

THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

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**Interview with Sidney M. Hais**

**Interview Date:** October 1, 2004  
**Interviewer:** Sharon L. House  
**Transcriber:** Nadine Hamilton

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TAPE 1/SIDE 1

**HOUSE:** This is part of the Ruth Ann Overbeck Capitol Hill History Project. And I'm pleased to be interviewing Mr. Sidney Hais. We're at his home, 4400 East-West Highway, Apt. 516 in Bethesda, MD. I'm the interviewer, and my name is Sharon House. Thank you, Mr. Hais, for doing this. Tell us your complete name.

**H AIS:** My complete name is Sidney Charles Morton Hais. The story behind that is that both grandfathers went to the synagogue—to different synagogues to put their names, to make sure the family names were carried on into the next, my generation.

**HOUSE:** Interesting. So I know your family's had a long—I know you've had a long history in this city. Tell us how your family happened to come to the United States and to Washington, DC and this neighborhood—the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

**H AIS:** Early in 1910, my father was a soldier in the Czar Nicolas' Second Army. He was mistreated by the dictators of that era under the czar, and he decided that anything would be better than that. He went AWOL from the czar's army and took off to cross Europe. In 1910, he took two years to cross Europe with the aid of the Brotherhood Society of Aid to aid people that want to escape from the dictatorship of the czar.

**HOUSE:** What is the Brotherhood Society?

**H AIS:** Hmm?

**HOUSE:** What is that Brotherhood Society?

**H AIS:** It's the benevolence, in Hebrew, Jewish, it's called the *landsmen*. The *landsmen* is your fellow countryman, people that helped immigrants to escape, you know, like we're doing today in Iraq.

**HOUSE:** I see.

**H AIS:** So, it's an organization informally put together to help your oppressed people get out of hardships and dictatorships and come to the land of the free and the home of the brave.

**HOUSE:** All right. So, I interrupted you. So he came across Europe then?

**H AIS:** Yeah. It took him two years to cross Europe from, to escape from Vilna [Russian name for capital of Lithuania], Russia. And during the two years, he was doing odd jobs in different places. And one story he tells me that he did work in Hamburg, Germany. He was there for a while, and he crossed into Holland

and crossed a whole continent of Europe until he got to Liverpool, England. And once he arrived in Liverpool in 1912, he was able to get aboard a ship, come into Ellis Island, New York. The ship was destined for Ellis Island in New York harbor. And in those days they had four classes of accommodations for passengers on ships going out of the country to cross the ocean. And my father was placed into what is called the steerage compartment of the ship which is the lowest and the worst part of being on board ship because all the refuse. It's comparable to living in the dump like, but after crossing Europe it took in those days, with the weather and so forth, it took him 10 or 12 days to get to New York and to Ellis Island where he was admitted to the United States and to become a citizen of the United States after going, taking his citizenship, qualifying as a citizen of the United States of America.

**HOUSE:** And where did he go when he left Ellis Island?

**HAI:** He went to Cleveland for a short period of time, got a job with the telephone company and factory and he was fired from that job because he suggested to the bosses that they should have conveyor belts in order to transport parts to workmen who were putting together the components to the telephone. And the union said no, you can't do that because it will cut down on labor, and he was fired. And he had to go out, and he came to Washington from Cleveland and there he was able to buy a little mom and pop grocery store on the corner of Seventh and C, NE, just one block from Stanton Park, and he owned the store in 1913 and ... Correction. My father came to America in 1912 and opened Hais Market and met my mother in 1913, got married in 1913 to my mother whose maiden name was Ida Flax and she was from, her family dwelt on Four and a Half St., SW which was comparable to Jewish ghetto in those days.

**HOUSE:** Why did he decide to come to Washington, DC and Capitol Hill? Do you know?

**HAI:** Because of the Order of the Brotherhood, and he had [ed: com]patriots from Russia that previously come to America and they were like self-help group that were aided their fellow countrymen to find work, to earn a living and enjoy the freedom of a democracy in the United States.

**HOUSE:** So, they maybe suggested he go into the grocery business or ...?

**HAI:** Yes, because at that time he did not read English, could not read or write English, but he could work in a grocery store, learn how to cut meat and learn how to shop at the markets, the wholesale markets, and learn how to stock the stores up with groceries and became a member of a grocery association. And it was a matter of learning from your countrymen who came to this country in an earlier period.

**HOUSE:** And you may have said this. You said it was at Seventh and C, NE?

**HAI:** Seventh and C.

**HOUSE:** Do you remember what corner that was on or do you remember the exact address?

**HAI:** That was on the east, it was on the northeast, let's see, Seventh and C. It was located, let me get the directions straight now. East, and North, northeast corner of Seventh and C.

**HOUSE:** OK. So let's go now to you. When and where were you born?

**HAI:** I was born above the store that my father had opened in 1912. I was born above the store in the room directly above the store facing the, the little alcove, facing Stanton Park and Capitol Hill and Eastern Presbyterian Church. It's at the corner of Seventh and C. Interesting enough my mother gave birth with the help of a midwife because either we couldn't afford or never had accessible doctor, obstetrician. So I was delivered to this world April 8, 1914 by a midwife. And one of the interesting events at that time was I was born in the middle of the night. And my grandmother who lived in faraway Southwest at that time and transportation was not available and in the middle of the night she journeyed from her mother's mother, my grandmother walked from old Southwest Washington to Seventh and C, NE to be with my mother for my birth. [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** Now you say transportation was not available, but what transportation would people have used in 1914?

**HAI:** I think there were streetcars, horse cars...

**HOUSE:** OK.

**HAI:** ...trolley cars, but they weren't running in the middle of the night.

**HOUSE:** Right.

**HAI:** And she walked up Capitol Hill.

**HOUSE:** All right. You also told a story once about your bris, about who did your bris.

**HAI:** Oh, my mother and father were married by Rabbi and Cantor, what's his name—Jolson. Al Jolson's father was the presiding religious person in my mother's synagogue at Four and a Half and E Street, Southwest Washington and they married by Rabbi Jolson, Cantor Jolson also. He was a combination of rabbi, cantor and also performed other religious rituals, and he was the father of the famous Al Jolson.

**HOUSE:** And he did your bris?

**H AIS:** And he did, he married my mother and daddy, and I think it's 10 days later, he did the circumcision.

**H OUSE:** Ten days after you were born.

**H AIS:** Uh-huh.

**H OUSE:** OK. You mentioned that your father was didn't speak English when he first came. When you were young, do you remember, was Russian spoken in your home, or was that your mother's language?

**H AIS:** Mostly some Yiddish a derivative from German. You know, that they picked up. But my father learned very quickly. My mother spoke pretty fluent English. She was pretty well versed in English.

**H OUSE:** OK. Let's talk a little bit about your father's grocery business. For example, where did he get his meat and produce and his groceries? Do you know that in the early years?

**H AIS:** In the early years, he shopped at the Florida Avenue farmers' market and the old Southwest market—both places. In order to buy meat in those days, the packing houses, meat houses were all down into the Southwest area which is around Constitution Avenue. Near . . ., so coming from the waterfront, Maine Avenue, all the way up to Pennsylvania Avenue was just a series of meat packing houses and grocery warehouses.

**H OUSE:** Is that Constitution or Independence?

**H AIS:** Um.

**H OUSE:** You said Southwest.

**H AIS:** Ah, the Center Market was a retail establishment. That was at Ninth and Pennsylvania.

**H OUSE:** Right.

**H AIS:** And behind Center Market which is now Constitution Market and along, B Street.

**H OUSE:** OK.

**H AIS:** They were all wholesale markets that sold to merchants.

**H OUSE:** So, he got his both his meat and his produce at these markets?

**H AIS:** Yeah.

**H OUSE:** And the canned goods?

**H AIS:** And the canned goods came from primarily from an association of grocers who pooled their resources together and established warehouse and ordered groceries in larger quantities from the manufacturers to be sent directly to the warehouses. And each and every morning, except Sunday morning, he'd go to market, he'd go to the farmers' market and then to the grocery to get the dry groceries at the, in the various grocery warehouses.

**H OUSE:** I guess he started pretty early, huh?

**H AIS:** Yeah. [Laughs] He started around five-o'clock every morning.

**H OUSE:** So, let's...

**H AIS:** So he could open the store at seven.

**H OUSE:** OK. What were the hours of the store?

**H AIS:** He opened the store at seven-o'clock and closed at nine o'clock.

**H OUSE:** OK. Tell us about this association of grocers that you mentioned.

**H AIS:** The DGS [ed: District Grocery Stores] was organized in 1923. A group of retail grocers.

**H OUSE:** I'm sorry. When did you say it was organized?

**H AIS:** 1923.

**H OUSE:** OK. OK.

**H AIS:** And my father was one of the organizers, charter members so to speak. And he—they established a good rapport with the manufacturers and had the merchandise shipped directly to the warehouse. To the wholesale grocery warehouses. They had several locations. The first one that I remember was at Sixth Street, off of Pennsylvania Avenue NW, and then they located a warehouse that was quite large. It was called the Union Terminal Warehouse at Four and a Half and D Street. And that became their main source of picking up and shipping, because the train tracks ran right in, directly into the warehouse.

**H OUSE:** Four and a Half and D Street?

**H AIS:** Four and a Half and D.

**H OUSE:** And which...

**H AIS:** The Union Terminal Warehouse.

**H OUSE:** So that would have been North...?

**H AIS:** Southwest.

**H AIS:** Union Terminal Warehouse. Southwest.

**H OUSE:** OK. OK. So what made them think to form this association? Why did they...?

**H AIS:** They formed the association so they could buy for a lot less as a group, bulk buying and quantity buying. It's like buying at a discount compared to buying on an individual basis.

**H OUSE:** I think you told me once some other competition was coming in?

**H AIS:** Many years later there was a another group of people that started up. That was west, southwest, but the DGS was the predominant, did the bulk of the...

**H OUSE:** OK.

**H AIS:** ...wholesale business.

**H OUSE:** There weren't chain groceries at that time?

**H AIS:** No, it was a chain of individual owners. [Interviewer note: Hais told House before and after the recorded interview that DGS was established to compete with a then new chain of Sanitary Markets, that later became Safeway].

