a black boy in it. It had a

Japanese boy in it. It had me in it, and it had four Anglos. We lived together. We camped together. We did everything together. The whole world to me was that kind of a world. It influenced my thinking about a lot of things that I did the rest of my life. It seems strange but it's how those things happen.

COHEN. Where did you go from Boy Scouts? What was your next thing?

GOLDBERG. I had been working with the Boy Scouts for about eight years. I had been elevated to being assistant scout executive. That was like the number two job. The executive director was a very fine man. The man right under him was great too. They were very nice to me. They gave me all the opportunities to do untraditional things in Boy Scouts because of my social work background. They appreciated it. I had very little supervision and I was allowed to do what ever I wanted to do. Professionally that is always a nice kind of job to have. I became very devoted to the Boy Scout movement and the Boy Scout profession. I could have spent the rest of my life doing that and enjoying it. I really found it very worthwhile.

At a certain point I had gone about as far as I could in the local Council and the Boy Scout movement has a personnel policy that says somebody within the local Council cannot become the executive director. That is an interesting policy, but in order to progress with the Boy Scout movement you have to leave this council or another council and move place to place. My family and I had our roots here in Los Angeles and I did not want to go through that route of two years here and two years there. I didn't want to expose my family and my children, who were growing up. I had an early experience and an early connection with the Jewish Big Brothers in a strange kind of way. I was a camp counselor at Camp Sowanas in Wrightwood when the Jewish Big Brothers and

some of their staff brought about ten kids up to the camp for a week. I looked after those ten kids, because they were Jewish kids and I was Jewish. I made some connections with some of the staff people who were part time social workers in the Jewish Big Brothers; they didn't have full time people. Later on I worked with another camp. They rented the Council of Jewish Women's Camp, Camp El Nido, up in the Hollywood Hills one summer. I was employed by the Jewish Big Brothers in the summer time while I was still going to college. I was like a program director. I had two years at Camp Max Straus. I was the director on leave from the Boy Scouts because Charles Schottland and people they knew about brought me over. Another thing that happened was that I was a member of the camp committee of the Jewish Big Brothers before they opened Camp Max Straus and was on a search committee to go out and find a camp and so on and help establish it. I got people involved through the camping business and through the Boy Scouts with the Jewish Big Brothers. At the point where I was having questions about whether I should continue my career in the Boy Scouts, the Jewish Big Brothers president said they had just opened a camp. The camp got to be more than my predecessor could handle: a very nice lady who was a volunteer, sort of a society lady with no professional background training, but who did a good job as an executive director. The camp was too much for her. The board decided they wanted to find a new executive. They came to me and asked me about how to do it. I was a little bit leery because of the experience I had in the Jewish Family Service, working for a secretarial agency. I was very honest and frank about that. Then, alter a while, I considered the fact that here was an agency that had three things that I liked a great deal and had a lot of experience with. It had a volunteer organization, and I am

accustomed to volunteers with the Scout Leaders Association. It had a camp and it also had the possibility of a professional social work component. This is part of my experience and part of my training. I finally decided that I would accept that, though very reluctantly. I hated to leave the Boy Scouts. They were very upset about it. I did that and became executive director of the Jewish Big Brothers.

COHEN. You stayed there for the rest of your career right?

GOLDBERG. I stayed there from about 1945 until about 1986 and then for about four or five years after that I was a consultant for the Camp Max Straus Foundation. This was an endowment fund that we had set up many years ago to fund Jewish Big Brothers and the camp. It was what we call a rainy day fund. So that is how I really got into the Jewish Big Brothers.

COHEN. Well, Milt, it is interesting that I started working for Jewish Big Brothers in 1947 and you started in 1945, and when I started you seemed to me as if you had been there forever. It was like a place that you had established yourself and yet it was just two years. It is hard to believe that. Tell me a little bit about what you found at Jewish Big Brothers and what happened during your reign at the agency and how did it change or what kind of problems did you encounter in trying to achieve your goals?

