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JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SMALL TOWN

A Sociological Study of Jewish Identification

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master
of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

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DIGEST

The purpose of this thesis is to arrive at an understanding of what it means to be Jewish in a small town. This study gathers together the memories, feelings, perceptions, longings and hopes of Jews living in a small town. It examines their interaction with a non-Jewish environment, while they attempt to maintain their group and religious identity. This thesis looks at the deep commitment of these Jews to their family religion, temple and community.

These small-town Jews also have fears. They are afraid lest their children marry non-Jews. They believe that there is an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in their community and they become anxious when they realize the rate at which their Jewish community is declining.

The Jews of Williamson are heirs of diversified and rich backgrounds, but they have one main goal in common; to provide for the well-being of their children and to transmit a love of Judaism to them. These Jews feel that they know what it means to be Jewish, what they must believe as Jews, how their Jewishness should be expressed, and what their Judaism demands of them. The Jews of Williamson are concerned and enthusiastic Jews who do not take their Judaism for granted. They care enough to disagree, do battle with, get upset about, defend, protect, praise and always seek to improve. Although limited with regard to the extent of Jewish exposure, one senses that there is a depth of Jewish commitment which is more genuine and sincere than can be found among Jews in other larger Jewish centers.

to Peggy

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INTRODUCTION

As one winds his way by automobile on the narrow Appalachian roads, one beholds many sights. The mountains, richly covered with deep shades of green, tower on all sides. Those majestic strongholds stand powerful and seem to say, "my friend, you will come and go, but I will long endure after you have gone." Suddenly, there is a clearing, and a run-down shack comes into view. One notices the broken, wooden steps, an abandoned car lying in the yard, a mother rocking endlessly on the porch. It is a familiar sight in Appalachia . . . poverty . . . of a most severe degree--but somehow amidst the grandeur of nature, its impact is softened. As one continues driving over valleys and mountains on deserted roads, one is struck by the impression of a world at peace. Finally, one approaches the town of Williamson, tucked neatly away in the West Virginia mountains. In comparison with the scattered dwellings along the way, this small mining town of six thousand seems like a buzzing metropolis, an oasis in the midst of a wilderness.

Williamson's history begins in 1892 when it was incorporated as a town.[1] The site of a cornfield only one year prior to its incorporation, Williamson grew rapidly after the main line of the Norfolk and Western Railway was extended through it to tap the vast coal resources of this area. The town was named for Wallace J. Williamson, son of pioneer settlers, who gathered a large fortune in timber and real estate. Finally, in 1905, Williamson was chartered as a city.

One of the two members of the first graduating class of Williamson High School, Okey Paul Keadle, gave an account of "How Williamson Grew To Be a Prosperous City," in his oration at the school's first commence-

ment exercises on April 27, 1910. Here are excerpts of how Keadle reviewed the early years of Williamson's development:

> Not very many years ago, a traveler passing through this country would have seen a large field of waving corn occupying the entire space where now our small, flourishing city stands. Indeed so recent is this date that the track of the plow still remains on Reservation Hill . . . .
>
> In the year 1900, a schoolhouse was built in Williamson. Before this time schools were held in almost any place that could be secured for the purpose, now they had a permanent home. By 1907, the number of school children had grown so large that the old building erected in 1900 was unable to hold them all, so a new one was built containing twelve rooms and two large halls.
>
> In 1904, the town saw the necessity of paved streets. In rainy seasons large mud ponds would stand in the streets so that pedestrians as well as wagons and trains had much difficulty in travelling in them.
>
> Owing to the abundance of lumber and the comparative scarcity of other building material, the earlier houses of the town were built of wood and very often the city has suffered from disasterous conflagrations. The worst of these fires occured in the summer of 1906. It swept out almost the entire block running from 208 to 228 on the north side of Third Avenue and from 205 to 227 on the south side, destroying in all about twenty buildings and causing the loss of many thousand dollars. In the long run, however, as is usually the case in such instances, the result was beneficial to the city for it removed all the old buildings on that street and gave room for new ones to be built.

Mr. Keadle ends with an optimistic outlook with regard to Williamson's continued growth and prosperity:

> The future for Williamson is very bright indeed. If an inhabitant should leave the city now, stay away for about ten years and then visit it, he would be astonished by what he would see. He will see Williamson strung all up and down Tug River for about three miles, all of which will be connected by a fine system of street cars. He will see a fine system of railroad yards. The Norfolk and Western Railway Company will have stretched across Tug River and extended their yards very much. Second Avenue will be the business street of the city with many fine buildings besides those that it already has. In Williamson he will see an equal to any city in Southern West Virginia.2

Moreover, the early history of Williamson is only partially complete without the mention of a small band of Jews who settled in this area before the turn of the century, According to one respondent:

> A determined lot they were, determined to make Williamson a small oasis in Jewish life in this community. They never forgot who they were and from whence they came . . . and they earned the respect and affection of Jews and non-Jews alike.

Many of the early Jewish settlers to Williamson were Russian immigrants who came to America to seek a better life for themselves and their families. Williamson presented an opportunity of a growing coal center. There was a need to provide the miners with goods. One respondent tells of his father who came to Williamson and took up the occupation of canvasser. With a pack on his back, loaded with blankets and spreads, he went to the coal camps. He would make a certain amount of commission for each item he sold. But according to this same respondent:

> He finally began to realize that if one was going to sell for someone, he might as well sell for himself. So he and another Jewish canvasser got together, pooled $350.00 each, bought a few items and began to canvass for themselves. They had a terrible struggle with no credit and no backers but by the mid-1920's they were fairly well-established.
>
> Then the labor unions came into Williamson, and there were terrible blood mine wars. People were displaced, their furniture ruined by fires, no one was allowed on the streets after dark. My dad and his partner helped these people get started over again. They let all old accounts be forgotten.

This type of story is repeated by other respondents:

> My grandfather left Russia to escape conscription. He could speak English and he came to America and travelled with a pack on his back. He followed the railroad lines. His son was the first Jewish baby born in Mingo County (the county in which Williamson is located) and people came from all over to see the 'Jew-baby'--expecting horns. He was a rarity.
>
> My father left Russia at age 16 to escape conscription. He came to the U.S. in a boat by himself. My father peddled

> with packs on his back--yard goods. Then he bought a horse and buggy. He was a self-educated man--he loved to read.

These first Jewish settlers were orthodox Jews, and the desire to establish regular Jewish services was felt with great urgency. So, in 1916 their worship was started in the "dugout" which was in the basement of the Cinderella Theatre. At first, members would conduct the services. The format of the service was orthodox.

> My father once walked out of High Holiday services. He explained to his father that he could not understand the Orthodox style service here in Williamson. It was after then, that the Temple changed from Orthodox to Reform.

Another respondent explains,

> Daddy was one of the group of Jews who established the Temple. At the 'dugout,' it was more Orthodox, they wore Yarmulkas, prayer-shawls, and davened. Reform was a happy medium--a matter of expediency--we were only able to get a Reform Rabbi. We had some hold-outs who went to Huntington for more traditional services. Services were first on Sunday night, for it was the only time Rabbi Feinstein, who travelled in from Huntington, could conduct services.
>
> Thus, in 1923, in the fall of the year, Rabbi Abraham Feinstein reorganized B'nai Israel Congregation, and introduced the Sunday evening weekly religious service, services necessarily held on Sunday night because of his occupation with the religious services in Ohev Sholom Congregation, in Huntington, on Friday nights and Saturday mornings.3

In 1932, Rabbi Feinstein left Huntington to become rabbi of Mizpah Congregation in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the Williamson Congregation turned to Hebrew Union College students for rabbinic leadership.

