



**Jewish Historical Society Oral Histories
Jennie “Jimmie” Randelman Josephson (7 Dec. 1994)**

**By Ellen Callahan
July 2020**

Link to audio files:

<https://archive.org/details/JHS29SideA/JHS+29-+side+A.mp3>

Summary Information:

Tape Number:	JHS 29
Length:	Side 1: 44:12 [Note: side 2 is empty]
Interviewer:	O. [Orvil “Ozzie”] ¹ Zuckerman
Interviewee:	Jennie “Jimmie” Randelman Josephson (1899-1997)
Date of Interview	12/7/1994
Place of Interview	Mrs. Josephson’s Apartment in Trenton

This interview centers on Jennie “Jimmie” Randelman Josephson and her life growing up and living in Trenton. Jennie’s mother’s family came to Trenton from Razina, Bessarabia/Romania in the early 1890s. Her uncles Isaac and Joseph Finkel came in about 1892, opened a dry goods store and then sent for the extended family.

Jennie’s mother Lena Finkel (1879-1969) married Nathan Randelman (1874-1969) in 1898 and after living in New York City for a brief time, settled in Trenton where Nathan was a clothing manufacturer and then began dealing in textiles. The Josephsons had 7 children: Jennie, the oldest; Francis/Fannie (born ca. 1905; Max/Milton (b. ca. 1907; Louis (b. ca. 1909); Buellah/Belle (b.ca. 1912; Evelyn (b. ca. 1914) and Arthur (b. ca. 1821).

Jennie discusses her childhood and some difficulties she and her friends had being Jewish in a mostly Christian school system. She also talks about attitudes towards working women, recounting how she resigned from a teaching position rather than being fired because she was to be married.

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

Jennie married David S. Josephson (ca. 1893-ca. 1979) in 1925 and after attending the New York School of Social Work began a career as a social worker for the state of New Jersey. Jennie and David had three children: Janice (b. 1926), Elinor (b. 1927) and Joseph (b. 1934). Towards the end of the interview, Jennie discusses her children, their lives and her extended family.

Key Word, Concept, Person	Time Stamp
Introduction	0:07
Finkel Family [Jennie’s mother’s family] immigration - ca. 1892 - brothers Isaac and Joseph came to US and sent for the rest of the family	0:34
Dry Goods Store- Isaac and Joseph opened a dry goods store in Trenton	1:20
Bessarabia/Romania ² - Finkel family homeland	1:44
Razina (town in Bessarabia/Romania the Finkel family came from)	1:51
Finkel, Louis (her grandfather) was a well-respected person both in Razina and Trenton. In Razina he acted as a spokesman for the Jewish community and the authorities	2:16
Finkel, Louis - became a peddler and was arrested the first week for working on a Sunday [which was illegal in many places at the time].	2:46
Judge Naar - Louis Finkel was brought before Judge Naar who recognized Louis as an educated man and helped him set up a store near “the big shul”	4:04
Finkel, Lena (Jennie’s mother) - Married [Nathan Randelman] of New York in 1898	5:05

² An area in Eastern Europe controlled by various countries including Russia, Romania and Moldova. The location is “bounded by the Prut River on the west, the Dniester River on the north and east, the Black Sea on the southeast, and the Chilia arm of the Danube River delta on the south.”
[\[https://www.britannica.com/place/Bessarabia\]](https://www.britannica.com/place/Bessarabia)

Randelmans lived in New York for a time but Lena wanted to return to Trenton so they moved	6:11
Josephson, Jennie - Randelman was her maiden name	7:00
Randelman, [Arthur] Dr. - Jennie's brother	7:14
Randelmans had 7 children	7:25
Bon Ton Manufacturing Company - high priced skirts and petticoats - owned by Nathan Randleman	7:37
Randelman, Nathan - did well but closed shop because of unions and "went in to textiles"	8:00
Stokes Family House - Randelman bought this 13 room house from the Stokes family - Jennie describes the home at length	9:00
Education - recollection of school days - Jennie recalls going to a kindergarten on Clinton Avenue	11:10
Randelman, Nathan - went to City College	11:43
Education - Nathan Randelman was "particular" about what his children read and how they spent their time.	12:00
Trenton Free Public Library (on Academy Street) - Jennie's mother took her to the library and asked the head librarian to help Jennie pick out the "best" books. The librarian chose books for her from that time on and even helped her when she was in college.	12:15
Randelman, Louis (Jennie's brother) - acted up in school and received red marks for behavior on his report card	13:21
Skelton School - Jennie's school for 7th and 8th grade	14:07