**H OUSE:** Right. OK. Did you help your father with the grocery business when you were young, while you were going to school?

**H AIS:** From the time I was five or six years old, he had me delivering milk and bread early in the morning, because bread and milk was left off at the store. The milk was left with ice on it, and the bread man left it in what was called bread boxes. And they were left in front of the store, sometimes before the store opened. And as soon as the store opened, my father would have me deliver to the various customers who wanted fresh milk and bread. Before I'd go to school, I had to do a series of deliveries in the neighborhood to deliver milk and bread.

**H OUSE:** Did you have a wagon?

**H AIS:** Yeah, I had a little wagon I pulled, and that was my first experience. I started as early as five or six years old. [Interviewer note: After the recording equipment was put away, Hais asked House if the following information could be included: When Hais was young, his father used a horse and wagon to get goods for the market. The horse was kept in a stable in back of the market and Hais remembers feeding it hay.]

**HOUSE:** Great. Just a little segue, but I believe the term Capitol Hill for this large neighborhood is a relatively recent term. Do you remember what the neighborhood was called then? Or was it called anything?

**H AIS:** I, it wasn't formally Capitol Hill, but we always thought of ourselves as part of Capitol Hill.

**HOUSE:** OK.

**H AIS:** Nothing to do with government, but the neighborhood.

**HOUSE:** OK. Now you went to several schools on the Hill, I believe. Let's talk about some of those. Your first public school was where?

**H AIS:** It was Peabody School which I understand had earlier been a Civil War hospital. It was an old building. They converted it into a public school. My first school experience was in the kindergarten, and my first kindergarten teacher was Mrs. Walker who lived at Fifth and B Street which is now Fifth and Constitution Avenue. And she was my kindergarten teacher. After the kindergarten, I went to Hilton School which is located on Sixth Street between C Street and B Street, on Sixth and Mass Avenue which came in just where Stanton Park started. And from Hilton School I went to first, second and third grades. My third grade teacher was Mrs. Geiger whose husband was pharmacist at Sixth and Constitution or Sixth and B Street. And that was quite an attractive store, because people, the athletes of those days used to gather around the drugstore because they sold soft drinks, besides prescriptions. And that was Geiger's Drugstore which was a famous landmark in those days. (How do you spell Geiger?) And I went to school with Mrs. Geiger's daughter. I can't think of her name now.

**HOUSE:** OK. Then after Hilton...

**H AIS:** I went back to Peabody for the fifth grade, and my schoolteacher there was Mrs. Harrison.

**HOUSE:** Then you went to middle school?

**H AIS:** No, I stayed in the fifth and sixth grade at Peabody again. I transferred back from Hilton, back to Peabody, and I spent my fifth and sixth grades were in the Peabody School.

**HOUSE:** Why did you go back to Peabody?

**H AIS:** Well that was the system in those days.

**HOUSE:** I see. OK. It wasn't, wasn't a school choice, huh?

**H AIS:** No, and the teacher was Mrs. Harrison in the fifth grade and Mrs. Lucas in the sixth grade.

**HOUSE:** OK. And then after that...

**H AIS:** I was transferred to the brand new Stuart Junior High School for the seventh, eighth grade, and I spent two years at Stuart Junior High School. And the principal there was Mr. Schwartz. I can't think of his first name.

**HOUSE:** And you showed us a picture of the first graduating class.

**H AIS:** Yeah, of Stuart. My class was the first graduating class.

**HOUSE:** Do you remember classmates, or experiences? Do you remember much about that school at the time?

**H AIS:** Oh yeah, there were quite, it was quite congenial atmosphere there. It wasn't too large, and I remember quite a few people from, I could probably pick out about 99 percent of the people shown in the picture.



**Stuart Junior High, Class of 1928 (first graduating class).  
Sidney Hais is fourth from the right in the second row from the top.  
Names of students written on the back of photo are attached as an addendum.**

**HOUSE:** Uh-huh.

**H AIS:** They were, they grew up in Northeast. They came from as far away as K Street and L Street, NE to be at Stuart Junior High School. Incidentally, before Stuart was built, Abner-Drury had a beer distillery

(not a distillery), a beer brewing business there. Abner-Drury. That was quite a landmark, and they were quite famous for their beer.

**HOUSE:** And where is that?

**HAI:** That was on the site where Stuart was built.

**HOUSE:** Oh.

**HAI:** Abner-Drury. It's two names. Abner-Drury [spelled it out]. And that was a...

**HOUSE:** And you actually remember that brewery being there?

**HAI:** Yeah. Uh- huh. And then Stuart was a brand new, they tore the brewery down and built the Stuart Junior High. [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** Interesting. That school still exists, of course. I'm sure students would be pretty interested to know that there was a brewery on their site. [Laughs]

**HAI:** We should mention Carbery, because that was a popular school. I did not go to it, but it was located, Carbery Elementary School was on Fifth Street NE between D and E. And that was quite a well-known elementary school.

**HOUSE:** And you didn't go to that one, because this other one was closer?

**HAI:** Just happened to be, Peabody was probably the one that was the one selected for me. And Carbery was used real, it was a busy school well populated school.

**HOUSE:** Uh-huh.

**HAI:** And there was another public elementary school, it was only for black people, at G Street, Fifth and G NE, called Ludlow.

**HOUSE:** OK.

**HAI:** And that was when days of segregation. And if you were black, you went to Ludlow School.

**HOUSE:** Then after junior high... Did they call it junior high then, or middle school?

**HAI:** No, junior high.

**HOUSE:** They called it junior high, OK. And, then you also went to high school in the neighborhood?

**HAIS:** I went to Eastern High School from Stuart Junior High School. And I went there in 1928, and graduated Eastern... I went there from the eighth grade, and then Stuart, I think, took on ninth grade, but my class of 1928 went directly to high school. And most of us went to Eastern High School which was located at 17<sup>th</sup> and East Capitol Street.

**HOUSE:** Which is where it is now.

**HAIS:** Uh-huh.

**HOUSE:** What do you remember about those school days besides classes too. What was a school day like? Was there anything special going on?

**HAIS:** Well, it was quite interesting because the teachers were very understanding, and very well-trained teachers in those days. They, most of them graduated from Wilson Normal School on Harvard Street, NW, and they were... And my first experience at Eastern High School was in the first year of high school, and there you had a teacher for every subject. And I had a typing teacher, I had a history teacher, French teacher. And I remember most of their names. My experience in the Eastern High School lasted four years, and I took various subjects—mathematics, algebra, geometry from... The names of teachers escape me. I know my history teacher was Mr. Gilford.

**HOUSE:** Who was the principal then? Do you remember that?

**HAIS:** The principal was Charles Hart, and he was quite well known. He had started his career at the Hine... Eastern High School was originally located at Seventh and Pennsylvania Avenue.

**HOUSE:** Where Hine is now?

**HAIS:** Yeah, which is now Hine Junior High School. It was in my day.

**HOUSE:** So tell us about some of the extra curricular activities that went on at Eastern.

**HAIS:** Oh, they, during lunch period, they had a cafeteria, and if you got through your lunch in time, you would go to the Armory, the gymnasium of the Armory, and they would have a five or six-piece music dancing during lunch periods.

**HOUSE:** Was that where the Armory is now?

**HAIS:** That's where Eastern is now, at 17<sup>th</sup> and East Capitol.

**HOUSE:** But the Armory?

**HAIS:** Armory.

**HOUSE:** That same Armory? OK.

**H AIS:** Yeah. It was just part of the school where the cadets kept their equipment, and they had basketball gymnasium there and so forth.

**HOUSE:** You mentioned the cadets.

**H AIS:** Oh, the high school cadets were quite popular in those days, and ...

**HOUSE:** Was this a military kind of cadet?

**H AIS:** Yeah, cadets could be considered like ROTC is today.

**HOUSE:** OK.

**H AIS:** And they had, Eastern had, from my best recollection, they had five different companies. My brother Harry Hais was a lieutenant in his cadet corps. And I did not do it, I took some other roads away from being a cadet. It didn't appeal to me.

**HOUSE:** How about sports? Were sports and athletics popular at Eastern?

**H AIS:** Yeah, sports was a great attraction at Eastern. Eastern was famous for their football, basketball teams, and they had baseball teams. And interestingly enough, football teams were coached by a Chief Guyon. He was a Carlisle Indian, and he had graduated Carlisle, Carlisle University in Pennsylvania, was exclusively open only to Indian, people of Indian descent. And when he came to Eastern to coach football, he made quite a good reputation as a football coach for Eastern. His name was Chuck Guyon—G-u-y-o-n, I think.

**HOUSE:** Now you had mentioned before some of the classmates you had, either in junior high or high school that later became well known in one field or another. I don't know, athletes, actresses...

**H AIS:** Yeah, my, among my schoolmates in those days was Robert Slye who became a collegiate athlete. He was also made all-high, he was extraordinary, Robert Slye. S-l-y-e. And he was outstanding athlete. And there was a athlete by the name of Bernie Lee who was a star on the basketball team. Charles Miller was a star on the football team. There was a man by the name of Max Miller who played football, and he was also an officer in the cadets. He did real good. Max Miller, later on became a real estate broker had an office on Pennsylvania Avenue between 10th and 11th.

**HOUSE:** Where there women you also remember from your school days? Girls then, of course.

**H AIS:** Oh. [Laughs] They, the girls in those days were very attractive, and dancing was popular, and, oh, my most notable girlfriend was a lady by the name of Mamie Green. And I liked her especially because her father owned Carolina movies at 11<sup>th</sup> and East Capitol Street where North Carolina and East Capitol come together. And she used to take me to the movies every day, every night, free, and I'd walk her home. She lived at Tenth and K NE, but we didn't mind all that walking, because I got into the movies free.