One Williamson congregant reminisees:

> In 1921, the founder of Williamson gave land to each church. Then, the big leap forward came, when the new Temple on the hill was conceived and the dream became a reality. To this day it remains a beautiful monument to the vision of those who came before us. How the ladies of the Sisterhood sweated and labored to pay for the new sanctuary, this new B'nai Israel Temple. Dinners and socials were a way of life, with all the ladies watching each penny as though

> it were the last . . . no help was hired then, each one took their turn and sweated it out in the kitchen. What a group of workers they were! And so this Jewish community thrived. And along the way there were the student Rabbis who helped us come in contact with the outside world, so that we could keep abreast of what was going on in the world-wide Jewish community. And there were the Sunday School teachers requited from the community, who came up faithfully each Sunday morning, and learned along with the kids. There was the unusual devotion of two teachers who set a beautiful example in the persons of Mae Albert and Ethel Bodenger. There were the Bar Mitzvahs, the Confirmations, the weddings, the sorrows, and we all shared them together. They were beautiful days, and we hope there will always be a B'nai Israel Congregation in this little town on the Tug river.

Unfortunately, however, the membership of B'nai Israel Congregation has in recent years been growing fewer. The older members die, or retire to Florida; their children move away from Williamson to the larger cities. In the words of one member,

> It's sad to see the Temple form from the basement of the Cinderella Theatre, to the Temple, grow to a membership of fifty-five families and now to see it dwindling.

But this situation is not unique to Williamson. According to Irving Spiegel, in a New York Times article,

> Jewish communities in towns with 250 or fewer Jewish families are concerned by their dwindling numbers, lack of communal services and isolation from the urban mainstream of Jewish life, yet they remain deep-rooted communities with a strong will to survive.[4]

It is interesting to note that "about 5 per cent of American Jewry lives in rural areas,"[5] and "of America's 5,500,000 Jews, 3,700,000--two-thirds of the total--live in or adjacent to ten of America's largest cities."[6]

Spiegel reveals in his article that in a study conducted by B'nai Brith of 150 representative Jews from 50 small towns, participants "feared that their minimal numbers, compounded by a steady emigration of their youth to the big cities, would further diminish the already hobbled viability of their small Jewish communities."[7]

Therefore, this writer feels the need to study this Jewish oasis, while it still remains a vital and flourishing community.

The Sample

In the Williamson study, 18 families were interviewed out of a total population of 24 Jewish families. Husbands and wives participated in interviews in which a questionnaire guide was used as a point of departure, (see appendix) but respondents were encouraged to:

1.) try to narrate experiences.

2.) relate memories and reminiscences.

3.) recall early memories of their childhood.

When possible interviews of spouses were conducted separately.

Age and Family Composition.

When we consider the factor of age, we find that the median age of both men and women is 50 years old. In other words, there are as many adults between the ages of 25-50 as there are over 50, as shown in the chart below.

Total 47 Adults

Age	25-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	Over 70
No. of Adults	4	2	4	6	7	2	11	5		6

The mean age of the children is between 14 and 15 (see below)

Age	4-5	6-8	9-10	12-13	14-15	16	17-18	20
No. of Children	2	1	2	6	3	5	4	1

Total 24 Children

Thus, this point in time is a good one for a study of Jewish identity in Williamson. There is still a sizeable youth population along with a well distributed adult population. What worries Williamson residents, though, is that most couples are beyond their child producing years, the young people leave Williamson after high school and the community is losing its senior citizens due to death and retirement. The Jewish community of Williamson is without a doubt declining quickly and within 10 years they will most likely consist of merely a few families.

Occupation.

The Jew of Williamson is represented in a very limited range of occupations. There is one Jewish dentist, a pharmacist, a radio station owner, and one woman who is a social worker, all the other male respondents are merchants; they own their own stores. Their wives are primarily housewives, although some help out in their husbands' stores. In a mature capitalistic age in which ever-increasing numbers of individuals work for enterprises which they do not themselves own, Williamson Jews follow quite a different pattern. Their occupational involvements seem characteristic of an earlier era, when enterprises were small or at least family-owned. Moreover, our respondents are both prosperous, upper-middle class, and satisfied with the economic order and the place they occupy in it. Perhaps they are the last of their breed though; it is questionable whether their children will be desirous, of emulating their parents' status.

Education.

The educational level of our respondents is not exceptionally high. 58% of all interviewees have had some college or completed college. This figure is in contrast with the "89% of respondents in Sklare's Lake-

ville study, who have had a year or more of higher education."[8]

On the other hand, the grown children of our respondents received college and post-college education. Regardless of their own educational background, respondents feel that a college education for their children is of top priority.

Generation and Descent.

Our sample is dominated by first and second generation Americans. Moreover, the parents and grandparents of respondents are overwhelmingly from East and Central Europe, and especially Russia. The East European immigrants who first came to Williamson really are atypical in their settlement pattern, for as Nathan Glazer points out,

> We know that the East Europeans came in comparatively large numbers and settled in compact areas; it may be that they began to compete with one another, rather than operate as a small middle class serving a larger Gentile public, as the Germans seem to have done.[9]

But these East Europeans who came to Williamson chose to try to carve out a life for themselves by providing services and goods for a large non-Jewish population.

Length of Residence.

One finding which is worth noting is that even the "imports," who are the newcomers to Williamson, as opposed to the "home-grown," who were born and raised in West Virginia, have resided in Williamson, on the average, for 25 years or more. Thus, even the "imports" could be considered long-time residents. Despite this fact, there are many cases in which the "home-grown" and "imports" are significantly different. Yet, on many issues there is a conformity of opinion.

The purpose of this study, then, will be to tap the Jewish consciousness in this small town, to investigate their identity as Jews, so that a total picture of their Jewishness will emerge. First, however, we

must explore the question of what "belonging to a group actually means."

The basic question which we must deal with and which this study directs itself to is:

"What does belonging to a group mean to an individual, and how does that affect his behavior in certain situations?"

Kurt Lewin, in Resolving Social Conflicts, tries to explicate the matter by the following:

> The group to which an individual belongs is the ground on which he stands, which gives or denies him social status, gives or denies him security and help. The firmness or weakness of this ground might not be consciously perceived, just as the firmness of the physical ground on which we tread is not always thought of. Dynamically, however, the firmness and clearness of this ground determine what the individual wishes to do, what he can do, and how he will do it. This is true equally of the social ground as of the physical.[10]

> The group a person belongs to serves not only as a source of help and protection; it also implies certain regulations and taboos . . . . It narrows the individual's 'space of movement' . . . . If belonging to a certain group hinders rather than helps the individual in achieving his dominant goals, a conflict between him and the group arises, even an eagerness to leave the group.[11]

Thus, hatred of Jews by fellow Jews is an expression of the individual's dislike of belonging to the Jewish group. The basic question then becomes can an individual satisfy his own personal needs to a sufficient degree without interfering unduly with the life and purpose of the group.

