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**Jewish Historical Society Oral Histories
Arthur Garfing (7 February 1995)**

**By Ellen Callahan
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Link to audio file

<https://archive.org/details/JHS16SideA>

Summary Information

Tape Number: JHS 16¹
Length: 25:35
Interviewer: Ed Spiro
Interviewee: Arthur Garfing² (May 22, 1904-November 6, 1997), owner of United Meat Company
Date of Interview: 2/7/1995
Place of Interview: Greenwood House

This interview focuses on Arthur Garfing and his experience as a young immigrant to Trenton from Poland. Mr. Garfing arrived in Trenton in 1922 when he was about 18 years old. Several of his father's sisters had moved to Trenton, including the wife of Max Moskowitz who gave him his first job. His parents remained in Vilna, where his mother died in 1937. His father was killed by the Germans in 1940, a fact he did not know until several years later.

Arthur had a variety of jobs including working in a dry goods store, a bakery, and the Japanese Silk Garment Factory owned by Issac Goldberg. Eventually, he finds work at the Trenton Packing Company where he learns to butcher. He goes into business with David Sussman at a shop on Fall Street. There are disagreements between the men and eventually Arthur takes over the store completely. He continued to expand his company, and at one point employed 10 butchers. In 1968, Arthur sold the business to his brother-in-law Issac Kushner.

¹ Researchers should note that it is often difficult to follow Mr. Garfing's story because of his thick accent

² Although the metadata lists the spelling Garfink, other sources found on Ancestry.com confirm Garfing as the correct spelling

Key Word, Concept, Person	Time Stamp
Ed Spiro provides an introduction	:17
Arthur Garfing arrived in US in 1922	1:18
Discusses relatives that were already in the area	1:29
Max Moskowitz married Arthur Garfing's father's sister	1:30
Another relative was Issac [White or Wright?] who had a store on Union Street	1:43
A third relative [name could not be interpreted] was a lawyer and a judge	1:49
Arthur Garfing arrived in US in 1922 and lived at 113 Union Street	1:54
He left his family in Europe - discusses his Mother's death in 1937 in Vilna	2:14
Ed Spiro's [the interviewer] family came from Hungary	2:23
Garfing's father left Vilna and was killed by the Germans in 1940	2:31

6,500 Jews were killed in 7 days and Arthur did not know for 2-3 years that his father had been killed.	2:34
Before going into the butcher trade, Garfing held a variety of different jobs.	2:58
His first job was with Max Moskowitz who had a dry goods store on Union Street	3:14
Then he worked for Max Heisner	3:28
He also worked for a bakery [Fry baker shop?] driving a horse; Arthur told the owner he knew about horses, but he was actually afraid of them. "Luckily, the horse knew the route."	3:40
He begins working for Issac Goldberg at the Japanese Silk Garment Company.	5:16
Arthur talks about the various ways he made money [difficult to understand] including selling someone else's boxes and barrels that were used to ship goods to the Japanese Silk Garments Company.	5:57
He went to night school and met the Young/Yoskovitz brothers who had a store [wholesale meat store].	6:32
At night school he also met Sol Feldman, who had a grocery store and they became friends.	6:55
Arthur, Sol and the Young/Yoskovitz brothers would speak Jewish and got to know one another.	7:14

The Young/Yoskowitz brothers owned the Trenton Packing Company	7:40
Eventually, Arthur gets a job working at the Trenton Packing Company, learned the business and then went into business for himself	7:49
Arthur starts his own business in 1925 - on Fall Street with Sussman [probably David as evidenced by 1927 Trenton City Directory]	8:20
His butcher shop was not a kosher shop	9:00
Arthur was married in 1929 - 1930 [to Minnie]	9:10
Interview briefly interrupted	9:22
Discusses his partnership and troubles in the beginning. [It is difficult to understand exactly what happened but have the impression that they worked together for a while, and then the partnership fell apart.] Eventually Sussman gave him the business “for nothing” because he had a “guilty conscience.”	9:40
Arthur was needed for the store because he was good with languages and could speak Slavic and Russian.	10:37
Once he had full control, he tore down several houses next to the store in order to expand.	11:00
At one point, he employed ten butchers.	11:18
Max Gross was “a good man” to Arthur and they used to collect for the [Jewish] Federation together.	11:40

Discuss the [Jewish] Federation which began in 1925 and money he gave the Federation and collecting from others for the Federation.	11:50
He sold the shop in 1968 to his brother-in-law Issac Kushner for \$15,000.	12:40
Interviewer and Arthur discuss Levi Kushner who married [Myrna] Silverstein - Levi was Arthur's nephew through his wife. Arthur goes on to discuss the fact that Levi's mother died shortly after giving birth to Levi. Arthur and his wife "adopted" Levi and took care of him. [Searches in the US censuses revealed that Levi's mother was Issac Kushner's first wife who died in 1929. Issac then married Arthur's wife's sister and eventually moved to Trenton with his family].	13:17
Arthur bought a house on West State Street in 1930, Issac Kushner lived on West State Street as well.	13:49
Arthur discusses how Levi Kushner was "very rich" [Levi Kushner owned and operated the Budny Fuel Oil Company]	14:07
Discusses Issac Kushner renting the meat store from him and there were lines up to the corner.	14:14
Arthur had one of his brothers work with him as well. He had him deliver meat in a car. [What follows is difficult to understand].	14:54
Loueffler's Bologna is mentioned	15:31
Arthur was one of the first residents of Highgate in 1960 [Highgate is an apartment complex in Ewing, New Jersey]	16:07

Arthur discusses his children [difficult to understand, the 1940 census reports that at the time he had a daughter Vivian and a son Carl].	17:02
Interviewer asks Arthur to talk about Trenton in the early years when he first moved there.	17:38
Arthur comments that people were very poor.	17:51
Talks about costs: bread, dinner, barber shop.	17:58
Reminisces about buying food from a pushcart	18:21
Arthur discusses his grandmother being a very pious woman [difficult to follow what is said.	18:40
Discusses Nathan Bayard and his family	19:30
Shows the interviewer a picture of friends playing cards: Chip Bernstein, Harry Levy, Harry Wilkin, Hyman Wilkin, person who built Colonial Gardens [could not understand name], Herman Spiegel, Harold ?, Nathan Bayard, Abe Moskowitz	21:16
Talk about Max and Abe Moskowitz	24:47

References

1923 Trenton City Directory

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/165426479> [Levi G. Kushner]

1940 Federal Census: *Trenton, Mercer, New Jersey*; Roll: *m-t0627-02437*; Page: *7A*; Enumeration District: *27-140*