**H OUSE:** [Laughs]

**H AIS:** And her name was Mamie Green, and her father owned the Carolina movie house. Oh, and I also went to movies while I was still in school at Stanton movies it was called. And it was owned by E. Lawrence Philips. That was located at Sixth and C, NE, just two buildings from the corner of Sixth and C, directly across from, on the south side of Stanton Park. And E. Lawrence Philips was the owner of that theater. And I got into the movies there regularly because I served the week's handbills or announcements. They'd be the programs for the following week to the doorsteps or mailboxes of the people in the neighborhood. And as a reward they'd allow me to go see the movies every night free.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

TAPE 1/SIDE 2

**H OUSE:** So you got to see a lot of movies then, with the combination of your dates and handing out promotional literature.

**H AIS:** Right

**H OUSE:** You were going to mention something about...

**H AIS:** Oh, going back to Stuart Junior High School. One of my outstanding lady friends became a, she was quite active in dramatics and she was a very talented thespian. She took part in school plays, both at Stuart Junior High School. When she went to Eastern High School she became active in stage plays which were regularly given in the auditorium after lots of rehearsals directed by Mrs. Taylor. She was in charge of the school plays. Later on, Edythe Lazaroff became a, left Washington for New York, and became an actress on the stage and acted on radio. And my other lady friend was Leah Effenbach who was a concert pianist. Even as a young junior high school girl she was very talented in playing and she let...she used to give concerts as a junior high school student, and in high school too. She was very talented too.

**H AIS:** She was the one who used to call me up every night and talk about what happened during the day.  
[Laughs]

**HOUSE:** So in addition to your public schools, you also went to Hebrew school?

**HAI:** Yeah, after public school from the time I was six to, I was bar mitzvahed at 13, every weekday afternoon I would go for, to Hebrew School. My first experience in Hebrew School was at my father's first Orthodox Synagogue which was located at Eighth and I Street NE.

**HOUSE:** Do you know what the name of that synagogue was?

**HAI:** The name escapes me.

**HOUSE:** Was that Ezras Israel?

**HAI:** Yeah, and that was strictly, strict orthodox type of... While I was learning Hebrew there and going to services regularly on Friday night services and Saturday, I'd also go to Hebrew school which was located in a little house behind the synagogue at Eighth and I.

**HOUSE:** That would have been on Eighth Street?

**HAI:** Yeah, Eighth and I.

**HOUSE:** OK. That kept you pretty busy with all your school things. What do you remember about, do you remember anything about the rabbi at that synagogue?

**HAI:** Oh, yeah, the rabbi was Mr. Schaeffer, and he had a long, black beard and he smoked cheroots or small cigars. And he had bad breath. [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** [Laughs] Quite an impression. Was your family kosher when you were growing up?

**HAI:** Yeah, initially when we lived at Seventh and C, my mother kept kosher.

**HOUSE:** But I assume the butcher meat in your father's market was not?

**HAI:** No, he'd go to the wholesale market, you know, where they sold kosher meat.

**HOUSE:** Well, where did your family get the meat that your mother cooked? Where did that come from, how did you get that?

**HAI:** Oh, up at the Northeast Market there were kosher butcher shops up there.

**HOUSE:** Is that Florida Avenue?

**HAI:** Yeah, Florida Avenue Market. And Southwest had also kosher markets too. There was separate meat markets.

**HOUSE:** And was there a rabbi or someone who supervised?

**H AIS:** There were supervised by people that were authorized to make sure the meats were koshered properly. There was quite a different procedure in those days of how the meat was brought to market or slaughtered. And the same with the chickens. They were, there was a special ritual which you had to go through, not a prayer ritual, but a certain way they were slaughtered or the chickens were dressed.

**HOUSE:** Well, were the chickens already dressed when your...?

**H AIS:** No, no my father dealt with only live chickens and then took them to the kosher person that was licensed to perform kosher, to kosher the chickens, to kill them in a certain method that they used. They would hang them up by the back, hold them by the back feet or hang them up by the back feet and kill, slice the necks so the blood would drain out. And that was the procedure that they used to kosher the chickens.

**HOUSE:** I see, so there was somebody at the market during that time to do that?

**H AIS:** Yeah, uh-huh. It was done, when they were being dressed they, they would farm it out to the help around there. And the chickens were, to be, have a kosher chicken, it had to be dry pickled. They didn't dip it in hot water.

**HOUSE:** Someone did that at the market as well?

**H AIS:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**HOUSE:** But your father usually did that kind of shopping, not your mother?

**H AIS:** My father, yeah.

**HOUSE:** OK. What other memories do you have of Jewish community life on the Hill? Were most of the families, say at the synagogue or Hebrew school, were they from Russia as well or...?

**H AIS:** The early Jewish life was centered not as much, or... At Eastern High School there was in those days when I went to school, there was a fraternity that was strictly Jewish. Which I was a member of.

**HOUSE:** Do you remember the name of that?

**H AIS:** The name escapes me right at the moment.

**HOUSE:** We can fill it in later. [Fraternity was Upsilon Lambda Phi, ULP]

**H AIS:** Uh-huh.

**HOUSE:** So there was this fraternity...

**HAI:** Yeah, the fraternity at Eastern.

**HOUSE:** And this fraternity did it sponsor social activities?

**HAI:** Yeah, uh-huh, they had dances and meetings and rituals and so forth.

**HOUSE:** Were the students who belonged to this, were they from a variety of backgrounds?

**HAI:** Yeah.

**HOUSE:** Were they Russian like...?

**HAI:** They were mostly immigrant, from immigrant families. There was a second generation after the immigrants that came to the America.

**HOUSE:** Right, right. OK. What were, were there relations between Jewish families and children and non-Jewish families?

**HAI:** Oh, yes. Some of ... [Laughs] That sounded like a platitude. I had many friends in the neighborhood, because there weren't more than a handful of Jewish families in our neighborhood. For the most part, they were Christian. And my best friends growing up from the time I was five to thirteen years old were people in the neighborhood, that lived next door to us or down the street from us. And it was a mixed community 'cause people came from all over the world to settle in those days.

**HOUSE:** Do you remember whether there were particular problems? Were there discrimination against Jewish families at all that you remember?

**HAI:** Not against the Jewish. The blacks were discriminated against. But I don't remember that any outward discrimination against Jews that were on the surface of things, you know. The blacks were segregated, but the Jewish people fitted in to the mainstream population.

**HOUSE:** OK. Let's talk some about some of the recreational activities you participated in when you were young. We've already talked about the movies, but there's a picture you showed me as a very young boy riding a pony in the neighborhood. Where was this taken? How old were you?

**HAI:** I was six years old, and that was taken at Sixth and B Street, that's now Sixth and Constitution Avenue. And that was one man's business to take the picture. For \$1 he would take a picture of a person on his pony.

**HOUSE:** Did you ride it mostly or just got on to take the picture?

**H AIS:** Just got, just to take the picture.



**Sidney Hais, 1920.**

**HOUSE:** OK. And I think you were active in baseball. Is that right?

**H AIS:** Oh, yeah.

**HOUSE:** Was that in school or was that neighborhood or...?

**H AIS:** Yeah, well that was part of my life on Capitol Hill. Originally, we played in a vacant lot just three doors from Hais Market. It was an open lot which is now an apartment. And my first experience playing baseball was on this vacant lot on Seventh Street in the middle of the block, three doors from Hais Market off the corner of Seventh and C, and the next street was D Street. But we played in, on this lot and in an alley back of the lot. It was a big alley. We played ball, baseball on the lot. But in later years, the recreation department established Plaza Playground which became a attraction for youngsters to play baseball on the Plaza Playground which is located at Mass Avenue and D Street on one side, Mass on the other and diagonally across from Union Station. And it was quite a large field. It was large enough to have two baseball diamonds and also during the season we played soccer ball there too.

**HOUSE:** Soccer?

**H AIS:** Soccer, uh-huh. That was at Mass Avenue and Second Street, between First and Second, between Mass Avenue and D Street.

**HOUSE:** Were these organized teams that played there or just...?

**H AIS:** The school teams, all the schools had their soccer teams and then we have a, we organized our own teams and gave them names and so forth.

**H OUSE:** You played baseball and soccer or you played baseball?

**H AIS:** I played baseball and soccer while I was at Peabody School. And that was on the Plaza Playground.

**H OUSE:** I see, so you were starting pretty young, like in the fifth grade?

**H AIS:** Yeah, seeing as how I was at Peabody. And I used to spend a lot of time on Plaza Playground where across, directly across the street still on Mass Avenue, but close to E Street was the tennis courts. And in those days there were quite a few people that made the high marks, achievement athletically among which was Bob Considine. And he was ranked nationally as a tennis player, and he got his tennis knowledge playing on Plaza tennis courts right at, located at Second and Mass Avenue, NE. And, let's see, oh there was some football playing on that Plaza Playground too. And I remember they had like semi-pro football teams, which were all a little older than we were, played on Plaza Playground. And the name was the Mohawks Athletic Club, and they were the dominant. And there was another athletic field at 15<sup>th</sup> and H Street, NE called Union Park where they played semi-pro baseball, at 15<sup>th</sup> and H Street, where H Street meets Bladensburg Road which is at...

**H OUSE:** Did you watch them there?

**H AIS:** Hmm? Oh, yeah, I used go there, and in addition to having a baseball field they used to have Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey circuses play, set up tents for the circus.

**H OUSE:** That's at 15<sup>th</sup> and H?

**H AIS:** Yeah, 15<sup>th</sup> and H.

**H OUSE:** When would that have been? Do you know about how old you were?

**H AIS:** Oh, I think I was in my teenages, between twelve and fifteen.

**H OUSE:** OK. So this would have been in the '20s.

**H AIS:** In later years, Ringling Bros., Barnum and Bailey opened, when they came to town would set up at Camp Meigs which was located at Florida Avenue, just above Florida Avenue Market. There was an open space up there which had been formerly World War I camping grounds for soldiers, station for soldiers, there was an abandoned army camp called Camp Meigs. M-e-i-g-s. Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey set up their tents up there after they disbanded Union Park at 15<sup>th</sup> and H.

**HOUSE:** I'm trying to picture this Union Park. If you go up H Street and get to 15<sup>th</sup>, is it going to be on the right or the left side?