GOLDBERG. When I came to the Jewish Big Brothers it was sort of like an amateur organization. There was very good work with the volunteer Big Brother program and they had just opened up their camp. Having come from a professional background, I approached the agency as a professional person, a professional person oriented to casework and group work and to administration of agencies which I learned at the Boy

Scouts. I was putting to good use all of my academic training, my professional experience my Boy Scout experience, and work with volunteers, fundraising, public relations, and the like. One of the first things I recognized that I had to do was to put together a professional staff. They had one social worker, a person who didn't have a degree in social work. I pretty much had to let him go. I started recruiting staff with MSWs and historically there had never been a person working with the Jewish people that did not have an MSW. One of the first workers I employed was a fellow named Moe Belkin. He had just come from the east, from a graduate school of social work. Then I hired another young man who came from USC who had a degree in social work: Henry Weiner. Then the third person I hired was a young man named Ben Cohen. He had just come out of the graduate school of social work. One major contribution I made in the very beginning was in setting up the policy that only MSWs would be employed at the agency. This was quite a revolution because as a big brother agency, of all the other agencies in America, none of them employed MSWs as their workers. They took on former school teachers, former county welfare workers, former big brothers, and the like. I also changed our relationship very much with the Big Brothers of America. We had a this unique situation: we had to be careful not to alienate us from them. We had to be very certain about how we participated because this was not the pattern that necessarily had to be followed by all big brother agencies in the country.

Next we wanted to have a clinical social work core of service and get out of the business of just assigning a big brother and doing nothing else. We got involved in getting a director of the volunteer Big Brother service. Ben Cohen was the first director. We developed a strong volunteer committee of board members for that service. Then

we organized, with the help of a very interesting gentleman, Dr. Oscar Reiss. Oscar Reiss was the pediatrician of all first Jewish families in Los Angeles. He had a bent towards pediatricians being educated and trained in the field of mental health and approaching not just the physiological problems of children, but also their psychological problems. I called upon him and knew that he had status with our own board: whatever he said would go. I had developed the technique already of knowing that as a professional I had to be very careful about these new and outreaching approaches to social work and the agency. I was able to find key board members and key volunteers in the community who could carry the ball for me. That was my way of doing it. So we organized a parent-child counseling service with a group of MSWs, we developed a counseling service for the child and the family. This was family-oriented, we are pioneers in the family-oriented treatment idea. We did not believe in treating children alone, which was the approach of the child guidance. We believed in treating the mother and the boy simultaneously. Many of our families were fatherless families. Every client that came to our agency, whether for camp or for volunteer programs or their parents were with us, got the benefit of work with professional clinical social workers. They underpinned all of the three services. That was unique.

COHEN. Let me ask you something. You mentioned that you had the boy and his mother. What about the father, if there was a father?

GOLDBERG. If there was a father we brought the whole family in, the mother, the father, and the boy, and social workers dealt with them in clinical interviews. We also did something that was interesting administratively. Most agencies developed their statistics in terms of the number of clients they served. I, being sort of goal-oriented,

changed our statistics in terms of kinds of interviews. We reported on the interviews each caseworker had and we identified the weekly interview, the intensive kind of treatment, and with all the members of the family. We then developed a program that if there was a father in the family, and this again was a unique approach, he had to come in to the interview with the mother and the child or we would not see them. This was a unique theme because historically to that point in all social agencies in America, the mother was the one who came to the social agencies with the child and the fathers never involved themselves. We developed techniques for involving the father and treating the fathers and that always moved things along much faster. Again, those were pioneer efforts.

COHEN. What kind of obstacles did you find when you tried to introduce new ideas? How did you deal with them?

