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**Jewish Historical Society Oral Histories  
Dr. Joe Miller (17 May 1995)**

**By Ellen Callahan  
May 2020**

**Link to audio file:**

<https://archive.org/details/JHS24SideB>

**Summary Information**

Tape Number: JHS 24  
Length: 25:44  
Interviewer: O. [Orvil "Ozzie"]<sup>1</sup> Zuckerman  
Interviewee: Dr. Joe Miller<sup>2</sup>  
Date of Interview: 5/17/1995  
Place of Interview: Unidentified

In this interview, Dr. Joseph Miller discusses the Stacy Laundry and the Sanitary Linens Supply Company of Trenton. Stacy Laundry [the Laundry] was co-owned by Dr. Miller's father-in-law Louis B. Shipper, Harry Lev and Louis Hoffman. Mr. Shipper and Mr. Lev also owned the Sanitary Linens Supply Company [Sanitary]. Both companies were formed in the 1920s and were initially located on East State Street and later moved to Ward Avenue. Dr. Miller discusses how many of his in-laws were in the laundry/linen rental business in various locations including Brooklyn and Utica, New York as well as Harrisburg and Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The Laundry was first established to take in household laundry in the Trenton area but eventually did have some commercial clients. The Sanitary rented merchandise including linens, aprons, uniforms, etc. to restaurants, businesses, barber shops, beauticians and military installations with clients in locations including Trenton, Princeton, Ft. Dix and McGuire Air Force Base.

The Sanitary was family owned and run in the beginning, but was eventually expanded and needed other employees. At some point [possibly the 1950s] the owners discovered that some of the managers were stealing from the business and it was at this point Dr. Miller [a chiroprapist] sold his practice and came to Trenton to work for his father-in-law. Dr. Miller discusses how the businesses grew, the rise of unions and the eventual influence of organized crime.

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

<sup>2</sup> Various sources confirm that the name is Miller, not Milner

<b>Key Word, Concept, Person</b>	<b>Time Stamp</b>
Introduction - Orvil Zuckerman provides an introduction - requesting recollections about the Stacy Laundry	:18
Stacy Laundry owners - Joseph Miller learned about Stacy Laundry [the Laundry] when he married Selma Shipper whose father Louis B. Shipper and Harry Lev were half owners of the Laundry. The other half was owned by Louis Hoffman, whose son Joe Hoffman ran the Laundry. The Laundry was established in the 1920s.	:49
Stacy Laundry location - The first plant was located on East State Street and then Ward Avenue off of East State Street and Logan Avenues	1:38
Sanitary Linens Supply Company - owned by Shipper and Lev was in the same building as the Laundry	1:58
Sanitary Linens and the Laundry - separate businesses but Sanitary's merchandise was cleaned by the Laundry	2:13
Sanitary founded in the 1920s	2:33
Routes for the Sanitary - included Princeton, Fort Dix, McGuire Air Force Base, New Hope, PA, Flemington and just outside of New Brunswick	2:41
Routes for the Laundry - about 6 routes all local to Trenton	2:56
The Laundry's clients - took in household work in the beginning but eventually took on some commercial clients	3:17
Sanitary's clients - dealt with retail, supplied restaurants, barbers, beauticians, hotels. Rented kitchen towels, uniform pants, aprons, shirts, jackets, etc. frocks	3:35

Sanitary's clients - supplied practically every store in Princeton and the Princeton University student owned eating clubs (similar to fraternity houses) on Prospect Street	4:06
Interview interrupted by Dr. Miller's dog	4:29
Prospect Eating Clubs at Princeton as client - Dr. Miller assisted at the Proctor eating club during a Harvard [football] game and homecoming weekend and described the weekend as being "wild"	4:44
Linen business problems - people would ruin or steal the rented merchandise - 20-25% of the overhead was replacing merchandise	5:38
Linen business was controlled by "the big boys" in certain areas of the country	6:11
Shipper family members also in the linen business – Mrs. [Louis B.] Shipper had several brothers in the business - Brooklyn, Utica, and her sister Jennie Bernstein's husband was in the business in Harrisburg, PA; Mr. Shipper's sister was married to a Mr. Stener in Allentown, PA in the business and they all became very wealthy	6:21
Marty Abenhoff in Utica - another family member, was a "great Zionist" who had apartments in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and raised funds for Israel in Utica	7:03
Michael Miller (Dr. Miller's son) - played professional basketball in Israel and became very close to Marty Abenhoff who died ca. March 1995	7:29
Michael Miller - director of athletics at the Jewish Community Center for several years after he graduated from Lafayette University	8:05
Izzy Bistrom - worked for Pilgrim Linen Supply Company and Capital Linen Supply Company [which were also in Trenton] and was a good friend of Joe Hoffman	8:33
Izzy Bistrom - was married to the sister of a Mr. Freedman who owned Pilgrim	9:04
American Laundry - was owned by Mr. Lavine; his son-in-law Herman Crown, his brother Marty owned Lincoln's Supply Company	9:23
Current owner of the Laundry and Sanitary - Discussion of who owns the companies now - none are owned by the family	9:40