**HAIS:** It's left side. It's on the far side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street where Bladensburg Road and Bennings Road come together at that point.

**HOUSE:** That's where the old Hechinger's was.

**HAIS:** Yeah, that's right.

**HOUSE:** OK.

**HAIS:** Bladensburg and Bennings Road at 15<sup>th</sup> Street.

**HOUSE:** You told me the other day about another kind of tent event you went to. Where the Northeast Library is now?

**HAIS:** Oh! Yeah, where the public library at Seventh and Maryland Avenue, NE, it used to be a vacant lot and they had a large tent which during good weather we would be entertained by evangelists, type of Billy, would give sermons like Billy Sunday was famous to giving, at Seventh and Maryland Avenue, NE.

**HOUSE:** And you went to those?

**HAIS:** I went, yeah. I heard the preachers preach the words of religion.

**HOUSE:** Did they get quite a big crowd?

**HAIS:** Yeah, it was an attraction for the whole neighborhood.

**HOUSE:** Did blacks and whites come to that as well?

**HAIS:** No, just the whites.

**HOUSE:** Strictly whites. I see. OK. You've probably covered most of it. I don't know if there are any other recreational activities you participated in as a teenager. I don't know how you had time to do anything else.

**HAIS:** [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** How about, how about homework? Where and when did you do that?

**HAIS:** Oh, homework I used to go to the Library of Congress. They allowed us into their reading room.

**HOUSE:** The big fancy one?

**H AIS:** Yeah.

**HOUSE:** OK. Was this when you were in high school?

**H AIS:** That was in high school. Just so we were quiet, we could, that was the only restriction and we could... And then they'd, give us the books that we needed for references, They were very accommodating and very open to the youngsters that wanted to study there. It was quite a nice scene.

**HOUSE:** Sounds very special. Did you use the local libraries at all, city libraries?

**H AIS:** I used the one across the street from Hais Market which was at Seventh and Maryland Avenue, just almost diagonally across from Hais Market.

**HOUSE:** That was after they...

**H AIS:** After they built the library on that vacant lot where the tent was.

**HOUSE:** So that would have been brand new ... That was when you were in high school, maybe?

**H AIS:** Yeah.

**HOUSE:** So, what are some of the neighborhood businesses (we've talked about the movies), some of the neighborhood businesses that you remember from the 20s and 30s?

**H AIS:** On the corner of Seventh and D, just one block up from Hais Market, there was a man who a roofing, where he repaired roofs and did, go out... His name was Symanoskie, and he had a roofing business established right on the corner of Seventh and D Street. Right near Maryland Avenue, Symanoskie was his name, Frank Symanoskie. I remember him very well. And he was in the roofing business. And across the street from Seventh and D on a triangle like setting was Bradley's Drugstore. It was first called Fleming's Drugstore at Seventh and Maryland, on Seventh and Maryland Avenue. And it was set up as a pharmacy and various other supplies that you'd expect to find in a drugstore. And later Mr. Fleming sold to a family by the name of Bradley. And they, they were neighborhood favorites.

**HOUSE:** Did you hang out there as a teenager?

**H AIS:** I hung out more at Geiger's at Sixth and B Street more because that's where the athletes used to gather and hang out in front. Doc Geiger was a famous landmark for the well-known athletes of, of that day.

**HOUSE:** From the high school, from Eastern High School?

**H AIS:** Yeah. Interestingly enough on Maryland Avenue at 623, the family doctor had his office and his home. I think it was a three story building, and he had an office there. And this was the family doctor. His name was Dr. Savage. (What was his first name?) Dr. Savage only charged \$1 for an office visit.

[Laughs]

**H OUSE:** Did you have to go to the doctor? Is that how you remember?

**H AIS:** Yeah. I went for measles, chicken pox. He'd come to the house too, and charge, I think, \$2 to come to the house. He used to come... And there was a dentist at Sixth and Maryland Avenue, no Seventh and Maryland Avenue, two houses from the corner off of Seventh Street. Dr. Marshall was my dentist.

**H OUSE:** And you remembered, you were telling me the other day, I remember, you had a banker early on or you got a bank account?

**H AIS:** Oh, yeah. At Ninth and East Capitol Street a brand new bank was built. It was called the Farmers and Mechanics Bank. And it would open an account for \$1 and also give you a little souvenir bank to put your change in. And we dealt with them. And that later became a City Bank, I think.

**H OUSE:** And you mentioned there was a post office in the neighborhood then?

**H AIS:** Yeah, there was a post office located next to the drugstore I mentioned earlier on Maryland Avenue between Seventh and Eighth Street, NE. On Maryland Avenue. And you asked me about the other tradesmen in the neighborhood. Many of the people worked at the Navy Yard. That was quite a popular place at the Navy Yard over in Southeast off 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

**H OUSE:** When you went into the banks and things in those days, did you see many women working outside the home, or mostly this was men who worked?

**H AIS:** Mostly men.

**H OUSE:** And in the stores as well, the retail stores?

**H AIS:** Yeah. Now getting to H Street, there was a well-known retail stores at Seventh and H. There was a Wahl's Department Store. W-a-h-l-s. And they were called Wahl's Department Store, and their home was on the corner of Seventh and F. That's where they lived, in a real nice modern home. But they kept this well-stocked department store at Seventh and H Street, NE.

**H OUSE:** It sounds like you didn't have much reason to leave the Hill, right? You had everything you needed right there. Is that right?

**HAIS:** Yeah, there was Blechman's Store on the opposite corner at 7th. B-l-e-c-h-m-a-n-s. That was a store that sold household goods. Not quite the quality that was sold by Wahl's. Wahl's was noted for their good quality merchandise.

**HOUSE:** Were there restaurants and cafes at that time that you remember?

**HAIS:** I remember People's Drugstore was a popular place for lunch. There was two People's Drugstore in Northeast, Capitol Hill area. The one most popular one, I think, for us was at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Lincoln Park, right directly across from the west side of Lincoln Park on 11<sup>th</sup> Street between East Capitol, Mass Avenue. People's Drugstore.

**HOUSE:** Did you ever go there for lunch?

**HAIS:** Yeah, they had lunch counter. For 35 cents, I think, you'd have a good, complete dinner, or lunch. There was also another popular People's Drugstore at Eighth and H, NE. And I remember Riggs Bank being on Eighth and H, NE. American Security was on the other corner. Riggs Bank was on the northwest corner and American Security Bank was on the southeast corner.

**HOUSE:** I think that Riggs Bank building is still there.

**HAIS:** Yeah.

**HOUSE:** Now you may have been a little older, but I know at one time you went to a number of nightclubs in the neighborhood.

**HAIS:** Oh yeah, when I was in high school or maybe out of high school, used to frequent nightclubs. They actually had live music there, dance bands. Dancing in those days was quite a popular... It wasn't exactly the kind of dancing they do today. And one of the nightclubs was Kavako's, at Eighth and H, and they were really busy every night. They wouldn't start until about 9:00, and dance until at least sometimes 1:00 in the morning. Kavako's. And down the street on H St. was the Rendezvous Nightclub, and they had a little band and dance floor. And on Eighth St., SE they had a dance, a place called Brinkley's, and that's where they would sell drinks, sandwiches. And, you know, at all these places the main thrust, I guess, was drinking beer.

**HOUSE:** Mostly beer, not hard liquor?

**HAIS:** No, I don't think in those days you could buy... Mostly it was beer.

**HOUSE:** Did you buy local beer from Huerich's Brewery here?

**H AIS:** Yeah, local beer, the popular beer for Washington, [unintelligible] they shipped a lot in from Baltimore, but there was brewery here called the Huerich Brewery . They still manufacture Huerich Brewery, and they were located down in Foggy Bottom right along the Potomac River. But they were local brewers, and they were quite active in supplying retail stores with their brewery. And then Abner Drury was a popular one. And the beer was seen to be the drink of choice.

**H OUSE:** Did you drink drafts, or did you drink it out of the bottle?

**H AIS:** If you were sitting in nightclub, you'd get a glass, or at the bar. Bars were famous in those days, because all these nightclubs had bars up front and dance and tables in the back. [Coughs] [Pause]

**H OUSE:** Did anyone very well-known ever play at any of these...?

**H AIS:** Oh, yeah. At Kavako's, believe it or not, when Glenn Miller was first getting started, he played there for one night. And that was quite a...

**H OUSE:** Where you there?

**H AIS:** No, I don't think I made that. But Glenn Miller did play one-night stand at Kavako's at Eighth and H.

**H OUSE:** And you were a dancer though? You danced when you went, right?

**H AIS:** Yeah, I danced a lot in my young days?

**H OUSE:** Was that swing dancing or...

**H AIS:** They called it the Charleston, that was one dance, and the shag.

**H OUSE:** The shag?

**H AIS:** The shag, yeah. That was where they kicked the heels up. Your heels would go up in the air and come down. The shag and the jitterbug, not the jitterbug, the Charleston. You remember that?

**H OUSE:** Yes, I've seen it. I assume these clubs were just for, these were segregated, right? So these were white clubs, right?

**H AIS:** Yes.

**H OUSE:** There must have been some well-know black musicians, but I guess they mostly played up 14<sup>th</sup> Street probably.

**HAIS:** Yeah, even up until..., there were very few. There were nightclubs downtown called the Lotus and the Casino Royal and they had big floorshows, but it was strictly segregated.

**HOUSE:** OK, I think that's about it for this segment. [Pause]

**HAIS:** And there was a well-known hardware store called Hummer's Hardware Store at, right off the corner of Sixth and B Street, or Sixth and Constitution Avenue. That was where they supplied the neighborhood with necessary things for the house and hardware equipment.

**HOUSE:** OK. Any other businesses you wanted to mention?

**HAIS:** Well, when I got into the real estate business on Capitol Hill, Eastern Savings and Loan was, at Fourth and Pennsylvania Avenue, very cooperative in financing real estate. And that was owned by people by the name of Harrison and Payne, that was their names. Donohue Real Estate was a very active broker on Pennsylvania Avenue between Second and Third Street.

