

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Rabbi Barry Marks

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
People of Faith Oral History project

Interview # PFM-A-L-2017-037

Rabbi Barry Marks, the rabbi at Temple Israel in Springfield, Illinois from 1973 to 2017, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *People of Faith – Mosaic of Faiths* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Mar 13, Mar 27, May 8 & May 30, 2017

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Edward Schoenbaum, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:30 + 1:10 + 1:17 + 0:54 / 1.5 + 1.17 + 1.28 + 0.9 = 4.85 hrs

Session 1: Barry Marks' ancestors and their story

Session 2: Barry's early life in Baltimore, schooling and years at Johns Hopkins U.

Session 3: Theological Seminary, ordination, first Temple in Danville and law school

Session 4: Experiences at Temple Israel in Springfield from 1973 through 2018

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 11, 2018.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

Barry Marks, *People of Faith*, PFM-A-L-2017-037

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Barry Marks was born on May 11, 1943 in Baltimore Maryland. His four grandparents were born in the Czarist Russian empire. His mother's grandparents and parents came from Ukraine to Rochester New York in 1910 and 1914 respectively. His father's parents came from Latvia to England in the 1880's. They subsequently emigrated from England to Baltimore in 1906. His paternal grandfather, Joseph Marks Gribeshok, dropped his last name when he became an American citizen. His mother, who grew up in Rochester, was very smart and following her graduation from high school, was offered a scholarship to Smith College. The Great Depression, however, prevented her from pursuing a college education, and she went to work as a stenographer. In 1936 she moved to Washington, DC to take a job at the United States Treasury. His mother and father were married in 1939; Barry was born in 1943, and his sister, Jodean, was born in 1948.

Barry grew up in Baltimore and went to Louisa May Alcott Elementary School, only three blocks from where he lived. He then went to Robert E. Lee Junior High School, to which he had to take a 45-minute bus and trackless trolley ride. He graduated from Baltimore City College (which, despite its name is a high school) in 1960 and from Johns Hopkins University in 1964. While in high school he studied Latin and French, and majored in classics - Latin and Greek, while in college. He also pursued Jewish studies at Baltimore Hebrew College, which is now part of Towson State University.

From 1964 to 1969, Marks attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. He was ordained as a rabbi in 1969 and moved to Danville, Illinois, where he was rabbi of Congregation Israel from 1969 to 1971. In 1971 he took a break from the rabbinate and became a student at the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign-Urbana. During his time in Champaign-Urbana, he worked as the administrative assistant to the rabbi of the local Jewish congregation, Sinai Temple, helping out with the congregation's Hebrew School and Sunday School programs.

From 1973 to 2017 Rabbi Marks has been the rabbi at Temple Israel in Springfield, and a great contributor to the community of Springfield. He was one of the founders of the Greater Springfield Interfaith Association, and was its President from 1985-1987 and again in 1999-2000, and has been its Treasurer since January 2017. His leadership throughout our community was recognized when he received the 2011 First Citizen Award. This award began in 1963.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Temple Israel, Springfield, Illinois; Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Congregation Israel, Decatur, Illinois; growing up in Baltimore, Maryland; Jewish education during junior high and high school; Baltimore Hebrew College

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to

preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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