GOLDBERG. Well, I was focusing on professional outcomes. I was measuring how many people we served and how well we served them. There were other people, especially some board people, who got interested in the numbers game. They always wanted to know how many this and how many that. They were concerned with numbers and to them the bottom line was how many little brothers do you have, how many kids in counseling, and how many kids at the camp. I was focusing on numbers too because I was a very pragmatic and practical person. I was also focusing on the quality of our service. That was always a hard thing to get across and to get acceptance and to get lay people to go along. For example, in the volunteer big brother program I had insisted that just as we see and supervise the families that we give very close supervision to the volunteer big brothers. We see volunteer big brothers as if they

were clients and help them do their job in a very formal and professional way. There was a lot of resistance of that because traditionally it also included the national league movement. They didn't bother with that. They just said: "Well, you are the big brother and you are the board: get going and whatever happens does and maybe once a year we will discover whether or not you still are the big brother." But we knew each month whether this big brother was active and how many times he had seen his boy and what was going on. There was resistance to all these things. Fortunately, they soon discovered that these things were a better way to serve the clients and that we focus on outcomes and had a finance budget and statistics and the like. So I was very fortunate. In my Boy Scout experience, one of my special interests and one of my special delights was in working with volunteers. I learned to work with volunteers. In fact I considered my board like my caseload. I considered my president to be my number one case. My job was to help them do the best possible job. I was constantly involved in subtle kind of training; informal training of board members and officers as to what is the best way to provide this kind of services. I got a lot of loyal support from them. I was very fortunate and had many good presidents who were very supportive of these ideas. Every one of them, with few exceptions, was very supportive. So it made it possible to do all these new and unique things which were more expensive. They cost more money. We were investing a lot of money in professional staff. For example, when I came to work with the Jewish Big Brothers, the budget was \$20,000. I remember very vividly, \$8,000 was for the volunteer Big Brother program and that was paid for by the United Way. The Camp Max Straus budget was not financed by the United Way, so the board members, who loved raising money by the way-- that was one of the things they liked the most--

raised \$12,000 just to run the camp. We had a budget of \$20,000. Just the other day I got a report on the status of things in the Jewish Big Brothers so I can keep up on what they are doing. I looked at the budget. The budget of the Jewish Big Brothers Association today--obviously they are providing more service--but it is one and a half million dollars.

COHEN. That is a little bit of a change.

GOLDBERG. Half a million dollars of that comes from the United Way and the Jewish Federation Council. One million dollars of it is raised by the board of directors through fundraising and all kinds of events and the like. They did a very good job in funding it. Two-thirds of the budget now is funded by the agency itself and its fundraisers. Again, there is the unique point here that I want to make. Budgeting and finance is an important part of any agency. Most of us as social workers are not too good in that field. That was not one of my major interests, but I have learned over the years how to do it. One of the things we discovered--I learned this in the Boy Scouts--the Boy Scouts said things like yes, United Way is funding us; we are not going to take any government money because we don't want to get involved. But you want to make sure that you are not dependent totally upon the United Way. If something happens, we want to deal with it. So they started to do some fundraising by commission of the United Way that supplemented the United' Way budget. The Jewish Big Brothers had the same concept. We started fundraising real early. We had to swim carefully in-between the United Way and the Jewish Federation Council in our fundraising. We had this philosophy that we are not going to depend entirely upon United Way. Unfortunately, as of about three years ago, like all the United Way agencies, they

received a fifty percent cut in budget. All Jewish Federation Council agencies received about a twenty five percent cut. The government had been funding an awful lot of agencies, had been cutting back so that most agencies now are in a real bad place financially because they became too dependent upon these funding agencies and the government. I know a lot about this because I know volunteers and I have been one since I left the Jewish Big Brothers and the United Way and the San Gabriel Valley Council. On the Allocations Committee and I have listened to all of the stories. If the agencies were like corporations they would be in chapter 11 bankruptcy. The Jewish Big Brothers and Camp Max Straus were an exception. We did not accept or go out and get public funding for our agency. Right now, Jewish Big Brothers is one of the few agencies that has the funds to carry on its program. Even though they had the cuts, and they do not need to cut staff and do not need to cut programs. They are able to carry on. That is a nice thing to know at a time like this. That sounds great.