**HOUSE:** This was later, right?

**HAIS:** Yeah.

**HOUSE:** We're going to cover all those a little bit later.

**HAIS:** Oh, all right.

**HOUSE:** Is there anything else...?

**HAIS:** In that era?

**HOUSE:** Yeah, 20's 30's when you were still young? We'll get to some of the others later.

**HAIS:** I think you ought to mention Garfield Playground located near Providence Hospital, it was the landmark. It was right in that general area, called Garfield, and they had a lot of good athletes that got their experience there. Among which was a man by the name of—they called him Gilly Hunt—Gilbert Hunt. He went to Eastern High School. We went together. And he was so good at tennis that he became, achieved a national ranking. He got his training on Garfield Playground, right near Providence Hospital.

**HOUSE:** Garfield Park's still there, and they still have tennis courts.

**HAIS:** Is that right?

**HOUSE:** Yes, on F Street.

**H AIS:** Yeah, well, Gilbert Hunt, and there was a lady, a city champion by the name of Lovey Atkins who dominated the ladies' tournaments for the city. And she represented the Garfield area too. [Pause] How about the time when the train ran into Union Station?

**H OUSE:** When was that?

**H AIS:** I guess, 20's, 30's, 30's when you had Union Station and the train brakes didn't work, and it went into the concourse where the people were sitting. It happened in the 30's to the best of my recollection. [ed: January 15, 1953]

**H OUSE:** Did the neighbors all go down to look?

**H AIS:** Yeah, it did quite a bit of damage and a lot of people were hurt. That was in the late 20's, I think. And that was a train wreck that caused a lot of... And the same day at the Standard Tire and Tobacco [ed: Standard Tire and Battery], 10<sup>th</sup> and H, NE, they had an explosion there, and the whole, blew up. Something exploded and blew up the whole side of that street. The same day that took place. That's part of...

**H OUSE:** You didn't know where to go to, right? So many...

**H AIS:** Oh yeah. Two catastrophes in two days. I mean the same day.

**H OUSE:** Wow.

**H AIS:** In 1923, did you know about...? Well this is not Capitol Hill. It was the Knickerbocker caved in.

**H OUSE:** I heard about that, with the snow.

**H AIS:** Well, that wasn't on Capitol Hill. But the Standard Tobacco [ed: Tire and Battery] and the Union Station were in the Capitol Hill area.

**H OUSE:** I didn't know about that, the one on H Street.

**H AIS:** Yeah, Tire and Tobacco [ed: Battery], and Oshinsky was the guy that owned it. [Pause]

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 2

TAPE 2/SIDE 1

**H AIS:** Graduating Eastern High School...

**H OUSE:** Right, were you saying you'd like to talk about the Depression a little bit during those early years?

**H AIS:** I lived through the Depression which started in 1929 and continued through to 1931, and it was a really bad time for most people, particularly in our area. I remember people not having jobs, not having enough food. There were soup kitchens established all over the metropolitan Washington area. And people were out of work and at a loss as to how to even survive.

**H OUSE:** Were there soup kitchens in the neighborhood, on Capitol Hill?

**H AIS:** There were soup kitchens on H Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and all through downtown Washington. And people were selling apples on the street in order to get a few... That was quite a public display of what the conditions were.

**H OUSE:** And did you see that on H Street in the neighborhood as well, or mostly downtown?

**H AIS:** Everywhere that people needed to pick up a few, enough to survive on. There really was no work, and the banks were closing, because they were having... And then I think it was President Roosevelt saved the banks from going under by subsidies. I remember my mother feeling sorry for people. We always had food in the store and in the house. She made soup in a tub-like, in order to be able to supply the neighborhood with soup for people that needed it.

**H OUSE:** So she gave that away?

**H AIS:** Oh yes. People that were out of work, and families were starving, literally starving. And she made soup for just about everybody up and down C Street and Seventh Street that weren't able to have jobs. Cause jobs were scarce and money was scarce, and people were really suffering. A great deal from the lack of not being able to earn any money. This was 1929 through 1931.

**H OUSE:** Did you see businesses in your neighborhood closing up at this time?

**H AIS:** Hais Market survived. I know the banks were closing. But the little merchants struggled through the Depression for the most part. The big stores were hurt real badly.

**H OUSE:** Did the movies stay open?

**H AIS:** Yeah, the movies were open. It was really one of the worst experiences of my lifetime to see too many people in breadlines, soup lines...

**H OUSE:** Some of your friends' fathers, I suppose, were out of work?

**H AIS:** Yeah. The neighbors that were working like mechanics, blue collar workers there just wasn't any work around in the period of Depression. It was a very severe Depression in that era.

**HOUSE:** Going on to something a little different, but similar, you said at one time your sister decided to go into business next to the market. I don't know if this was after the Depression...

**H AIS:** My sister was about five or six years old...

**HOUSE:** Oh, she was pretty young.

**H AIS:** She bought a block of ice from the iceman who came by... Before electric refrigeration, we used to keep the meats and spoilage stuff by using blocks of ice that went above a baffle above a refrigerator. And it had to be carried in and placed above the refrigerator. And my sister was able to get the iceman to give her blocks of ice, and she would put it into a stand in Hais Market side yard and scrape snowballs and sell snowballs for 5 cents. And one night she wanted to continue on, and she made candles, she lit candles and kept her snowball stand open. And she got too close to candles. She had one of these flimsy, little dresses on. It caught fire, and created quite a sensation at that time when she burning. I think the only way we saved her was rolling her up into a blanket to put out the fire.

**HOUSE:** Fortunate you were there.

**H AIS:** Yeah, she was close to home.

**HOUSE:** OK, well going back a little more chronologically, you graduated from Eastern High School. Did you work with your father then in the grocery a while?

**H AIS:** Yeah, between going to school, I worked continuously until... And then my father wanted to retire about; about 1955 we sold the store. My sister, Naomi got married and opened a store on... No, she didn't. She married a man who worked for Sunbeam Market, North Capitol Street and R Street, I think. In Sunbeam Market. He only made \$12 a week, and my father wasn't happy that he couldn't support her for \$12 a week. So, he said, you come, I'll retire from the market, and you and Sidney operate Hais Market. So, we started that back in the late 40's, I think. Cause we sold it in '55. And then spent some time with the retail beverage business for a while, and then I didn't like that as a career, so I went to real estate. I enlisted as a salesman for Sidney Z. Mensch.

**HOUSE:** OK, let's go back just a second here to catch up. We're going to just do this chronologically for whatever reason. Before that, talk just a little bit about World War II. What did you do during World War II?

**H AIS:** In World War II, I was drafted into the Army, and I was sent first, first stop was Camp Lee. I had the physical, passed the physical, went down to Camp Lee in Petersburg, Virginia for processing. And they found out that I was qualified to join the Army Air Corps which was part of the Army, but it was a

much better situation than being in the infantry. So I qualified to, after my two weeks at Camp Lee, Virginia, I got shipped to... In the middle of the night, we got on troop train, and it kept moving. We spent the whole day on the train, and they did feed us at one stop, I think Philadelphia. And we got off on the train and didn't tell us where we were going. We got off the train and felt the spray and the wind and rain, and when we got unloaded and start marching away from the train station, we marched directly to the Atlantic Ocean. And I said, "goodness gracious," we haven't even been in the Army a month, and they're sending us overseas. We've never been trained as a soldier. But as it happened, my first station after being drafted and processing was Atlantic City, New Jersey. And the Army had requisitioned all the beachfront hotels for the soldiers.

**HOUSE:** Not bad.

**HAI:** And the only difference was that they pulled the fancy furniture out and gave us bunk beds, instead of fancy hotel beds. And this Army GI stuff was in the rooms, but the hotels we were established in were oceanfront hotels. And we had to train up there. I remember we trained on Brigantine Island which was right outside of Atlantic City. We trained along the beaches there. I spent, initially I was one of the first of the group of my outfit to hit Atlantic City. And there was a demand for personnel to establish the post. I was walking along one Saturday afternoon along the boardwalk with my uniform on which I hadn't learned to wear properly. My hat was too big, it hung down over my ears. My jacket, my blouse was too big and wasn't fitting military-like, and my pants were too long, and I felt really like a sad sack which was an army character in that time. I felt real sorry for myself. Here I am in Atlantic City, and I don't know what's going to happen next and so forth. And then somebody approached me, slapped me on my back and happened to be an old school buddy of mine who had been sent up a month or two to this base. And when we exchanged greetings, he said what are you doing here? I said I'm up here for basic training. And he said, would you like to be part of my outfit? I'm working for a major who's in charge of personnel, and I can get you transferred to my outfit, which was sort of a dream come true. Because his commanding officer called my training officer and requisitioned me to go to work in Atlantic City for the quartermaster group. You know, doing clerical work in an office [Laughs] in a fancy hotel. And that career lasted through the summer of '42 all through, we didn't ship out until '44. I had two summers in Atlantic City.

**HOUSE:** Those old school ties came in handy.

**HAI:** It was. [Laughs] An old friend, he was just doing... And then it got rough after that, of course, because I stayed in until '45. But while Atlantic City, we had to march to duty. And strange as it may sound, whenever we marched, we were supposed to sing. One of the favorite songs was "The Stars and Stripes Will Fly Over Tokyo When the 923rd Squadron Gets There." [Laughs] And we were singing, and

the people were still, the tourists were still coming up, but they were staying at the smaller places. They were cheering us as if we'd won the war, and I hadn't even carried a gun yet.