> There also seems to exist in every underprivileged group a tendency to accept the values of the more privileged group in a given society. The member of the underprivileged group therefore becomes excessively sensitive to everything within his own group that does not conform to those values, because it makes him feel that he belongs to a group whose standards are lower. Such feeling against one's own group conflicts with the natural tendency of the individual in favor of it. The result is a typically ambivalent attitude on the part of members of an underprivileged group toward their own group.[12]

This ambivalence is described in detail by an eastern college coed, who

expressed her feelings as follows:

> You may have noticed that I am the middle speaker. It's a very appropriate place for me, I think, not because I strike a mean between them, but rather because I am on the fence. I haven't quite made up my mind as to what I think or why I think it. And in that, I am typical of the Jewish people.
>
> Look at me. I'm neither here nor there. As a Jewess, I don't amount to much. I come to services when I have to; I've been told that mine is a precious heritage, but I haven't the slightest idea what it is. I can name quite a number of relatively unimportant English poets--but do I know who is the greatest Jewish poet? No. My education has been exclusively Christian. My virtues are the Christian virtues--at least my conceptions are. Occasionally, I discover something in me that is characteristically Jewish--and I am surprised, almost estranged from myself. I know I'm Jewish because I've been told so, because I have Jewish friends. Aside from that, it doesn't mean very much to me.
>
> So you see, as a Jewess I don't amount to much. But I'm not much better as an American either. Here at school I move in a charmed circle of Jews. The other circle, the non-Jews are oblivious of me, and I of them. Occasionally, the circles touch, sometimes more, sometimes less. I become friendly with someone in the other circle. But self-consciously friendly. If it's a boy, I wonder just how he thinks of me; he wonders what his fraternity brothers are saying. If it's a girl, we both congratulate ourselves mentally on our overstepping the bonds of racial prejudice. When I read the Phi Beta Kappa list, I'm careful to point out how many of the chosen people are Jewish. I'm always conscious that I am Jewish whether I hide it or try to impress it upon others.
>
> So what am I? According to Jews, I'm American. According to Americans, I'm Jewish. And I'm wrong, utterly wrong, in being that way. And so it is only by pushing people like me off the fence, which side isn't so important, so long as it's off the fence--that Jews are ever going to be freed from Anti-Semitism. We must remove the beam from our own eyes.[13]

Lewin is quick to point out though, that it is not the belonging to many different groups that is the cause of difficulty, but an uncertainty of belongingness. Our young coed, felt not only was she not a part of the majority, but also not a member of the minority. She believed herself to be in the middle, "neither here nor there," standing between the groups. Thus, the "marginal man" must face countless psycho-

logical difficulties--he may experience uncertainty, instability, and self-hate.

> For the modern Jew there exists an additional factor to increase his uncertainty. He is frequently uncertain about the way he belongs to the Jewish group, and to what degree.[14]

Is Judaism a religious group, a race, a nation, or a culture. This difficulty of describing positively the Jewish group as a whole, adds to the bewilderment of the Jewish individual.

In dealing with the Williamson Jewish community it is my contention that on the whole, they are not marginal individuals. I do not believe that the Jew of Williamson is in a constant state of conflict and uncertainty; for he is rooted enough in his Judaism, to accept his group and be strengthened by it. He does not possess an uncertainty of belongingness. This study will show that the Williamson Jew has a keen sense of what it means to be Jewish in 1973, they know what being Jewish implies, what they must believe as Jews, and how their Jewishness should be expressed.

CHAPTER I

Temple--Nucleus of the Community

The synagogue, a place for communal worship and study, has been one of the most lasting institutions of the Jewish people, and also one of their greatest achievements. The synagogue is not a shrine nor an altar, but a place for prayer and meditation, a place for listening and absorbing, a place for interacting and communicating.

In Zborowski's and Herzog's book, Life is With People, the following description of the synagogue in the "Shtetl," the small-town community of eastern Europe, is offered,

> The structure of the community is, in fact, the structure of the synagogue. This is not because the secular order is carried into the synagogue, but because it would be impossible to separate the religious from the secular--they are fused into one whole. Every act of the weekday world falls within the jurisdiction of Divine law and nothing is too trifling to be considered in relation to the Law.[1]

According to this account, religion was not considered as something separate from daily life; religious and worldly matters were as one. The synagogue, moreover, was a center of Jewish life. It is interesting to note, that today, although American Jews do not actively identify themselves with "Shtetl" existence, nevertheless, in this area of centrality, the synagogue has retained somewhat of a "Shtetl" image. Albert I. Gordon, in his study of suburbia published in 1959, reinforces this idea when he states:

> The synagogue is suburbia's nuclear and most important Jewish institution. More Jewish men and women are identified with it than with any other organized body within the community. It continues, as it has through the ages, to fulfill its threefold function as a House of Prayer, House of Study and House of Assembly.[2]

In the words of Mordecai M. Kaplan, "If 'secular' means 'worldly' and

'religious' means 'spiritual' there is as much that is worldly in the Synagogue as there is what is spiritual in the Community Center."[3] Thus, the synagogue probably has retained its position as nucleus of the Jewish community just because of the fusion between the religious and the worldly.

Furthermore, Gordon maintains:

> The temple has gained its pre-eminence in suburbia less as a religious institution than as usually the first organized body to provide a physical structure in which Jews can meet as Jews within the community. The temple meets more of the real needs of Jews, religiously, socially, and educationally, than any other Jewish institution.[4]

However, despite the temple's centrality, and its desire to meet "the real needs of Jews," the most recent revelations by Professor Fein about Jews' attitudes towards the temple are alarming,

> Our data indicate that the temple is not, for most of its members, an object of significant emotional investment. Only rarely does it elicit enthusiasm, only rarely anger; for most, it is an address of sometime relevance.[5]

Before we consider the role and value of the temple in the lives of the Williamson Jews, the temple background of respondents will first be examined in an attempt to discover how that background compares with temple activity in Williamson.

To begin with, respondents can be divided into two groups; those who were born or raised in West Virginia, the "home-grown," and the "imports," those who came to West Virginia after they had been raised elsewhere (in most cases in the East). These two groups not only differ by virtue of their place of origin, but also with respect to their religious backgrounds. Thus, it is found that the "home-grown" were raised in Reform homes, attended Reform temples, and were brought up with the Union Prayer Book. The "imports," on the other hand, came from

Conservative-Orthodox backgrounds, in which temple was called Schul, and the service assumed a traditional nature.

The contrast becomes more vivid as we read what the various respondents relate about their temple backgrounds. One "import" reports:

> One of the most traumatic experiences was coming to Williamson. My father and I davened every morning and recited the morning prayers. I did this from age seven and on. Being next to father, it became a daily ritual. As I got older, I tried to get away from it. Father felt dismay when I didn't do all of this. After age thirteen, I felt I was winding away from it; I only davened on Saturday morning.

Other "imports" reminisce:

> When I was growing up it was more important for my brother to go to Chedar and have a Bar Mitzvah. My mother and I used to say prayers on Friday night from the Siddur. At Schul, the children went out when they said Kaddish.
>
> I had bad experiences in Schul. (As kids) we didn't understand the depth of Orthodox Judaism. We would 'cut-up' in Schul and would get dirty looks from father.
>
> I was taught to read Hebrew before English. My parents sent me away from our home in Pennsylvania.to attend a Yeshiva in New York in the third grade, My father had a notion to make a Rabbi out of me; an unfulfilled hope of father for himself. I stayed with my uncle in New York who was an Orthodox Rabbi.
>
> When I did go to services, I liked going--even though everything was in Hebrew. I especially liked listening to the Cantor sing.
>
> My father was president of the Orthodox congregation. My father felt we had to be at the head of the class. When the Rabbi came to visit the school, he wore a high hat, he would come and ask the questions--we would have to bench whole prayers. During the inflation, my father was still president and he shelled out money for teachers out of his own pocket.
>
> There was extreme rivalry between the Orthodox and Conservative. We all attended services every 'Yon Tov,' every Friday night and Saturday. Women sat upstairs, men downstairs. We had better go, (to services).
>
> I remember a teacher we had, a nice fellow, and I learned that this fellow was looking for a new job. We had to translate the 'Ethics of the Fathers.' One sen-

tence, my girl-friend couldn't remember. I whispered to her, 'he must not of gotten that job'--he heard that and dismissed the whole class.

We had Orthodox services in the assembly hall of the Moshav (in Israel) for the High Holidays. One of the members of the community led services. We kids stayed outside most of the time and the old men would say, Shhh! Shhh! I had a Bat Mitzvah--no religious service--just a massive celebration.

Thus, for the "imports" coming to Williamson, a town which offered only one brand of Judaism, namely Reform, somewhat of a shock was felt.

> Coming to Williamson was going to the opposite extreme. Williamson was a let-down. I went to Temple here, hoping to enjoy it.