Sanitary - bought by two "Italian boys from South Jersey"	9:55
Blakely Laundry - "up on Brunswick Ave" was the only laundry left and they were involved in a scandal	10:16
Stacy Laundry branches or "satellite" locations" - had 6 locations, Hermitage, West Trenton, near Ewing High School, New Hope, Cass Street, Plant Street, Hamilton, Ft. Dix, McGuire AF base	10:33
Stacy Laundry branches or "satellite locations" - management of the satellites; Miller took care of some of the stores; Ron Berman's father ran one.	11:17
Stacy Laundry branches or "satellite locations" - managers and employees stealing from business which is why Dr. Miller sold his practice and began to work for Mr. Shipper	12:19
Carl Shipper (Louis Shipper's son) - bought Hoffman part of the Laundry	13:36
Photographs of Sanitary and the Laundry - Interviewer asks about possible photographs for the archives	14:09
Christmas parties for the local children - held by Sanitary and the Laundry every year	14:29
Jewish Historical Society of Trenton Slide Show - Interviewer discusses upcoming slide show that the Archives is having on June 25th and the previous one held on December 11 (had 200 people) and how they hope to continue the discussions and help people search their Jewish roots	15:15
Union activity and employee relations	16:48
Teamsters Union and the Laundry Workers Union organized the Sanitary; Dr. Miller describes the Teamsters as being "pretty rough"	17:05
<b>Miller asks if the following info will be off the record and Zuckerman replies that "it won't go any further then this"</b>	17:18
Union corruption - union leaders use to "schemer" the [shop] stewards and the union representatives were "paid off"	17:29

Employee relations - workers taking advantage of breaks “stole time” from the company; if workers were criticized for this, they would go to their shop stewards.	17:43
Teamster drivers - described as being “cocky” and were stealing merchandise to sell it and it became a “lousy business”	18:26
Corruption among drivers in linen supply companies - Drivers from different companies would steal merchandise, quit their jobs and then go into business themselves using the stolen merchandise and became “outlaws.” If they had financial trouble (did not have the cash to replace merchandise) they would then sell their businesses, sometimes back to the people from whom they had stolen merchandise. There were many local “racketeers” that did this.	18:43
Organized crime involvement in the business - Someone [unclear who] came to Lou [Shipper] and Miller and wanted to get on the payroll. He was looking for some legitimate income and promised that in return, no one would try and steal their routes. Miller did not want to have any part of it.	20:01
Italian Americans - many were barbers, beauticians, all knew each other or were relatives.	21:15
Stacy Laundry new owners - was purchased by the same people who purchased Sanitary [people from South Jersey].	21:45
Joe Miller - Miller went back into practice in 1967, at first working part time in his practice and also for Sanitary, worked day and night for years.	22:33
Business ethics - Miller talks about how various companies no longer looked out for each other. At one time, competitors would look after each other, trade off accounts rather than try to steal accounts. Outlaws could easily undercut business by underbidding costs.	23:23

## References

1930 Federal Census, Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey, page 22A, Enumeration District 0068

The National Archives in St. Louis, Missouri; St. Louis, Missouri; *WWII Draft Registration Cards for Pennsylvania, 10/16/1940-03/31/1947*; Record Group: *Records of the Selective Service System, 147*; Box: 1720

*Prominent Families of New Jersey, Vol. 1, page 840. William Starr Myers*