COHEN. So tell me, the Jewish Big Brothers when I started, and during all the time that I was there, provided big brothers for boys. I understand that there are now big brothers for girls. How did that come about?

GOLDBERG. Historically we were a boys' agency. I guess for me it was very convenient because I knew a lot about boys' agencies. I came from the Boy Scouts. That was simple for me, and I had no problem about girls, but I figured other agencies could take care of them. I did not resist it, although some people think I did--I had no problem. I like girls. I have a daughter and I have granddaughters and so and so. So I have no problem. About half way through, or a little more than half way through my career, we decided to bring some women on the board. We brought two women. They

were very active in the United Way. I knew that they were very active in the Council of Jewish Women. They were real top-notch people. They were the first two women on the board and then we brought on more and the board is now coeducational. Then when Stanley Gerston became director of the volunteer Big Brother Services he came up with the idea that girls also were fatherless and need a so-called father image. Everybody accepted that for boys but they didn't exactly accept that for the girls. Also they said, to just send them over to a girls' organization. We didn't have a girls' organization. We didn't have Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles at that time. They started a program, a pioneer program, and a unique program. This was Stan's favorite program. They did it and it turned out to be very successful. It was always a small number. Talking about coeducation, Camp Max Straus was for boys only for a long long time. Just before I left, a year or two before I left, when Shell Weinstein became the camp director--he was on the professional staff--had a little girl sign in. He was a big brother to a little girl. Shell had a lot of conviction, as did some of our people on the board. This started especially after women were on the board. They wanted to know why camp wasn't provided for girls. As of about 1984 Camp Max Straus became coeducational. Seven cabins were up on the hill for boys and five cabins on the flats for girls. Then we reorganized the physical plan, added facilities and showers to make it comfortable for the girls. So we are in the business with all of our programs now of serving girls and boys.

COHEN. Serving girls and boys at camp at the same time?

GOLDBERG. That is right. There is no problem, although I wondered about that at one point. I had my reservations, but I was convinced it was the right thing to do. It is

working out very successfully. I give them a lot of credit.

COHEN. What did you find most gratifying personally and professionally in all the years of your working in agencies and the community?

GOLDBERG. That is a hard question to answer. I can make a broad generalization first, then maybe get into specifics. When I look back upon my career, starting in 1937, I feel totally fulfilled. I don't think many people can say this but I can. I am totally fulfilled about my career and my experience. I was able to do what I really wanted to do and I enjoyed every minute of it. I remember about ten years ago the big thing work was articles in the social work journals about burnout and burnout and burnout. I loved going to work everyday with the Jewish Big Brothers and the Boy Scouts of America. It was very rewarding and it met all of my professional needs as well as my ethical needs. I have a sense of having made a difference for so many people. I remember talking to board members who were very, very successful people financially. They headed big corporations; like Sydney Rosenberg, who headed a 150 million-dollar corporation. I remember working with those people all my life. A lot of them were not really happy about how they were working, what their job was, what their employment was. They had all the money in the world and all had problems with their children because they couldn't do what they should be doing for them. They were so busy earning all their money. A lot of people go through life not really enjoying what they do. I have enjoyed it and I also feel that I made a difference and have left behind some legacies. It is good to see them working out so well. I am very proud of how the Boy Scouts are doing now, for example. About 75 percent of the territory and the people they serve are kids in ethnic minorities and they are doing a very intensive job of getting ethnic minorities to