However, this same respondent, as did other "imports," changed his thinking over time.

> What turned me toward Reform was that my son liked Reform. so much. Williamson was my first contact with Reform. When I saw the product of Reform, my son, I was pleased. I never forced the girls into Bat Mitzvah, but they wanted it. In Williamson, it was nice to see my children appreciate what was going on in Temple; unlike when we were children in Schul. It's nice to sit all together on a Friday night.
>
> Now we are regular Temple goers. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world.

What was most important to "imports" was that there was a Jewish house of worship in Williamson. The temple provided a way to satisfy their desire for identification with the Jewish people.

> My mother felt whether one's Orthodox or Reform makes no difference. If there's a Temple--one goes.

A different portrait is painted by the "home-grown" respondents. They were raised on Reform Judaism.

> My dad helped build the Temple (in Beckley, W.Va.), and served as president. We were regular Temple attenders. I remember Rabbi Shinedling; he got there one year before my Bar Mitzvah. I went for Hebrew lessons, two or three times a week. He would love to dictate. I had the usual conflict between going to Temple and playing football.

He was somewhat of a taskmaster--I was relieved when Bar Mitzvah was over!

There were thirteen kids in my Confirmation. My speech for Confirmation was 'God is Almighty.' I can still remember the whole speech. It left an impression on me--the high spot of my religious training.

I was raised in the Williamson Temple. I had my Bar Mitzvah under Rabbi Feinstein; I couldn't read a word of Hebrew--memorized everything.

Under Rabbi Feinstein, if we didn't pass our tests, we couldn't be Confirmed. I was in the third Confirmation class. I didn't like religious school. The Rabbi favored one or two students in our class. At age thirteen to fourteen, I refused to go to Sunday school, but my parents made me go.

I was born in Kermit, West Virginia. The nearest Temple was in Williamson. At age six, I started Sunday school. I had to take the bus for 20 cents or the train for 25 cents for the 21 mile trip. My father would not take me to Sunday school, for he was busy with the store; he worked 6 days a week from 7 A.M. til 11 P.M.

My parents went only to Temple on the High Holidays. I was always upset because my parents never attended functions of the Temple. They were so busy with the business, they never had time for anything else. I attended religious school here in Williamson all the way through from age 4 or 5. I had no Bat Mitzvah. Boys nor girls, had this ceremony--only the very Orthodox families did--but I was Confirmed. A man in town, Ben Kahn, who knew Hebrew very well, taught us Hebrew. I used to hate it--I had enough trouble with English. We had a lot of dedicated parents who taught at the religious school and if the kids didn't learn something in Sunday school, they felt terrible.

Our religious school (in Williamson) was a farce--I learned nothing. What I learned I learned on my own by reading Jewish magazines and books later.

The Reform experience is summed up in the following words by one "home-grown." He tends to see the situation of West Virginia Jews surrounded by a sea of Christiandom as having been responsible for a minimum of Jewish emphasis in his religious training.

In my younger years, we had a Jewish consciousness, but no formal Judaism. I did what was necessary. They wanted

> me to have a Bar Mitzvah, but it was a sham; I knew so little. We were growing up in a Christian world. We ourselves knew so little about Judaism. The Christian world knew nothing about Judaism. We never talked about Judaism with non-Jews.

However, now he sees himself as being more Jewishly aware. "The kids made an effect on my Jewishness. I wanted them to have a Jewish background," he declares.

So it is that the "imports" may not be the only group that experienced a change in their Jewish life style when they moved to Williamson. It is true that they had to make an adjustment from orthodoxy to reform. However, the "home-grown" might also have undergone a transformation. Many of them feel that they have a stronger Jewish identity than their parents; that they have experienced a "return." So what may emerge among Williamson Jewry is a compromise between two divergent groups, from different parts of the country, with different religious backgrounds.

Why Join?

Given any large urban center, where Jews tend to congregate, there will be many reasons given to explain why people affiliate with a temple. Gordon found that,

> fifty-two per cent of all respondents explain their synagogue membership in terms of what they consider their obligation as a member of the Jewish community and/or what their children require by way of Hebrew or Sunday school education. Sixty-eight persons, or 11 per cent, stated that their membership was based exclusively on the use of the synagogue's school facilities for their children's Hebrew education. Only eleven persons, or 1.8 per cent, gave as their reason that 'I am religious.' A sense of identification with the Jewish people and a concern for the identification of their children with this people are thus clearly indicated as the two major reasons for synagogue membership.[6]

However, in Williamson these reasons become purely academic. If a Jew comes to town, he joins the temple; this is understood. It is his

duty; what is expected and considered appropriate.

> I joined the Temple because I almost felt it was expected, being in a small town with a small Jewish community.
>
> I joined the Temple immediately because I am a Jew.
>
> Temple is a social amenity in a small town. In a big city, it wouldn't be quite as necessary. The Temple as a building is necessary to establish a rapport between a person and his belief. I got involved in Temple because it is socially demanded and because of my family.
>
> One goes to Temple because it's a duty.
>
> Being in a small community, we want to go to Temple. Everybody wants to learn.

The following humorous account was related by a respondent:

> The first thing we did when we came to Williamson was to join the Temple. Before we settled here, we wanted to be sure that there was a Jewish community here and a temple. We looked in the phone book, came across the name 'Abraham' and asked him if there were Jews here--it turned out he was an Arab.

Sense of Community

One of the major findings of the Fein report was the failure of the synagogue to provide a sense of Jewish community.

> No single conclusion registers so strongly as our sense that there is among the people we have come to know a powerful, perhaps even desperate, longing for community.[7]

Fein claims that congregants see the temple as a set of services--rabbinic, spiritual, educational--rather than the temple as a social system, as a community.

In light of this conclusion, Williamson respondents were asked, "Do you feel there is a sense of community that exists in the Congregation?" All respondents agreed that there was such a sense of community and they described it in the following manner:

> There is a sense of community in Williamson. It's a way of life in a small town. Doing and belonging brings out

a lot of good in people. There's a closeness that one doesn't have in a larger town. I never regretted raising my kids in a small town, it gives them a sense of independence, and a good sense of values.

There's a community feeling 100 per cent in times of trouble, and 80 per cent in times of gladness.

There are so few of us to do everything. We need a common goal. Temple provides that goal more so than anything.

The Temple is the focus, it holds the community together.

Moreover, Fein pointed out, that,

> 60 per cent of our respondents state that few, if any, of their close friends are members of the temples to which they belong. It is, therefore, possible to conclude that, whatever the satisfactions people derive from temple membership, significant friendship experience is not among them.[8]

However, among the Williamson Jews, all of their close friends are members of the same temple.

> In a small town one cannot find another (Jewish) group. If you get mad at each other--where's to go? In a big city, if I don't like you, I can find somebody else.
>
> If I have an argument with a non-Jewish neighbour we can go our separate way, but with a Jew, one cannot do this; you are constantly thrown together. We're bound together and we can't turn our back on one another.
>
> When we get together we feel like one big family.
>
> Regardless of any little differences, there is a bond that ties us all together.
>
> In time of peril, everyone comes to your comfort and aid. Everyone is concerned and wants to help. We are a handful against the whole world.

This sense of community, of oneness, of friendship, that Williamson Jews feel, is caused to a great extent by their desire to identify themselves actively with Jews in an atmosphere which is overwhelmingly non-Jewish.

As one respondent expresses:

> I am thankful to God that there is a temple in Williamson,

> for without it we would be absorbed in the Christian world. It holds the Jewish community together. (Without it) the Jewishness in Williamson would disappear.

Yet it is not only repelling forces that drive people in Williamson toward temple, but forces of attraction.

> I think temple is very important. Services inspire me. It makes me want to be a better person. If I were married and had children I would insist that my family attend services regularly.

