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**Jewish Historical Society Oral Histories
Maynard Barker & Caroline Barker Ayers (17 April 1995)**

**By Ellen Callahan
May 2020**

Link to audio file:

<https://archive.org/details/JHS12SideA>

Summary Information

Tape Number: JHS 12
Length: 47:23
Interviewer: O. [Orvil "Ozzie"]¹ Zuckerman
Interviewee: Maynard Barker (1923-1997)
Caroline Barker Ayers (1920-2001)
Date of Interview: 4/17/1995
Place of Interview: Maynard Barker's residence on Ewingville Road, Ewing, N.J.

In this interview, Maynard Barker and his sister Caroline Barker Ayers discuss their family history and reminisce about the various businesses and friends in the Union Street Neighborhood where they grew up in the 1920s and 1930s

Mr. Barker's grandfather, Jacob Barker (1856-1924) was born in Lithuania. He first came to the Trenton area in about 1886 and remained there until at least 1892. He and his first wife Bella Zeltt (1865-1892) had Martin Morris Barker in 1887. Bella Barker died in August of 1892. Shortly after her death, Jacob married Bella's sister, Yetta Zeltt (1873-1945).

Jacob and Yetta had Reuben Barker (1893-1971; Maynard's father) while living on a farm in Perrineville, Monmouth County. By 1895, they had returned to Trenton and had five more children: Katherine Barker Popkin (1896-1958); Bessie Barker Rubin (1899-1948); Abraham Gary Barker (1901-1948); Moses Barker (1903-1973); and Mary Barker Perry (1904-1894).

Reuben Barker married Etta Strauss in 1915. The couple lived in Trenton where Reuben made his living selling livestock he purchased from area farms and fish he caught on the Delaware. The

couple had three children: Alice Barker Kadis (1917-2004), Caroline Barker Ayers (1920-2001) and Maynard S. Barker (1923-1997).

Maynard Barker owned and operated the Trenton Meat Farm for many years until he retired in 1994. He was predeceased by his wife Anne Theresa Rinaldo Barker (1924-1989) and left three children: Gloria Barker Zuczek Dunn, Bette Marie Barker Epstein and Richard Barker.

¹ <https://njewishnews.timesofisrael.com/ozzie-zuckerman-chronicler-of-jewish-trenton>

Key Word, Concept, Person	Time Stamp
Barker, Reubin - Maynard's father was born in [Perrineville] ¹ , NJ	:36
Barker, Jacob - Maynard's grandfather was born in Lithuania	:46
Lithuania - Maynard's mother and father came from the same area in Lithuania	:56
Barker, Jacob - Immigration to the U. S. - Maynard's grandfather, Jacob Barker came to the US in 1880 and settled on a farm in Perrineville	1:08
Barker, Jacob - married two sisters. The first sister died and he married her sister.	2:12

¹ Mr. Barker initially says Pinestone but later corrects this to Perrineville. His daughter Bette Marie Baker Epstein confirms Perrineville is correct.

Barker, Rubin - his siblings: Martin (step-brother from first marriage) then Rubin, Kattie, Gary, Monty, Mary, Bessie and Phil	2:44
Barker, Rubin - accident - When Maynard's father was 13, he lost an arm in a railroad accident when he and several other children were playing in the rail yard in Trenton	4:08
Barker, Rubin - work on the farm - Maynard assumed that his father left the farm when he was young because he never talked about what he did there as a boy ² .	4:50
Union Street, Trenton - family lived on Union Street, Trenton [by 1895]	5:12
Barker, Jacob - work - peddled fish and livestock	5:25
Barker, Jacob - death in 1924	5:54
Barker, [Etta Strauss] - Maynard's mother Etta Strauss came to the US in about 1902 from Lithuania and lived around the corner from the Barkers with the Alberts, her Aunt Tille [Theresa] Strauss Albert and Jacob Albert	6:19
Barker, [Etta Strauss] - Immigration to U. S. - Maynard's mother told him that her parents wanted to send a child to America. She was not the oldest, but she said she would go, so they "put her on a boat and sent her to America."	6:58
Albert, Jake and Israel business - owned the ice factory on Bloomsbury Street in Trenton	7:27

² Bette Marie Barker Epstein used the 1895 New Jersey Census to confirm that the Barkers are in Trenton by that time and notes that their names were mis-written as Barkle

Albert, Jake and Israel business - would also buy suet from local butchers and as far away as Atlantic City. They would sell this to rendering factories that turned the suet into soap.	7:40
Soap making	8:11
Albert, Israel - sued the Ford Motor Company over “an invention” and won	8:21
Rosenburg, Phyllis Goldberg - she was Jake Albert’s niece [daughter of his sister] and the wife of Leon Rosenburg	8:56
Barker, Rubin - Siblings - most stayed in Trenton	9:50
Barker, Katie - married a Popkin and moved “down south” - her children were Rufus and Gary Popkin	10:03
Barker, Rubin - Siblings - Katie, Mary, Bessie, Martin, Moses (Monty), Phil, and Gary	10:29
Barker, Rubin - Siblings - most married local people	11:14
Ayers, Caroline Barker - Maynard's sister joins the conversation	12:16
Baker family businesses: Barkers were involved in “a million businesses.” Phil and Gary were partners selling fruit, car parts and during WWII, began renting apartments.	12:05