enter the Boy Scout program. I am on the economic committee of the Boy Scouts. Ever since I left the Boy Scouts I was on the camp committee. I am now the chairman of the camp research committee. Last year we sent 700 Boy Scouts to camp: poor kids, black and Mexican mostly. We sent them to camp on camperships with \$140,000. Last year the Los Angeles Times Camp Fund, which I founded, raised and distributed one million dollars and sent ten thousand kids to camp. I get a great feeling when I see the outcome. These are the legacies that I feel are left and the Jewish Big Brothers is running better than ever. It is a better organization than when I was director of it. They are fundraising, they are programming, they are increasing, and they have two hundred volunteer big brothers. When I was there they only had maybe one hundred and fifty. They have enlarged the number of kids that go to camp. They send about eight hundred kids to camp every summer. Well, these are not monuments or buildings, although I have built my buildings at Camp Max Straus; these are legacies of people. The kids are being served. I guess I have a real sense about kids who need service, getting it. One of the problems I am having right now is that the state of childcare services has deteriorated a great deal. The level of poverty of children has increased a great deal. It is somewhat disturbing that the state of children in America is much worse now with single parents, no fathers, poverty, and so forth. I had thought, when I was a young graduate out of the School of Social Work in 1937, that by this time those problems would be solved. They are not solved; and on the other hand there are a lot of kids who get a lot of help as a result of our activities and our experiences.

COHEN. What is your feeling now about the measures that the social work profession can undertake to affect programs or policies that would be more or less effective if

pursued by the social workers?

GOLDBERG. Well, I made reference to that earlier. I think the status of childcare in this country is going downhill. The social work profession has to do everything it can even though it is in a very bad climate now politically. We need to try to hold on to everything we have done so far. We need to try to improve services to children by both the public agencies and the private agencies--to feel that funding from public agency services to children and funding to private agency services to children would decrease and you would be in trouble. We have a real role and I am very proud of the National Association of Social Workers. I remember when I was a young social worker joining, being on committees in the local chapter of the NASW. It was a very modest meager organization, but it has grown into a very effective, efficient, very capable organization and politically has a lot of clout and I would hope that they would continue to grow and continue to carry on their political activity for childcare services.

COHEN. Very good. What significant changes have you observed between social work practice today and social work practice when you went into the field?

COHEN. Well, that is a hard one. I think, as a profession, much is due to the NASW and other various departments, there has been this great movement into clinical social work and clinical social workers are being better trained and they are used better and they are being rewarded for their services much better. Social work is a great profession and I am very proud of it. I think we all have a right to be very proud of our profession. I think we are much more effective than we used to be, but we are working in a very difficult culture and a difficult environment, currently at least. I just think we have to be more aggressive politically because professionally in terms of our training

and our skills I think we have come a long way in improving our skills through the graduate schools of social work and through the professional groups. I think we just have to be more effective politically because what is the use of having all these skills if politically we are not allowed to use them. I remember I hoped some day that the Children's Bureau of the Child Welfare Department of the County of Los Angeles. I remember the days when there was nobody over there that had an MSW and we worked so hard to get MSWs in there hoping that they would give real professional services to the thousands and thousands of children who were being separated from their family. That is also another thing that concerned us. Our focus in the Jewish Big Brothers was to try to help children stay in their families, not working on pushing them out into foster homes and orphanages. Our goal was to help these boys and these girls by working with their families and help them stay in their own home. By and large, with all things being equal, this is the best place for a kid to be if his mother and dad are doing all the right things. That was a philosophy that I brought to the Jewish people and I hope that we can get back into that and do more with that.

COHEN. I hope you are right. Now are there some things that you neglected to talk about that you want to add at this point? Please feel free to do so.

GOLDBERG. Yes, there are several. We talked about some of my great satisfactions and one of them was starting about 1947. We developed a relationship with USC's Graduate School of Social Work for field placements of two graduate students in the Jewish Big Brothers who wanted experience and specialization in clinical work. This is a very helpful thing to the agency. Also the agency is very proud of the fact that many of these trainees, or graduate students, we hired later on. They had come to work for