> I feel we need the Temple. I am proud of it. I am proud when a new Jewish family comes here, or when a non-Jewish visitor comes.

On the issue of, "do you feel that your involvement with a temple would be less if you lived in a larger city?" respondents are equally divided in opinion and the division is not along "home-grown" versus "import" lines. One respondent who feels she would be as involved with temple in a larger city, states:

> I'm Jewishly oriented from my family; I'm interested in the survival of the Jewish population in the small city and large city.

On the other hand:

> I think being in a small town increased my involvement with temple. In a big city, there are more people to get involved in the temple and (responsibility) doesn't always fall on the same men over and over. I've been in every office in the Temple.

Temple Attendance

In 1959, at the time Gordon's study was published, his evaluation of temple attendance was a follows:

> Eighty-one Rabbis in seventy-eight different suburbs throughout the country report that the synagogue or temple is only 'moderately well attended' at the Sabbath Eve service and that 'it is poorly attended on Sabbath morning, except when a Bar Mitzvah, Confirmation, or other special event takes place.[9]

In addition, in the Lakeville Studies of the late 1950's, it was

discovered,

> that only 13 per cent of all respondents may be considered regular worshippers. 74 per cent are irregular worshippers and 13 per cent never come to any service.[10]

The latest findings confirm that temple services are poorly attended,

> barely a quarter of all respondents attend services as much as a few times a month or more; over 30 per cent attend only on High Holidays or still less often.[11]

If, as Dr. Fein notes, the primary interaction of members with their temples takes place in the context of worship services, then this is not a very extensive interaction for most. One rabbi reflects on the situation as follows:

> Jews just don't pray these days. If they do pray, then they do on special occasions only and do not seem to feel the need to do so most of the year . . . . When you ask people why they don't attend Sabbath Eve services, they reply by saying they do not manage to get together with their families very much these days, and if they do so on Friday night, they prefer not to rush. And besides, being with one's family is also a religious act. When it comes to Sabbath morning services, they simply say that they work on Saturday or 'are busy,' whatever that may mean to them. I believe that all it means is that actually other things are of greater importance and matter more. That is why they don't come. Prayer is fast becoming a lost art.[12]

In a small town like Williamson, temple attendance, in comparison, is high. 50 per cent of all respondents could be considered regular worshippers. There are two explanations which might account for the high attendance rate of Williamson Jews. On the one hand, there is a minimum of attractive forces pulling them away from Friday night services and toward such larger city attractions as restaurants, movies, theatre, etc. Thus, the temple provides something to do on a Friday night in a town which offers very little.

However, people also are drawn to the temple because of their love for it and its significance in their lives. The temple is the focal point

of the Jewish community, it holds the community together. It provides a place for the Williamson Jews to congregate, to socialize, to interact. There is also a feeling that since the Jews are small in number, it is the obligation of every member, to give as much of himself as possible--and that includes attending services.

Impact of Student Rabbis

From the fall of 1932 on, and continuing until the present, the Williamson congregation has been served by students of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, on a regular bi-weekly basis. Some of the more notable former students who served this congregation were Ely E. Pilchick (1938-1939), Richard C. Hertz (1941-1942), Murray Blackman (1945-1946 and 1948-1949), Alexander M. Schindler (1952-1953) and Martin Siegel (1959-1960).[13]

It might now be asked what impact does a student rabbi exert on this bi-weekly congregation. It seems that his effect can be great, however, this depends to a great extent on the individual student. The Williamson congregants have similar expectations of their rabbi as do congregations elsewhere. They want a student who will, primarily, relate well to young people, be a good educator, and give well-thought-out, interesting sermons. They look to their rabbi to bring relevant issues of Judaism to their attention. As one respondent noted:

> The student Rabbis helped us come in contact with the outside world, so that we could keep abreast of what was going on in the world-wide Jewish community.

It is the opinion of this writer, that the Williamson Jews have all the machinery to operate a temple efficiently and effectively, the Board, officers, sisterhood, youth group, religious school and various committees. Yet, the student rabbi is the spark which can set everything in motion.

He can be a powerful and dynamic force.

In the words of respondents:

> The Temple is made by the Rabbi. The Rabbi can make the Temple a focal point.
>
> The children's link with the Rabbi is the most important.
>
> If the kids like the Rabbi, that's everything. If he can get along well with the kids.
>
> I like sermons on social issues. Rabbis and Cantors were always awesome and unapproachable. Because our Rabbis are young, I can relate to them more.

However, there is also a belief among congregants that home ritual and observance must be strong simply because the rabbi only comes once every two weeks. He comes in on a Friday and leaves on a Sunday. There has to be an ongoing Judaism, therefore.

> The home is most important. We must live Judaism. The Rabbi comes only bi-weekly. Judaism is home first and then Temple.

Religious Education

> Everywhere in suburbia concern for youth is marked, and temples and synagogues appear to be providing important leadership.[14]

As we have noted, respondents want a rabbi who will interact effectively with their children. This confirms what Fein has discovered, namely, "What people want their rabbi to do, far beyond any other responsibility, is to 'solve' the 'youth problem,' to transmit the heritage to the young."[15] Thus, since children are considered top priority, it should not be surprising to find that activities involving children are likewise viewed as most essential. Keeping this in mind, parents were asked, "how important do you feel religious education is for your children?"

> I think it's part of their basic growing up. In order for a child to know his heritage, he needs some kind of training. I am not sure if that will assure that he will marry Jewish--but it can't hurt.

I think it's important--probably because I didn't have it. A child should have a religious identity. It's important to know about your background and history; to learn Hebrew.

I think it is my sworn duty that I should send my kids to religious school and that they should get a religious education. But I feel that one really learns about Judaism after religious school.

I wanted them to have everything as much as possible. They were all willingly confirmed.

There is also a feeling present that in a small town anything which enhances Jewish identification is desirable.

> Religious education is very important. I wanted them to know that they were Jews. In a small town, kids have to know they are Jewish.

Parents are vitally concerned about and interested in the quality and substance of their childrens' education.

> I think religious education should be taught as history with visual aids. I think the books for the religious school are rotten. I think ethics are taught at home--the books on ethics are outdated.

Camp

According to Gordon, summer camp programs are popular with the Jewish families of suburbia. Fifty-two per cent of the respondents to his questionnaire send their children to such camps.

> Yes, I know how much it costs to send my two children to camp, but my wife and I consider it a good investment. What would the children do around the house all summer? They could get into more mischief than anything else. This way, they receive expert instruction in sports and in addition, they study Hebrew. Each year, they come back all aglow with new knowledge and valuable experience. I work hard for my money, but I think that my children really profit by their camp experience. It is good for them.[16]

Providing a camp experience for children in Williamson is likewise viewed as important. It will prove most significant here to compare camp preferences with those cited in Fein's report. Fein provided the

description of four alternative camps to respondents. The descriptions were as follows:

1. BEAVER - A regular overnight camp where a majority of the campers are Jewish. No particular emphasis is placed on things Jewish.

2. JUDAH - An all-Jewish camp in which Jewish culture and religion are stressed. The children attend classes in language and religion part of the day. The camp is Kosher.

3. LINCOLN - A camp attended by children of many different religions, races, and nationalities. Emphasis is put on all the various cultures and religions represented by the children.

4. MACCABEE - An all-Jewish camp in which Jewish culture and history are stressed but not religion, the children attend classes in language and history part of the day but not in religion. The camp is Kosher.