**HOUSE:** [Laughs] You said you were shipped out. Where were you shipped to?



**Bernard “Dutch” Herman, left, and Sidney Hais, in 1943, in front of Hais Market, 301 Seventh Street NE. Mr. Herman lived at 312 Seventh Street NE.**

**H AIS:** My first station was California. They shipped me clear across, with a group of 16 other soldiers, we got shipped out cross country. They gave us about three weeks to travel through there. You know, go home on furlough and come back. We traveled from Atlantic City, well, we left Atlantic City, went home, met in Pittsburgh. Sixteen of us and about three or four cars, had oodles of time to get to the West Coast. The next station, well, what happened in between, the next station happened to be Santa Monica Air Force Base which was on the *Pacific* Ocean. [Laughs] The trip across country was more fun. There were 16 soldiers and, I think, I had four cars. And we'd stop at all the—Las Vegas when Las Vegas was just a cowboy town like. They had gambling and all the other things, but it was really like a western town. We stopped at the Boulder Dam and we stopped at all historical places on the way back. We took all the time we needed to get to the West Coast. And then we start spreading out, you know, did little bit of duty in California. We got to Texas. That station, that Texas was rough going, because I was in west Texas. I've got pictures of Judge Roy Bean, Pecos, Texas. And he's the guy that ruled all the land from Pecos which was 200 and some miles from... What's the place?

**HOUSE:** Mexican border?

**H AIS:** Yeah, the Mexican border. Used to cross over there.

**HOUSE:** Rio Grande.

**H AIS:** Rio Grande, yeah Fort Bliss, Pecos... What was the name of the town that was right on the Rio Grande across...? All you did walk across the narrow bridge to get into Mexico. Used to go there weekends, you know, get over in Mexico, had to get off the street in Mexico because GIs were patrolling it. We'd check in to a hotel in Juarez! [Laughs] Juarez.

**H OUSE:** Right on the other side of El Paso.

**H AIS:** Yeah, El Paso, yeah, Fort Bliss. We'd cross the Juarez into Mexico. They did have American soldiers patrolling the streets, but we didn't have many problems there. From there went on to San Angelo, Texas. I was near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

**H OUSE:** What were your responsibilities with the military?

**H AIS:** I was part of the air force supply, issuing parachutes to the training squadrons.

**H OUSE:** I see.

**H AIS:** Just doing general duty, you know, supplying air force. I didn't become an air force mechanic. Probably could if I'd had any inclination. But they kept me on mostly for clerical duty.

**H OUSE:** Do you have any memories, I know you weren't there most of the time. Do you have any memories of Capitol Hill during World War II? Like do you remember hearing about Pearl Harbor being bombed?

**H AIS:** Oh. When Pearl Harbor, that's a nice story. I was at the Redskins. The Redskins were playing that afternoon and everybody was interested in football game. But about halfway through the game, they start making loudspeaker, the loudspeaker was asking army personnel to leave the game and report back to duty. And nobody knew what the situation was until after the game was over. That was my first experience, at that Redskins game, the day Pearl Harbor was bombed.

**H OUSE:** Was that at Griffith Stadium?

**H AIS:** Yeah, Griffith Stadium.

**H OUSE:** So you came back then when the war was over? Is that when you came back home?

**H AIS:** Yeah, I was in the army from 1942 to 1945.

**H OUSE:** Then you came back, and you worked in your father's grocery?

**H AIS:** Yeah. And then my brother-in-law came along, and I worked along with him until '55. And then after '55... Even working in the store, I started buying up neighborhood properties. My father made me buy the house next door to Hais Market. He was interested in owning property.



**Sidney Hais at work in grocery store, ca 1950-1955.**

**HOUSE:** When did you buy that store? The house next door to the store?

**H AIS:** I bought the house next door, and I paid \$4,500.

**HOUSE:** Do you remember when that was or how old you were? About?

**H AIS:** Let's see I bought that before... No, I bought that after I came back. And this was in the '50's, 1950's.

**HOUSE:** So that was your introduction to real estate?

**H AIS:** Yeah, uh-huh, 706 C Street, NE. Paid like \$5,000.

**HOUSE:** And you mentioned earlier, then you got into, you had a real estate office?

**H AIS:** Oh yeah, I learned the retail beverage business. I didn't like the conditions there so I enrolled as a sales person with a broker, and they gave a course in real estate law and everything. I stayed about two years with a real estate broker. After that I, then start doing my own buying and selling independently of

being a broker. I called myself a restorer or an investor. I spent two years as a sales person and then this was in the late 50's, early 60's...

**HOUSE:** These were mostly on Capitol Hill?

**H AIS:** That was my base of operation, because I opened an office at 509 C Street, NE. I converted it into a real estate office and operated out of there with some associates. I was the sole owner of that and that was right in the middle of the block across from Stanton Park.

**HOUSE:** What kind of houses did you buy on the Hill? Were they large houses or small houses or all kinds of houses?

**H AIS:** All kinds of houses, because I knew that there was a demand for houses. It was a lot more challenging than working retail or working the grocery store.

**HOUSE:** How did you find the houses to build, I mean to buy?

**H AIS:** I did through a series of different ways to some of the brokers who only wanted to sell on commission. People wanted to move quickly, and he would ask for a cash offer. I had access to credit with the banks. If I needed money, they would supply me with money to buy a house and pay all cash. And then I would either rent the house, which was the smartest thing I ever did. I'd buy up a number of houses through the years and rent them for a period of 15 to 20 years or more and hold onto them as rental properties. Along with my wife, we were able to not have an agent collecting. We used to do our own collecting, because we kept on top of it. But we never did actual manual labor. We always hired, because my father taught me that manual labor is not as profitable as investing. [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** How many of these houses did you ever own? Do you know, on the Hill? Do you have an estimate?

**H AIS:** [Laughs] The story... I never carried but six or seven of these and...

**HOUSE:** These are notebooks you have of the ads.

**H AIS:** Yeah, uh-huh. And every time I had a house, I had to advertise it to get calls. One of the better things I learned through that... If someone called me and wanted to buy the house, I would get their information and where they work, and get enough information to call what used to be the Stone's Mercantile Agency, which was comparable to a credit bureau. And before I'd even go out to show a house to a prospective, I would call Stone's Mercantile Agency and say what have you got on this person here. Is his credit good? Has he been, you know, has he got good credit? And then after Stone's (I'd do this on

the telephone), said these people are qualified, I would make the appointment and show them house and hope to sell it.

**HOUSE:** I thought as long as we've mentioned the notebooks, I would read or summarize a couple of these ads. They might be interesting.

**HAI:** Yeah. There are quite a few on Capitol Hill, most in NE.

**HOUSE:** I'm just going to read a couple here just so that people who are listening to this tape or reading it will have a little idea. This is one from 1968, a little ad you have posted in here. It says: "Tourist rooming house." This must have been a house that was for sale, yes, it says: "House for sale. "One thousand dollars down, \$160 a month. Three story brick, two full baths, 643 Fourth Street, NE. Seven large rooms with big, full kitchen. Vacant, good condition. Last used as a tourist home. Excellent terms from owner." And then it says: "Call any time." And gives your number. You must have been a night owl. Was that your number?

**HAI:** I used to work out of my home until I got the office.

**HOUSE:** I see. Here's another one I thought was interesting. This was from late August, the very end of August, 1971. You have a note here that this is 250 Tenth Street SE.

**HAI:** Good area.

**HOUSE:** It says: "Capitol Hill, 200 block 10<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Very active block. Ready for restoration. Owner will finance. Two-story, unrestored, tapestry brick. Six rooms, plus two enclosed, heated porches. In livable condition. As little as \$2500 down, will handle monthly payments approximately \$200."

**HOUSE:** "Priced in the low \$20's.

**HAI:** [Laughs]

**HOUSE:** Then, I take it nobody bought it, because I see here just a few months later...

**HAI:** Eventually I sold it.

**HOUSE:** Right, but this is nine months later now. This is the very end of March, early April, 1972. We have that same property, 250 Tenth Street, SE. The ad says: "Capitol Hill, 10 percent down, VA no-money down. Attractively restored, all brick, fireplace, large living room, dining room, new kitchen, heated panel sunroom, second [I'm not sure if that's fireplace or floor], three bedrooms, new bath, heated panel den and/or fourth bedroom. Basement plus drive-in inside parking. Priced in the lower \$40's. Call any day until 10:00 p.m."

**H AIS:** That was after I restored it.

**H OUSE:** Right! So nine months later somebody else could have bought that, but they didn't. So you did. So that gives us a little example. Were other people doing similar kinds of things then—renovations and buying?

**H AIS:** Oh yeah. There was a combination of people involved in real estate. The people in this book were investors and the brokers that I had good rapport with were Beau Brogan. He was... (I don't know if that name ever crossed your path). Rhea Radin was a very active Capitol Hill broker. Barbara Held. When you said you knew of. They were all involved in real estate. There was a young man by the name of Herb Lerner, L-e-r-n-e-r. He had a number of properties starting at Eighth and Pennsylvania Avenue and going all the way down to the Navy Yard. He had nightclubs, he had storefronts, he owned many piece of property. He was not a broker, but he was an investor. And he did real well. He kept a bar, beer parlor right next to Miller's Furniture Store. I wish I could remember the name of that place.

**H OUSE:** Miller's Furniture there at Eighth Street SE...

**H AIS:** Yeah. Eighth and Pennsylvania. Herb Lerner was quite active. And he ended up buying a piece of property, Tenth and Maryland Avenue for a very low price. Something like maybe \$15,000, \$20,000. At Tenth and Maryland. He contracted the work out, and he made an apartment and a very luxurious house above it. On the first floor. Next to Finley's Gyms, you remember you mentioned Finley's Gym.

**H OUSE:** Right.

**H AIS:** And he was this Herbert ... Had a swimming pool. Tenth and Maryland Avenue. And he bought the house, didn't pay more than \$20,000. But he put a lot of money into it. Made a swimming pool, and a luxurious two stories above the apartment and one below. I was close to working with him, we worked together.

**H OUSE:** Did you work with other businesses on the Hill? Banks and title companies?

**H AIS:** Yeah. Lawyers' Title on Pennsylvania Avenue, right next door to Donohue Construction, Donohue Real Estate office. That was right the same block, 300 block of Pennsylvania or 200 block. On Pennsylvania Avenue.

**H OUSE:** What were the banks you used, or savings and loans?

**H AIS:** I used Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank at Eighth and East Capitol. That was my first banking experience. And then I banked with Eastern Savings and Loan for mortgage money. That was at Fourth

and Pennsylvania Avenue. And they were a very popular source of mortgages on the Hill. And there was a Riggs Bank at Eighth and D Streets SE. It might still be there, I'm not sure.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

TAPE 2/SIDE 2

**HAI:** Did we mention the hardware store that was operating, Southeast Hardware, Lock and Key. All the hardware. Lot of the real estate people dealt with them.