us and also most of them went out and worked in the field of social work, both public and private, and were very successful and we feel that this service of the community is an extension of professionalization of the Jewish Big Brothers Association. Then we also are proud of the fact that Jewish Big Brothers was responsible for organizing with three other big brother-big sister agencies in the community. Our board members organized the Catholic Big Brothers way back in the early days. Later on we organized for non-Jewish, non-Catholic people: the Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles, which is a very successful agency carrying on very good service. In most recent years we helped organize and helped train the staff of the new Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles. The present executive director is on our staff as a volunteer. Some of our board members were also on the board of the Big Sisters of Los Angeles. Most recently we developed a cooperative relationship with the Big Sisters of Los Angeles where there are certain mothers who wanted their daughters to have big sisters. I was just talking about the three other Big Brother-Big-Sister agencies. The last one I was talking about was the Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles, which is a very successful agency and is doing very well. Some of our board members are on their board. We now have an arrangement with them where Jewish girls who are related to our agency through their brothers and mothers can be provided with big sisters by the Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles and we now have about fifteen or twenty of them.

Also I would like to speak about another area that grew out of my Boy Scout camping and professional responsibilities and my experience as the administrator of Camp Max Straus through the Jewish Big Brothers. Having these professional responsibilities for camping at both agencies, I became active in the early stages when I came to the Boy

Scout LA Council because a man named Wes Clussnun was very active in the American Camping Association and involved me in that organization with a local chapter of the Southern California Camping Association. Through the Welfare Planning Council, I became chairman of the first camp committee of the Welfare Planning Council and later became the general manager of the first national meeting of the American Camping Association held in Los Angeles. As a result of that national meeting here in Los Angeles, we prevailed upon the Welfare Planning Council through its director of Research, Genevieve Carter, and her assistant to make a self-study of all the camps and the campers in the greater Los Angeles area. This took about two years and came up with a very excellent report. That became the basis of establishing within the Welfare Planning Council a Camp Bureau with a professional social worker as director of the Camp Bureau to implement the recommendations of the Camp Bureau. This led to the establishment of the Times Campership Fund about forty-one years ago with the Los Angeles Times, the United Way, and the Southern California Camping Association; they now have been carrying on for forty-one years a very successful and unique campership program to send minority kids to about one hundred and twenty camps in Southern California who meet the requirements and the standards of the American Camping Association. Last year, as I said previously, ten thousand kids went to camp as a result of that program, so I have a long history of identification with the American Camping Association, both locally and nationally. At one time I was the secretary of the American Camping Association and a couple of years later I was the vice-president of the American Camping Association representing the non-profit social agencies. The American Camping Association also includes private camps that are for-profit. This has

been a very rewarding experience and also a great learning experience, participating in these national conferences.

I would also like to make a brief reference to something that I should have included when I talked about my professional Scouting experience. Do you remember I indicated that I have been active as a volunteer since I retired from the Jewish Big Brother?

While I was working with the Jewish Big Brothers, I was invited by the director to organize and chair the first committee on Scouting for the handicapped. Now they call it Scouts with Disabilities. I agreed to do that because I had experience working with handicapped kids at Camp Max Straus and felt that was a wonderful opportunity.

Scouting is a great opportunity for handicapped kids to feel self-esteem and to be part of a regular group and not to be isolated. One condition that I had on taking that job, (I always have conditions when I take a job) was that they would provide me with a professional who would do nothing but work on this Scouting for the handicapped; they did. He was a very capable young man and he busied himself for several years organizing Scout troops in all the schools where handicapped kids were. We also focused on trying to get handicapped kids who could handle it to be mainstreamed in regular Scouting. That was a very rewarding and satisfying experience for me. As a result of this, I was invited to be a member of the National Council of Boy Scouts of America and to be on their committee on Scouting with the Handicapped.

Subsequently, I became the vice-chairman of that committee and that committee enlarged the whole focus of getting Boy Scouts all over America and all the Councils into the Boy Scout movement. Statistically there are large numbers of kids that are in the program. They are all kinds of kids; kids that are physically handicapped, blind,

deaf, spastic, learning disabled kids, kids who are in juvenile delinquency institutions, etcetera. That has been another one of my great experiences. It fits in very well with my early experience in the Boy Scouts and working with the Jewish Big Brothers.