Market Street grade school [possibly Cooper or McKinley] - Jennie's school for 1st through 6th grade	14:20
Skelton School - Christian vs. Jewish traditions	14:48
Beyer, Riva - Made to apologize in front of an assembly of the entire school for "taking the lord's name in vain" but denied to Jennie Josephson that she had said it.	15:58
Zuckerman, Ozzie - same treatment as a child in Waynesboro, PA	16:51
Jewish Philosophy of Living - "it's alright for them" but "we're not everybody" [against the idea of buying things because everyone else had it]	17:05
Social activities in high school	18:18
Blagren, Sam - one of Jennie Josephson's dates	19:22
White Horse Inn - dancing on Saturday night	19:27
Swern, Nat - one of Jennie Josephson's dates - story about him visiting a patient	20:29
Polish pottery workers on Saturday night after being paid	21:12
Education - attended Trenton Normal School and took two certificates in teaching	22:31
Career - obtained a teaching position in Trenton school system but stayed only two weeks before resigning because she became engaged and knew that once she was married, she would lose her position	23:11
Education and new career - attended New York School of Social Work and became a social worker for the State of New Jersey in Trenton until the family relocated to Maplewood in 1936	25:00

Attitudes towards working women - parents disapproved, husband disapproved but did not interfere	25:51
Civic Involvement - Jennie was involved in several organizations including being the president of the National Council of Jewish Women and a member of the Jewish Family Service	26:33
Careers in Maplewood - was a social worker for the State but then began teaching again	27:25
Jennie returned to Trenton about 1990	27:50
60 Elmhurst Ave - Jennie's parent's home	28:28
880 Bellevue Ave - Josephson family home	28:35
1308 West State Street - Josephson family home	28:51
Altman, Lilly - lived at 1310 West State Street	29:02
Civil Service - would not hire anyone over 35 but wanted Jennie for a job when she moved to North Jersey so they changed her date of birth	29:18
Josephson, Louis - Trenton City Attorney - Jennie's brother -in -law	30:35
Josephson, David - Jennie's husband who owned Josephson's Shoe Store on Broad Street and then on State Street near Broad	30:55
Josephson, David - President of the Trenton Chamber of Commerce, one of the founders of the Young Hebrew Men's Association	32:40
Josephson's Shoe Store - closed ca. 1935-1936	32:50

Randelman, Arthur Dr. - Jennie's brother living on Alton Drive in Ewing, NJ	33:26
Randelman, Arthur Dr. retired from private practice but was working at Trenton State Psychiatric Hospital at the time of this recording	34:03
Josephson, Joe - discussion of his career and move to Anchorage, Alaska. Joe Josephson was an attorney and was an Alaskan State Senator	35:10
1 daughter lives in Chicago [Janice, based on mention that she was 67 at the time of this interview]	36:10
1 daughter lives in Merrimac [Elinor May, based on mention that she was 66 at the time of this interview]	36:18
Daughter [Janice] in Chicago is an editor; has Multiple Sclerosis but copes very well; discusses this daughter's various accomplishments	36:28
Jennie talks about her extended family - children and grand-children	41:50

References

Nathan Randelman and Lena Finkel: Ancestry.com. *New Jersey, Marriage Records, 1670-1965* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

Jennie Josephson Death Record: Ancestry.com. New Jersey, Death Index, 1901-2017 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

Josephson Family: Year: 1930; Census Place: Trenton, Mercer, New Jersey; Page: 20A; Enumeration District: 0062; FHL microfilm: 2341100

Josephson Family: Year: 1940; Census Place: Maplewood, Essex, New Jersey; Roll: m-t0627-02336; Page: 64A; Enumeration District: 7-217

Randelman Family: Year: 1910; Census Place: Trenton Ward 4, Mercer, New Jersey; Roll: T624_896; Page: 1B; Enumeration District: 0051; FHL microfilm: 1374909

Randelman Family Year: 1920; Census Place: Trenton Ward 4, Mercer, New Jersey; Roll: T625_1052; Page: 3A; Enumeration District: 58

Joseph Josephson; <https://akleg.gov/100years/bio.php?id=1212>