**HOUSE:** District Lock and Hardware?

**HAI:** Yeah, District Lock and Hardware.

**HOUSE:** Right. I don't think we mentioned it before in this recording.

**HAI:** Yeah. And they were real popular with the people that needed supplies. That was before the Home Depot type, Hechinger's came on line.

**HOUSE:** So who did your restorations?

**HAI:** Handymen. That was another rather difficult thing, because the skilled mechanics... Well, we either couldn't afford them or didn't want to pay their prices. So we used the handyman guys that were not exactly mechanics, or trained mechanics. And there we had problems, you know, getting the right... We didn't seek, the houses that we're talking to... [cat meows] (Is he bothering you?) Handyman were precarious situation, because you had to keep track of them, hope he didn't get drunk on the job and so forth and so on. The reason for using the handymen instead of trained mechanics was the fact that the properties that we're talking about were not primary Capitol Hill valuable properties yet. They were borderline properties. And that's the reason I kept them rented for a good many years. Because the interval between the time I bought them and I rented a good large number of them over the years, was because of the acceleration. You know, I bought them very reasonable, and by the time that Capitol Hill progressed and became more fashionable or desirable for government workers, the properties had increased in value. I'll give you an example. We bought 220 12th Street, bought it with my sister, for \$5500, and Perpetual Savings and Loan gave us a mortgage of \$4500. We kept it 15, 20 years and ended up selling it for what we thought was a great price, for \$90,000. But it's probably worth \$200,000, \$300,000 today. Two hundred block of 12<sup>th</sup> off of Lincoln Park. That story could be repeated over and over, because if I had any success it was the fact that I waited for the inflation to set in, or the appreciation I should say. These houses increased in value tremendously over the years I held them. Now being a landlord wasn't the easiest thing, [Laughs] but we handled it because my wife was pretty good, you know

at keeping track of these guys. In fact, I remember the time when she wore into one of the guys was doing sloppy work and she kicked his wooden horse that he was sawing with. She kicked it and told him, fired him on the spot.

**HOUSE:** What was he doing?

**H AIS:** He was goofing off. You know, not doing good work, and so she kicked the—what do you call those things that you saw on?

**HOUSE:** Oh yeah, that's right, that's a horse.

**H AIS:** She kicked it from under him. Says go, fired him. She was tough that way, and she was an asset in that respect.

**HOUSE:** What was your wife's name?

**H AIS:** Roxie. Roxie Kurten Hais. That's her picture. [ed: pointed]

**HOUSE:** OK. Where were you living then? You weren't living on the Hill at that time, were you?

**H AIS:** No, when I got married we lived in 16<sup>th</sup> and Harvard Street for a while. And then our first, no she lived in Quebec House, Connecticut Avenue and Quebec. It was called the Quebec Apartments, and we lived in a top floor apartment facing Rock Creek Park. I still stayed in the real estate investment business, and she became sort of a partner in it, although she didn't need that business to make a living because she had been trained to be a dress designer. She had learned the garment trade. She came over from the old country too, and she learned to sew real good, to be a seamstress, and then put together clothes.

**HOUSE:** OK. So, you were living off the Hill, but you were continuing to work on the Hill. And you did this real estate business on the Hill, basically 1960 to 1980. Is that right?

**H AIS:** From 1960..., got married. I was involved before 1960. In the late 50's, middle '50's, I got involved in real estate. I went to work for, as I told you, for a real estate broker. I got a salesman's license, and then I decided that... Then I got involved with people... I lived in the Woodruff for a while. That was a hotel/apartment on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. One of my school mates was into this investing business. He says don't waste your time being a salesperson. He said come with me, and I'll show you how to become an investor in real estate. So he gave me my basic training in real estate by taking me all over—with the auctions, sales, meeting the brokers who wanted the cash deal, and all that. I broke into real estate as a salesman first, and then as an investor back in the 50's and 60's.

**HOUSE:** Now I know when Martin Luther King was assassinated...

**H AIS:** 1968.

**H OUSE:** 1968. And there were a lot of riots and there was a lot of burning. H Street was devastated. It's only now really starting to come back. What did that do in terms of your business?

**H AIS:** Well, I was downtown with my wife on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. I think we were shopping for supplies at the electrical store. When we went out to our car, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW was smoke and fires in the stores, and riots were going on. And the people were rushing all over the place with market baskets full of groceries. The black people were robbing the stores of goods, you know, burning the stores, and then taking the merchandise and running off in different directions with grocery carts or whatever they could carry with them.

**H OUSE:** What did this do to your business, because you had a lot of houses in the Capitol Hill neighborhood? Did that make people much less interested in living on the Hill, or buying a house?

**H AIS:** No, the Hill wasn't affected as badly as H Street, NE, Seventh Street, NW, and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. They were the three areas. And I remember Marion Barry, seeing a picture of him dressed, back in '68, Marion Barry dressed up in African garb, you know, with the African...

**H OUSE:** Dashiki.

**H AIS:** Yeah. ... [deleted at request of interviewee] on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. It was either a picture or actual seeing him march up and down with these people, you know. What was their slogan? "Black is beautiful." Something like that. And that was the era of the riots which caused a lot of ... For about 10, 15 years later these stores were still only shells.

**H OUSE:** So this didn't harm your business of doing houses, selling houses? You had some on I Street, NE, for example, I saw in those books.

**H AIS:** If you weren't on these commercial streets, then the dwellings, the burnt dwellings... In fact, the story goes that one of our tenants placed a sign on one of our houses, "Don't burn this baby, 'cause soul brother lives here." And they did not do very insignificant [ed: probably meant significant] damage to residential properties, and because there was a demand for housing, I stayed with the business. Because the commercial was the only blight in the city.

**H OUSE:** And your businesses were mostly residential. I mean your properties.

**H AIS:** Yeah, almost strictly.

**HOUSE:** So, when and why did you stop doing real estate on the Hill? When did you get out of the housing business on the Hill?

**H AIS:** Best I could determine was 1956. Until the late, middle, late '80's.

**HOUSE:** OK. And why, why did you... You just retired at that point?

**H AIS:** Yeah. Well, I had accumulated financially security, and Marion Barry was, made it real tough to do things. At one point, I don't know exactly the chronological thing, but at one time, I don't know if I told you this story, but he proposed a bill, and it was passed in the D.C. City Council whereby they would charge anyone that would buy a house and make a profit. He would, he got an order through the City Council taxing the gain 97 percent. [ed: This 97 percent is total of federal tax, DC income tax and this special tax.]

**HOUSE:** Because if you sold the house... Capital gains...

**H AIS:** If I bought a house and you didn't do any work on it or changed tenants or whatever, and just flipped it so to speak, he would demand 97 percent of the gain. Which didn't make sense. And we fought that by organizing, you know, the real estate... Legal representatives fought that for three years. Not many people, I think, observed it, but it was the law of the city at that time. Ninety-seven percent. And things like that disenchanted people from being in real estate, you know, as a buyer. But it all turned around. If you remember Washington, all those blighted buildings along 14<sup>th</sup> Street, H Street, you remember them? They were in your time.

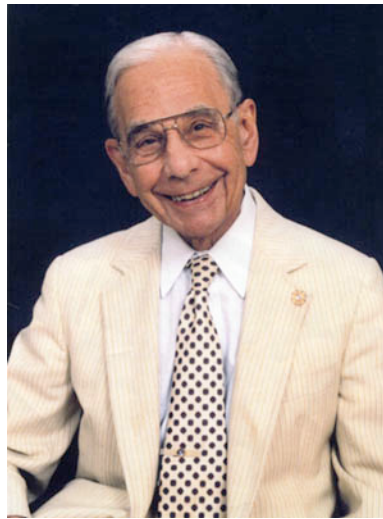
**HOUSE:** Yes.

**H AIS:** So the reason I stayed with it, it didn't affect the residential part of real estate to that extent.

**HOUSE:** After you retired, I know you've kept busy. What kinds of things have you been doing?

**H AIS:** Oh yeah, then I went into investing money into Federal insured mortgage, not mort..., yeah mort... When I sold a house and the people were short on cash, I would take back part of the financing. So I had a steady income from the mortgages that I took back. Sometimes I took back the whole mortgage, you know. Sold the house to you for \$15 [thousand], and you put down \$5 [thousand], I'd take the \$10,000 note and collect it monthly. If I sold it and got a mortgage from a savings and loan and the people only had \$1,000, and the savings and loan—and the house let's say was \$20,000—savings and loan would only give me \$15,000 on the house and the people only had \$1,000 down. I would take a \$4,000 note or whatever the case may be and collect it monthly. And so eventually 'cause I qualified my salespeople that I sold to carefully because, you know, I didn't want to go through the motions of getting a

bad payer. I collected on mortgages. And then I had an elderly gentleman those days who had been through the same thing 20, 30 years, and he owned a lot of property. He was already at my stage of life that I am now. He had cash pouring in from mortgages that he had financed, or houses he had sold, and built up quite a substantial amount of cash or money that was not invested, but laying in the bank. So I used to pick him up, he still had some properties. I picked up this elderly gentleman almost daily and take him to look at his houses to see if they were in good shape. He finally was able to sell them all and got more money, but he wanted to invest the money. So he, I would buy the houses, and he would finance them, you know, on long-term mortgages.



**Sidney Hais in 1995.**

**HOUSE:** I know you've been involved in a lot of volunteer work too. Do you want to just tell us briefly what some of those volunteer things are? Your baseball, for example?

**H AIS:** Oh my first experience in baseball was going to the games when I was eight and 10 years old. My uncles and aunts, my mother's brothers were baseball fans, and they would take me regularly to the games that played at Griffith Stadium. In the course of events, I'd go at least every Friday that they played in Washington, because it was ladies' day. My mother's sister was a baseball fan, and she took me to Griffith Stadium every Friday. She got in free, and I was that age where the kids got in free on Friday afternoon. One Friday afternoon the umpire called a bad decision against the Washington Senators. There was a large group of ladies there. They didn't like the call, and they ran out on the field with their umbrellas (it was a cloudy day) and start beating up on the umpires for the bad decision they made. I got an article where it was written up in the paper.