Finally, I would like to talk about the outcomes. I have always been oriented to process and organization. I looked at organization first and I learned management and executive directorship and how to do all those things. I got a lot of training in that field. I have always been interested in the so-called outcomes.

COHEN. What happened to these kids that went to our program; our camp program, our volunteer Big Brother program, our parent child-counseling program? Where are they now? We have been through this now for about fifty-five, almost sixty years.

Where are they?

GOLDBERG. They are in the community and it is very rewarding to find that there are these kids out in the community, in the Jewish community and the non-Jewish community. They are successful in all kinds of places and ways. We run into them from time to time and they always remember their experience at Camp Max Straus.

Many of them have told me that the best week of their life was when they went to Camp Max Straus. We can feel the outcomes of the program. One of the best outcomes is that to our board of directors of the Jewish Big Brothers we brought in two counselors, people who worked at our camp as college students. Marv Rosenberg became chairman of our camp committee and went to UCLA. Dave Schwartz, who is a physical education person at Roosevelt High School, came to work for us as a young teacher. He later became president of the Jewish Big Brothers Association. Then we have board members currently who were former clients of the agency. I won't mention the names.

To top it all we have what is the final chapter of this whole thing of outcomes. Our current president of the Jewish Big Brothers Association is a young man named Bob Waldorf, who incidentally was supervised when he was a little brother by Ben Cohen. Bob Waldorf's mother was a client at our agency when he was a small boy. He had a big brother assigned to him and they continue to have a life long relationship. He went to Camp Max Straus. I remember him very vividly and he was a very active boy. He became a volunteer big brother. He became a member of the board and last year he was elected to be president of the Jewish Big Brothers Association. So here you are. Those are the things that are living things. It is not the budget or the staff, it is what happens to people.

There are two other people I would like to make reference to. I remember a young man, Harry, who is now a Senior Federal Judge. That is the next step below being a Supreme Court judge. He is deeply involved in the community and helping the Salvation Army and other projects. He is on our advisory board. I remember when Harry was a young boy and I remember vividly some of the real difficult problems he had. So he ends up being a Federal Judge. Then I remember another young man whose name is also Harry who worked in the kitchen. He was a client of ours. By the way, Judge Harry also worked at the camp in the kitchen and became a counselor. We helped him go through law school by working summers. Then this other person is Harry Andler who worked in the kitchen and later on became a counselor and worked his way through college. Harry Andler, for many years, was a superintendent of a Los Angeles Unified School District. Of course, I am mentioning people who are in the service sector. I guess I could mention people who are very wealthy and very rich and on and

on. So that is kind of a way in which my closing statement is talking about these people.

COHEN. It is great to hear it. I have one other question. Do you have any personal papers, pamphlets, or items that can be made available to researchers and other scholars that you are willing to contribute to our Social Welfare Archives project?

GOLDBERG. Well, the Jewish Big Brothers Association has in their files a whole series of annual bound books of the minutes and all the activities of the agency. They might be available some day when they finish up what they are doing now. The last two years they have been involved in doing oral histories of some of the people who have made contributions and they are in the process of putting it all together. Perhaps when that is all finished up we might approach them to see if they would like to store those in our archives. Now in the Boy Scout thing, I had suggested on several occasions about getting together a committee and doing a history of the Boy Scouts. They haven't done that yet. I myself have dictated an oral history of my experience with the Boy Scouts for the past fifty or sixty years, but it is a very personal kind of thing. You might want to approach the Boy Scouts again because they have been in business since about 1920, a long long time. Maybe you can get them to do something about their oral history. Other than that I have cleaned my files out and thrown my papers away.

COHEN. Well Milt, it has been a pleasure to talk with you and I think this is an important addition to our oral histories and thank you very much.

GOLDBERG. Well, it is a little different approach. It is kind of a group work approach and it is a private agency approach, as you say. Nobody thinks of the Boy Scouts as a social welfare agency, but it is: I enjoyed and I appreciate your taking the time for this.