It was found that, "86 per cent of all adult respondents ranked either Lincoln or Beaver first, and 73 per cent ranked them second. (Respondents) prefer Maccabee to Judah, whose description may have caused some to suppose that it was an Orthodox camp."[17] In way of contrast, all parents but one in the Williamson study who did send their children to camp sent them to a camp fitting Judah's description. Reasons given by parents are as follows:

> To mix with other Jewish people, I sent my kids to a Jewish summer camp. My daughter refuses to have a social life with non-Jews. She has nothing in common with them. All her friends are those she met at OFTY. My son would miss senior prom to go to a conclave.
>
> There was nothing here in Williamson for them in the summer; we wanted them to be with more Jewish kids.
>
> We sent the kids to Bluestar because it was a good camp, rather than because of the religious aspect.
>
> We did send our children to a summer camp, Jewish, they kept the Sabbath there, but it wasn't a religious camp. There were no Jewish studies. 99 per cent of the campers were Jewish, 90 per cent of the counselors--Jewish. I wanted my children to have the experience of other Jewish children.

> We send our children to Jewish summer camps because there is nothing to do in Williamson. We send them for Jewish learning.

The strong Jewish preference, when it comes to camps might be explained by the parents' desire to involve their children as often and extensively as possible in Jewish activities and with fellow Jews, because there is such a void in this area in Williamson.

The Union Prayer Book

Professor Lenn reports that, "Generally speaking, the present prayerbook is not 'wearing well'. There is great demand by the majority of the rabbis for a revision as soon as possible."[18] However, when one examines the views of congregants, one discovers a somewhat different picture. According to the Fein study, "the Union prayerbook, traditional target of much criticism, is endorsed in its present form by almost half of all respondents, and most of the rest think it could use relatively modest revision."[19]

There seems to be a discrepancy between what the rabbi sees as an urgent need for change regarding the Union prayerbook and where his congregants stand regarding this issue. This discrepancy can be explained in one of two ways:

1.) either the criticism and debate over the Union prayerbook is occurring "within a limited circle, and is quite peripheral to the interests of most temple members."[20]

Or:

2.) most members are satisfied in retaining the status quo, because temple, religion, matters of Judaism occupy little or no importance in their lives--they are simply apathetic.

In the Williamson study 50 per cent of all respondents were in favor

of completely changing the Union prayerbook, 45 per cent want to keep it just the way it is, and 5 per cent have mixed feelings concerning it. Furthermore, it seems that one's being "home-grown" or "import" had no influence on attitudes with regard to favoring or disfavoring the prayerbook. What is most significant though is that Williamson Jews are not apathetic. Those who take issue with the prayerbook do so on the following grounds:

> I don't like it; it has Christian overtones, and they talk of God as a Savior. I can't divorce the word, "Savior", from that of Christ.
>
> The language should be changed and be more applicable to modern times.
>
> The prayerbook is hypocritical. The Sh'ma has as much meaning to me in English as in Hebrew. Reform Jews have guilt feelings about getting away from tradition. They try to grab on to something no longer there. What gives me the greatest feeling is the passage, "Grant us peace"--those are the greatest words in that prayerbook.
>
> I think it's time for a change with the prayerbooks, I think there's a lot of things that can be taken out.
>
> The prayerbook amounts to just reading words--it has no meaning.
>
> I am completely disgusted with it. I know the prayers are beautiful, but it's just not enough.

In contrast, a common view expressed by those who want to retain the Union prayerbook, is based on the fact that they are familiar with it, enjoy it, and it continues to prove meaningful to them.

> Some of the things are obsolete, but you take what you want out of it and interpret it in your own way. Many of the things are comforting in there. One sits and has your (own) thoughts too.
>
> I see nothing wrong with the prayerbook. You remember it. As far as praying, I don't like changes.
>
> I think occasionally there has to be some variety, but I'm comfortable with the basics of the prayerbook.

> The prayerbook is familiar to me; I feel comfortable with it. We've been doing this for years. Why change now!
>
> I like it just the way it is. There is enough Hebrew, so that when a stranger comes to our temple, he knows he is in a temple.

In concluding this chapter on "Temple," one significant finding is that for Williamson Jews, temple is not an "address of sometime relevance," nor is it "too peripheral an institution for them to get very excited about."[21] Temple remains for the Williamson community a focal point, and it holds the Jewish community together. They are drawn to temple out of a need, a longing and a desire. Concerning matters of temple, student rabbis, religious education, and the prayerbooks, Williamson Jews care enough to disagree, do battle with, get upset about, defend, protect, praise and always seek to improve.

CHAPTER II

Ritual--Clinging to Tradition

Ritual is defined as symbolic rites and observances, which are expressive of certain thoughts or sentiments. Every religious system has its distinctive ceremonies indicative of its own particular truths. In Judaism, ritual lends beauty and art to the religion. Jewish ritual heightens the sanctity of man's daily existence and adds meaning to life's various stages.

> Ritual helps us to identify ourselves with the people to which we belong and to read the spiritual meaning for us of its historic experience. We can as little do without observances and practices that symbolize the religious meanings of our civilization as we can do without language to communicate our ideas and feelings to one another.[1]

In this Chapter, the question of ritual observance is confronted. It was traditionally believed that since God ordained ritual practices, they must be observed punctiliously by all who fear the Lord. Furthermore, these practices and regulations regarding how one should live, set the Jews apart from others; made them distinct. However, it is interesting to note as the historian Jacob Katz has emphasized:

> even the most pious Jew of medieval times found it difficult to observe halachic precepts relating to economic life and occupational activities. Such precepts presupposed 'the existence of a large Jewish population . . . able to dispense with contact with (Gentiles) or at least able to tolerate restrictions on free intercourse with them.'[2]

Today, in our modern era, many Jews feel no obligation nor desire to maintain the ritual practices of their ancestors. Many Jews reject the notion that observances are divinely ordained; they feel that such a system of ritual, although appropriate for their ancestor's era, are now inappropriate.

Yet, even though there has been a general reduction in observance of ritual, "ritual associated with the child, the family and the people appears to be acceptable today."[3]

In Sklare's Lakeville studies, a list of eleven observances was presented to respondents and they were asked: "Which of the following observances are practiced more or less regularly in your home?" The list consisted of the following items:

1. Bacon or Ham never served
2. Kosher meat bought regularly
3. Kasher the meat
4. Special dinner on Friday night
5. Lighting of candles on Friday night
6. Kiddush on Friday night
7. No smoking allowed in the house on the Sabbath
8. Seder on Passover
9. Bread not eaten in the home on Passover
10. Either or both parents fast on Yom Kippur
11. Candles lit on Hanukkah

It was found that of the eleven practices, the mean number observed was 2.8. Some 19 per cent of the respondents observed none of the rituals, while only 10 per cent observed seven or more. The largest group of respondents observed only one or two rituals, as compared to five or six rituals followed in their parental homes. While the conclusion to be drawn is that religious practice in most of the homes is at a very low level, ritual involving children have become popular, namely, lighting candles on Hanukkah and the Passover Seder. Moreover, while traditionally the Sabbath was regarded as the "queen of holydays," in only 32 per cent of the homes are Sabbath candles lit.[4]

Sklare has offered a criteria for ritual retention. It is found that the highest degree of retention will occur when a ritual,

1.) is capable of effective redefinition in modern terms.

2.) does not demand social isolation or the adoption of a unique life style.

3.) accords with the religious culture of the larger community and provides a "Jewish" alternative when such is felt to be needed,

4.) is centered on the child.

5.) is performed annually or infrequently.[5]

Thus, although the modern Jew feels that much ritual has lost its significance and meaning, nevertheless, he "selects from the vast storehouse of the past what is not only objectively possible for him to practise, but subjectively possible for him to 'identify' with."[6] In the words of one respondent of Gordon's study,

> Jews have no antipathy to ritual but they want the ritual to be simple, to be beautiful and to be meaningful.[7]

Now, in considering the findings of the Williamson study, we first note that a major influence on religious observance is the parental home.