**HOUSE:** [Laughs] Well, I was thinking of the things that you're doing now with the baseball. You're supporting...

**H AIS:** Oh, up to today? Because I was always a baseball fan, I always got connected to the group that was... After Washington left and the Griffith family sold out to Bob Short, and Bob Short came in, bought the team 30 years ago, *sold* it 30 years ago. I mean he bought the team and then moved it to Minneapolis [ed: Texas], and left us without a team. So in the interval years, there always been an organized group of people that wanted to bring baseball back. Three or four years ago, I met with a group of people that were interested in bringing baseball back. Some of them were financially able to buy teams. It was just a matter of getting the right deal or getting a team that was for sale. I remember meeting at the, where old Griffith Stadium used to be is the Howard University Hospital, on Florida Avenue and Seventh Street. We met at the Howard University Conference Center on occasion just to lobby and make plans to petition the major league baseball to move back to Washington.

In the course of events, we were telling different stories about the old days and baseball and Babe Ruth and Walter Johnson, oh great performers of yesteryears. Everybody was swapping baseball stories. I got up and told them being 10 years old, I went to the '24 World Series with my aunt and uncle, my mother's family, and saw Walter Johnson finish the last game in 1924. They played the New York Giants and the Washington Senators, at that time. Walter Johnson had lost two games. At the end of the seventh game, the best four out of the seven, whoever won the four games out of the seven were the world's champions in those days. Walter Johnson had lost two games prior, it was three games each, three won and three lost. Giants won three and the Senators won three. They went into the last game. Walter Johnson didn't start the game, but towards the end of the game, they were tied in the last inning, so the game went to twelve innings. I described the winning, how they won the game in the twelfth inning. It was two outs, and the score was 3-3. If Washington got a run, it would mean they were world champions in '24. So I told them the story about how that last game, there was two outs and a Washington player by the name of Muddy Ruel was on second base. Earl McNeely, the center fielder, was at bat. Earl McNeely hit an easy ground ball to Freddie Lindstrom on third base, and it hit a pebble and bounced out in the outfield. Muddy Ruel, Washington Senators, came and scored the winning run and made the score 4-3. That was the game. That hit won the game and the World Series. So I told that story to the conference over at Howard University. One of the guys, Mr. Malek who's one of the competitors for this new team, he came over (this is two, three years ago). He said if we get a team in Washington, I'll invite you...He was so struck by my memory of '24 World Series that he said if Washington gets the team and I'm the owner, you'll sit in my box for the opening day game.

**H OUSE:** Well, I'll bet you're hoping he buys it. We've got a team now it looks like. Well, that's great. I've been looking at your wall here, and I'm seeing all these awards. I'm not going to be able to do all of them. But I know you support Cal Ripkin baseball.

**H AIS:** Yeah. Uh-huh.

**H OUSE:** What is Cal Ripkin baseball?

**H AIS:** It's for young kids, rather than have them team up with gangs, they... I think in that list of stuff I gave you the Cal Ripkin story is written up. He's the inspiration for these kids to play Little League baseball. They're called Babe Ruth/Cal Ripkin Little League teams. One lady in Kiwanis, she's up in her, 60's, 70's, she is in charge of 800 kids. You have to fund them, to buy them uniforms. It's a \$1,000 to outfit a kid's team. So I adopted a number of teams, called Sid's Kid's.

**H OUSE:** That's great. I see you have awards for that. You also have awards from the Kiwanis, I know you're active in the Kiwanis. I know you're active in Washington's Oldest Inhabitants, and you're a vice president in charge of membership recruitment. You've done wonderfully there. I don't know, there are so many awards here. I can't tell if there are other things I should...

**H AIS:** When I was active in real estate doing restoration, later on instead of doing... When I knew that Capitol Hill was worth spending lots of money for, you know, doing complete restorations, I became a member and a board director on the National Association of Builders. I was on that for about 10 years, I guess. They represented the building trade. I served on the board for the National Association of Realtors and got awards for different things, the work that we did. We were constantly fighting City Hall, you know, and we needed to have an organization. We were well supported by Washington Gas Company, the C&P [Chesapeake and Potomac], different utility companies. They were all in favor of supporting the builders' association.

**H OUSE:** OK. Well, this has been an excellent interview. I don't know if there's anything you want to add?

**H AIS:** Well, let's see if I have any... [Pause] My teachers, of course, I don't know if they mean anything to anybody

[Tape seems to have been stopped for a bit.]

**H OUSE:** What was that? Band concerts?

**H AIS:** The military bands would play almost every night in the good weather on the *east* side of the Capitol. People would come down from all over Capitol Hill to hear the bands.

**H OUSE:** They did that until very recently actually.

**H AIS:** Yeah. I don't know, for some reason they don't use the east side, I don't think.

**HOUSE:** Now, of course, they're doing the construction.

**H AIS:** And then the band concerts at the Marine Barracks are still going on. And that was a...

**HOUSE:** Friday nights.

**H AIS:** Yeah, Friday night.

**HOUSE:** This has been a wonderful interview, and I thank you very much for doing this, Mr. Hais.

END OF INTERVIEW

### Addendum

The copy of the Stuart class of 1928 photo from Sidney Hais, shown on page 9, has two columns of signatures and other information on the back. There are 38 people in the photo, including Sidney Hais; 40 persons (not including his two younger sisters who added their names at the bottom) signed their names. As identified by Sidney Hais these signatures include some of his classmates as well as several of his teachers and faculty from three area schools. According to the *Washington Evening Star* of January 31, 1928, this graduation took place on that day and 94 diplomas were awarded. (The article lists the names.). Perhaps this is only one section of the winter graduating class. Several students wrote 8B, with a superscript "1", next to their names. (Only 8B is shown below.) This is apparently a section of the class, and perhaps only some of the students in this section noted that. There are not signatures for everyone in the photo, and probably some of the students who signed are not in the photo. This photo, with the signatures, is a copy. The Sumner School Archives has the original photo, also donated by Hais. The signatures are not on the back of that photo, but on a separate piece of paper. Another piece of paper associated with the photo at Sumner has signatures of additional students.

Sidney Hais is in the third row, the fourth person from the right. Unless noted otherwise identifications and other notes in brackets below related to individuals were provided by Hais.

#### First column of signatures:

Gladys Hummer 8B

Raymond Dixon 8B

Max Gershenson 8B [Front row, third from left]

Elizabeth C. Corkhill Section 8B

Jessie Reichard 8B [Second row, fifth from right]

Elmer L. Smith [Third row, second from left. He lived at 612 C Street NE.]

Beverly Langmead 8B [Second row, fourth from right. Her family owned Langmead's One Arm Restaurant on 14th Street NW, so named because diners sat in school desk type seats with one arm rest. They lived in the 200 block of Ninth Street NE.]

Constance Calomiris 8B [Probably, second row, second from left. The Calomiris family was "big" in real estate.]

Elsie Bargagni 8B

Margaret Schreiber 8B

David Jarvis 8b

Florence Davis 8B [Third row, third from left]

Lloyd Mockabee 8B [Front row, in the middle of the pennant. His family was known for civic activities on the Hill and his aunt was a local teacher.]

Leah Effenbach [Second row, far right. She became a nationally known pianist and played at Carnegie Hall.]

Dorothy Abell [Probably, second row, second from right. According to the *Star* article, she was valedictorian.]

Eugene Jaeger 8B [Top row, far left. His family was “well to do” and had a large home on Fifth Street NE, across from Peabody school, the first house off the alley next to the Fifth Street Deli.]

Thomas Virnstein 8B

James S. Dalzell 8B

Bertha Lipscomb

William Martin

Etta Mangum

Leon Cohen [Probably not in photo]

Robert Slye [Top row, third from left. He became a track star at Eastern High.]

Forrest A. Hanback, President [of the class, per the *Star*.]

Maury Disney [Third row, far left]

Stanley Levy [Third row, third from right. His father had Levy Shoe Store on H Street between Fifth and Sixth NE.]

Hubert S. Fletcher

Second column of signatures:

S. W. Beller [Stuart teacher, female]

L. B. Berryman [Stuart business courses teacher, female]

G. F. Youngblood [Stuart athletic director. He was of American Indian ancestry.]

Best Wishes Sidney Claus J. Schwartz [Stuart Principal]

Kenneth M. Hawkins

Walter L. Griest [Stuart faculty]

M. Gertrude Young [Peabody principal when Hais entered in the fourth grade. She lived in the 600 block of Massachusetts Avenue.]

E. H. Moore [Peabody female teacher]

B. M. Harrison [Hais' sixth grade female teacher at Peabody]

K. D. Brady [Hais' third grade female teacher at Hilton]

Frances C. Chandler [Stuart business courses teacher]

Annie Laubner [spelling not clear to transcriber]

Ada R. Entwiste [Stuart art teacher. She lived in the 1000 block of Massachusetts Avenue at Lincoln Park, across from Peoples drug store.]

Naomi Hais [in a younger person's handwriting, Sidney Hais' younger sister]

Margaret Hais [in a younger person's handwriting, Sidney Hais' younger sister]

1/28/31 [This is the graduation date with the day and year reversed.]

Others in photo who did not sign the back -- identified and described by Sidney Hais:

Yvonne Beuchert Top row, fourth from left. Her father was the neighborhood plumber whose shop was at Fifth and B NE, across from Peabody School.

Eugene Blake Front row, third from right. He lived in the 600 block of Massachusetts Avenue NE.

Mildred Holmes Second row, far left. She lived at 623 Massachusetts Avenue NE.

Franklin Lady First row, fourth from right, holding the tip of the pennant. He became a dentist with an office at Eighth and E NE.

Edythe Lazaroff Second row, third from right. She became an actress and performed on Broadway and in radio soap operas.