Barker, Monty - during the depression trucked chickens up from “down south” and then got into the carny [circus games] business, then he sold used furniture on Hermitage Avenue and real estate	13:18
Barker, Martin - had a fruit business in New Brunswick	14:04
Barker, Phil - only one of Maynard’s uncles that was still living at the time of the interview; all of the aunts have died	14:11
Barker, Maynard - siblings - Alice Barker [Kadis] and Caroline Barker [Ayers]	14:30
Barker, Maynard - Jewish education - He went to the Hebrew School and also sometimes had tutors. He recalls having a woman tutor which was “unusual” for the time	15:14
Kaplan, Joe - an attorney who tutored some children on South Clinton Avenue	15:55
Linowitz was a rabbi	16:14
Barker, Maynard - Jewish education - again mentions the woman tutor	16:24
Barker, Maynard - Maynard went to the “People of Truth” synagogue on Union and Full which was run by Jake Albert	17:09
Union Street Neighborhood Businesses - what follows is a lengthy discussion about the various shops and people who ran them mostly located on Union or on nearby streets	17:24

Horse Stable - next to Fry's Bakery	19:50
Sax family - Joey and Charlie Sax; Arthur Sax-Wilner & Irving Sax-Wilner who were general practitioners and then became eye specialists	23:20
Dr. Stein - Sax-Wilner brothers took over Dr. Stein's office	24:52
Barker family - lived at 71 Union and their grandparents, Jacob and Yetta Barker lived next door; discussion of their deaths	25:35
Union Street businesses and families - Continue to discuss families and stores on Union	26:40
Union Street Neighborhood Schools - Parker School on Union Street, McKinley School on Mercer Street, Junior 3 and Junior 4	32:25
Children's activities - Played in the street, went to the Y [probably referring to the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations], playground on Bloomsburg, and the alley behind the school, where they would roller skate and play handball	33:46
Juvenile Delinquency - Interviewer asks if any of the children got in trouble with the police - neither Barker recalls anyone getting into trouble; neither remembered any crime	34:33
Crime in general - Caroline states that no one locked their doors, but Maynard points out that there wasn't anything to take	35:11
Radio - A radio was one important item they had and this was not until 1927; they would often listen to the fights	35:20

Fighters of the time: Jack Sharkey, Jack Johnson	35:35
Racism - Both Maynard and Caroline recalled that everybody played together; they played with “schwartzers” [Yiddish term for African-Americans]; different nationalities; there was no racism. Caroline comments: “We weren’t brought up like that. Everybody was a friend of everybody’s.”	35:54
Transportation - Model T Ford - First car in the family was Reuben’s 1927 Model T Ford	36:18
Transportation - Before they had a car they would go by horse and wagon to Lambertville and Pennington and it would take them a week to go from farm to farm and gather things to sell	36:47
Barker, Reuben - work - was also a fisherman and kept a big pond in the backyard where he kept fish from the Delaware to sell. The Delaware used to be full of Carp	37:12
Cohen Family - Reuben worked with someone in the Cohen family - discussion about which Cohen family	37:50
Zuckerman, Ozzie - discusses his family background.	38:55
Citron- Byer - scrap business - Zuckerman’s family worked for Citron-Byer	39:59
Byer, Abey - scrap business	40:05

Prohibition - father of Sam “the Plumber” DeCavalcante’s - discussion of DeCavalcante’s father being involved in smuggling “booze”	40:29
Byer, Abey - moved to Cincinnati where he eventually made a fortune in the steel industry	41:00
Barker, Gary - discussion of Gary Barker’s singing abilities	41:46
Dr. Phillips - discussion of Dr. Phillips who was a “skin” doctor on West State Street - his father was a butcher	42:40
Horowitz - also had a butcher shop	43:26
African-Americans - discussion of several African-Americans (“schwartzers”) ability to speak very good Jewish	43:45
Union Street Neighborhood Businesses - Continuation of listing businesses on Union	44:23

References

Albert v. Ford Motor Co., Court of Errors and Appeals May 4, 1934, 172 A. 379 (N.J. 1934)

Asbury Park Press, 19 January 1997, p. 28 - Obituary of Maynard S. Barker

Ayers, Caroline Joyce Barker - Find a Grave, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 20 May 2020), memorial page for Caroline Joyce Barker Ayers (6 Sep 1920–6 Jan 2001), Find a Grave Memorial no. 175063923, citing Colonial Memorial Park, Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey, USA ; Maintained by Mark London (contributor 47271866) .

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Barker, Martin Morris - Martin Morris Barker Draft Registration - Registration State: New Jersey; Registration County: Middlesex; Roll: 1712215; Draft Board: 1Ancestry.com. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Marriage Index, 1885-1951 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

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Barker, Yetta Zeltt - Find a Grave, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 19 May 2020), memorial page for Yetta Zeltt Barker (Feb 1873–16 May 1945), Find a Grave Memorial no. 70884260, citing Congregation Brothers of Israel Cemetery #1, Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey, USA ; Maintained by Mark London (contributor 47271866).

Epstein, Bette Marie Barker [daughter of Maynard Barker] 4/20/2020 e-mail to Ellen Callahan titled “Re: Interview with your father.” Ms. Barker provides genealogical information about her father and his family.

Federal 1920 Census: Westfield, Union, New Jersey; Page: 6A; Enumeration District: 0171; FHL microfilm: 2341125.

Kadis, Alice Barker - Find a Grave, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 20 May 2020), memorial page for Alice Barker Kadis (31 Dec 1917–20 Nov 2004), Find a Grave Memorial no. 175058258, citing People Of Truth Hebrew Cemetery - Clover Section, Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey, USA ; Maintained by Mark London (contributor 47271866).

New Jersey 1895 Census, Mercer County - Trenton - 4th Ward - Page 38 [According to his great-granddaughter Bette Marie Barker Epstein, Jacob is mistakenly listed as Barkle rather than Barker.]