> The parental home does not serve as a model which the child duplicates, but rather as a baseline from which he initiates.[8]

In the Williamson study, respondents were asked to relate memories of ritual observance in their parental home. The nature of the memory may vary in degree, depending on whether the respondent is "import" or "home-grown," but the fact that these memories are pleasant, are readily recalled and cherished by all, testifies to the richness of the Jewish parental home environment.

The "imports" reminisce:

<u>on the Sabbath</u>

> There is an everlasting feeling surrounding the Sabbath; newspaper on the floor or the smell of chicken soup means it is Friday night. The house would be cleaned--immaculate. Newspaper would be put down in the kitchen after the floor was washed. In a Jewish building everyone was cooking chicken; you could smell it a block and a half away. Unfortunately, this doesn't exist anymore. My mother kept strictly Kosher to the letter of the law. She would not turn on lights on the Sabbath, would tear

off toilet tissue in advance. We would celebrate the holidays gastronomically; beets in a certain way for Pesach; to make horseradish red, she used to add this horrendous smelling stuff.

On a Friday night, my dad came home from Schul and we ate soup, potatoes, cougle, apple sauce and a piece of meat. Every Friday the same. Four pounds of meat per week was allocated to a family of eight during the World War I years (in Germany). In 1914, things got tough. People who came from Eastern Europe had less to eat than us--so we shared. Two children stayed over the summer with us.

On Friday nights, we would light the Sabbath oil lamp, say Kiddish and occasionally we'd bake Challah. On Friday nights, we would bring soup to poorer people. This was the law. We shared--a Jewish way of sharing; no matter how little one had. When times got bad, instead of hired help, the youth cleaned the temple every Thursday night. It was no Mitzvah, it just had to be done.

on Passover

Passover is my favorite holiday. We always had a Seder at my grandmother's house--a big, long, noisy Seder, but so much fun, and we would eat til we had a stomach ache. They would clean the house; change the dishes. Grandfather conducted the Seder; everything was home-made--it was just fun.

On Pesach, the whole house was changed and cleaned--doors even taken off hinges to clean. My father would put all Chumatz in a room, and sign a contract with a 'Shabbos Goy' and sell her that room, for all eight days. She sometimes would come into that room and take out what she pleased.

On Passover, I went to my aunt and uncle's house. Everyone had a home Seder. The competition among the kids was 'whose Seder lasted the longest.' A lot of questions were asked back and forth--all pertaining to Passover.

on Chanukah

Gifts were unknown. The candles were lit, mother baked donuts and had coffee. People were closer than they are in America.

My mother used to hide a plate of cookies for Chanukah--that was my present--not like here. There was a program for our whole school. Latkes were served.

> Chanukah as a kid was beautiful to me because of Chanukah gelt--not a lot of money. Chanukah has become commercialized.

on Purim

> We used to go around and collect money for the orphanages. This was a special privilege.

One "import" from Israel admits that she didn't have lights or wine on a Friday night, and the only reason for a special meal on that day was that meat or fish rationing was scheduled for Fridays. However, she experienced a different kind of Jewish identification:

> We took in a boy from the Exodus, Motel Mikel. He came with the youth aliyah. The youth were collected in Europe, those that escaped the concentration camps, and transferred from ship to ship. He suffered so much that he forgot things like his age. My parents had to teach him things like how to eat. He told us of the hunger strike in Cyprus to protest against England not letting ships into the harbor.
>
> Our house was many times the office for immigrants who were smuggled in. When people first came they were terribly mixed up. We tried to impress upon them that they were in Jewish hands now, but the people were very scared and frightened. When it was suspected that immigrants had landed, the British called a curfew to search for their duffel bags, which we hid any place imaginable, like in cow manure, and to check I.D.'s, they took long sticks and poked it in the manure to find the duffel bags.
>
> At that time, I was in Kindergarten. They closed the school down, everyone had to go home; I ran home, I was so scared and frightened! It left quite an impression on me.
>
> We used to mock the British but we were scared of them too. There was a lady at our house. As I came through the door, my father said, 'Aunt Rebecca has come to visit.' I said, 'I didn't know we had an Aunt Rebecca!' It was an immigrant. They said, 'Be quiet, don't talk!' . . .
>
> In Israel, one doesn't have to be taught you're a Jew, when you live through incidents like these, . . . you know you're a Jew.

The "home-grown" have more difficulty in recalling memories of ritual practiced in their parental home. The fact that these homes were reform, may affect the diligence with which ritual was carried out. However, most of the "home-grown" feel that their own homes incorporate a

much more intense feeling for ritual,

> We knew we were Jewish; but we didn't practice much ritual. We offered our children more than my parents offered us.

on the Sabbath

> On Sabbath we had 'Knadlech' and chicken soup. We would light the candles, and have challah, which mother would make herself.
>
> My grandfather kept kosher, but it's too hard to keep kosher in a small town. My grandfather even admitted that keeping kosher had outlived its day--but she herself would not change.
>
> When we moved to Williamson, we became Reform. Mother realized she couldn't keep a kosher home. She still would not mix milk and meat. Had no ham or bacon in the house. The Sabbath was not so important.
>
> My parents never lit Friday night candles. All stores were open til 10 P.M. every evening and til 12 midnight on Saturday. My parents didn't have time for family rituals. I don't remember a Seder at home. Yet I knew when I grew up, I would observe these things.

on Passover

> I can remember looking forward to Passover. Mother would work for a week in advance.

on Chanukah

> I used to take candles down to the store so my father could say the blessings over the Chanukah candles, and I used to repeat the blessings.

on Yom Kippur

> Yom Kippur is most meaningful to me. I used to take off two days for the High Holidays and walk to Temple. As long as mother was living, I wanted to abide by all the customs. She was the catalyst that kept things together. She was the guiding influence in our home. Old timers had a fear that Yom Kippur was the time that people were to be accounted for; these would live--these die.

In Williamson, there is a clinging to tradition, a carry-over from the ritual practiced in their parental homes. In the words of one respondent, "If Judaism wants to survive, there must be tradition. This

is the way it was done and this is the way Jewish life has to go on."

To Williamson Jews, there are two most important celebrations; that of the Sabbath and Passover. Chanukah is a source of conflict as we shall see later in this Chapter. For the Sabbath, a special meal is prepared, women still bake their own Challah, some make their own wine. The Sabbath lights are kindled, the blessings over the wine and bread recited. On a Friday night in Williamson--one knows it is the Sabbath.

> My husband and I always say blessings over bread and wine. We have a special meal on Friday. We try to have traditional foods; chicken soup and chopped liver. If one of the children have a special event that interrupts our celebration of the Sabbath, we don't like it, but we've given into it. If we lived in the city, the need to run to the basketball game would not be so dominant. But because in the area of recreation and sports, basketball is all there is; one has to at times bend.
>
> Recently two of my children were out of town on a Friday night, my husband was working late at the store, and my youngest daughter arrived home, did not see the usual Sabbath preparations, and said, 'It's Friday, why isn't the table set?'--She really missed the Sabbath.
>
> If everything goes right, we light the Sabbath candles, and say the Kiddish. There should be a special room for the Sabbath and a special meal. I like and want to have gefillte fish and matzo balls on a Friday night; I like to know it is the Sabbath. I am turned off to so much in Judaism--but this much I like.
>
> I am not a religious person, but I will not light the Sabbath candles after dark. I think of myself more as a traditional person. I love Judaism. I love Jewish art, books, food, people. When I get mad, I also like to get mad at Jews. I like being around Jews. I still think the Sabbath is most important but I don't really observe it. Every time I do work on the Sabbath, I feel guilty about it. To this day, I will not hang wash out on Saturday.
>
> We light the candles on Sabbath, have a Challah and wine, we have all the blessings. The children sing the Birchat Hamazon and my husband does the full Kiddish.
>
> In Williamson, I experienced my first real practice of Judaism. I always observed the Sabbath with the children, lit candles, had a special meal and enjoyed it.

> I only observed as much as I felt I had to. Living in a small town one is obligated to be active. If I lived in a larger town, I wouldn't go to temple. When the kids were younger and interested, I cooked special meals on Friday night. My family knows they're in a Jewish home, and I regard this as a Jewish home. Jewish identity through food. I cook Jewishly all the time.
>
> If I forget to light candles, I feel bad. This day, Sabbath, is special. It's not the actual lighting of the candles, but what it symbolizes.

For Passover, a huge congregational Seder is held yearly and the women prepare for weeks in advance. However, some families still prefer the home Seder.

> We have a home Seder, we change our dishes, get rid of all the leaven, rice, soup, everything.
>
> We keep kosher, buy our meat from Cincinnati. We've always kept kosher. I was turning away from keeping kosher and my daughter objected to it. I want my children to experience the tradition. With Reform we do less and less and before you know it, they'll be nothing left of the tradition. I have strong feelings for the tradition.
>
> I like the ceremony and the ritual of it. I worked hard on the Passover seder. We used to serve over one hundred people in those days. I would get chairs from the funeral home. We used to have the fish come in from Huntington or go to Huntington to pick it up. We'd work for weeks on Passover.
>
> We have Passover at home, even though there is a temple seder. I think when one has a home seder there is more control. We like to include a family or two. The kids help me prepare the seder.

One "home-grown" sums up his feeling about tradition as follows:

> If something is worth doing, you do it right or not at all. It all boils down to this. There is too much done haphazard. I feel that some things that are traditional are nice. One cannot throw out all tradition. A seder should not be done, just because it has to be done--it must be done with love.

Thus, in Williamson there is a drawing from the rituals of the past. In contrast with Sklare's findings the Sabbath in Williamson has retained its importance, however, just as in the Lakeville study, Passover is a

most popular festivity in which the entire Jewish population takes part. The feeling is that it is important to hold on to some tradition. For the "imports" it is more a matter of keeping many observances experienced in the parental home, for the "home-grown" it is enriching the parental home observances.

The following excerpt expresses well the significance of ritual observance in Williamson.

> Although Jewish ritual is less frequently practiced today by suburban families than in past generations, it still plays an important role in Jewish life. Jews do not seem to feel that Dietary Laws are as important or meaningful as did their grandfathers. They work on the Sabbath and otherwise show little regard for the details of Jewish law that seemed so important a generation or two ago. Still, they observe and practice that ritual which is associated most directly with their family life and with the home. They choose the ritual they will observe, less often on the basis of Jewish Law than on a far more practical basis--what appeals to them and their families, what has significance and relevance for them, and what they believe identifies them as Jews. Fortunately for the Jewish people, many of the practices of contemporary Jews help to maintain their distinctiveness and are rich in positive values. Thus, suburban Jews and Judaism seem to gain in spiritual and moral strength, despite the changes in emphasis in matters of ritual.[9]

Effect of Children on Observance

Marshall Sklare found that home observance is at a relatively low level in the earliest phase of parenthood. Observance rises, however, as children reach school age, and it attains its peak when children are of Bar Mitzvah or Confirmation age. When children become mature, parental observance declines.[10] Thus, the child-centered home concerns itself with fulfilling what the Jewish community expects, namely, that a Jewish child be raised Jewishly.

Gordon claims that:

> Jewish children are largely responsible for re-introducing (or sometimes introducing for the first time) Jewish cere-

> monial and ritual into the home . . . . Because children have been indoctrinated in the religious schools in matters of ritual, and because 'children must be satisfied,' parents have returned to certain of their Hebraic traditions.[11]

In the Williamson study, where there seems to be an extensive involvement with ritual, the question was posed, "Did your children have any effect on your religious observance?" Both "imports" and "home-grown" feel that "they made more of an effort because of the children."

> When we first were married we did not go to temple. After we started to raise a family, we started going--we wanted to make a good influence on the kids.
>
> Definitely, it's because of the children that we do certain practices.
>
> The kids had an effect on our religious observance. In a small town there is not much to do and one has to involve oneself with something.
>
> We make more of an effort to observe the holidays because of our daughter.
>
> My husband pushed me to set a good example. The kids had a definite effect on my religious observance.
>
> I became more active in the sisterhood and the religious school because of the children.
>
> We make more of an effort because of the children. Tradition is something the children fell into because we were keeping it.
>
> The children played a part in my Judaism. I feel they should have a basic religion. Judaism is about as basic as one can be.

Thus, what may begin as a response to the needs of a child, turns out to be an enriching experience for the parents.

A Good Jew

Leonard Fein, in his study, Reform is a Verb, states that most Jews in America simply do not know what being Jewish implies, what they must believe as Jews, and how their Jewishness should be expressed.[12] In the

area of "What it means to be a good Jew" he concludes, "the data suggest a general uncertainty regarding the requirements, or even the desiderata of Judaism."[13]

> In short, if there is an ideology of Reform Judaism, the evidence suggests that it is largely irrelevant as a shaper of the values and opinions of Reform Jews. Those values and opinions seem, instead, to be quite eclectically, perhaps even randomly distributed.[14]

In the Williamson study, respondents were asked, "what is your image of the 'good Jew'". The results fall into five main categories, but the concensus is that being a good Jew means to be a good person. There is a keen sense of what a good Jew is.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOOD JEW (Williamson)

	per cent of respondents
1.) be a good person lead an ethical and moral life	81%
2.) marry within the Jewish faith	7.6%
3.) contribute to Jewish philantropies	3.8%
4.) support Israel	3.8%
5.) accept his being Jewish and not try to hide it	3.8%

Respondents described their feelings as follows:

> A good Jew is connected with honor and respect; to believe in oneself and one's fellowman; to help where help is needed without being asked.
>
> I think one has to be a 'mensch' to be a good Jew.
>
> I think I am a good Jew. I think a good Jew is as I am. Jews should be liberal in their manner of doing business; liberal in employment, pay and conditions.
>
> I consider myself a good Jew. It's a way of life. The fact that one has a good Jewish education doesn't make one a good Jew; it's what you do every day.
>
> A good Jew is the way one lives every day. Giving of yourself, doing for others, helping. Being concerned with other people, Jewish and non-Jewish.
>
> Be humble and honest, have respect for others, live honestly, do good unto others.

Belief in God

In Albert I. Gordon's study of suburban Jews, 1959, it was noted that 92 per cent of all respondents answered, "I believe in God." Rabbis indicated that their congregants, "take God for granted."

> There appears to be a belief in God, the Creator, whose immanence in the affairs of men is nevertheless open to question.[15]

As Gordon explains further on:

> Doubts concerning God's immanence, the role He plays in the lives of men now and his justice and fairness in His dealings with humans (if He is concerned with each of us) trouble the minds of young Jews in suburbia. They doubt also that prayer can change the course of human events in any degree. These young men and women, recipients of college educations, are deeply moved and disturbed by the Nazi Holocaust and the annihilation of six million Jews and keenly aware of the role which science and natural law play in contemporary civilization. Like so many other thoughtful people, they are uncertain and even confused in their ideas about God and the meaning of human existence.[16]

According to Professor Lenn's more recent report, 74% of all respondents believe in God, either in a traditional, less traditional, or non-traditional sense. However, one out of four congregants identify themselves either as agnostics or atheists.[17] These findings parallel those of the Williamson study, as shown in the chart below.

	PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS
1.) Believe in God in the more or less traditional Judaic sense	17%
2.) Believe in God in the more or less traditional Judaic sense "as modified in terms of what my own views of what God is, and what he stands for."	37%
3.) Non-traditional believers	21%
TOTAL WHO BELIEVE IN GOD	75%

4.) Agnostic 12.5%

5.) Atheist 12.5%

100.0%

In the Williamson study, 75% of all respondents believe in some kind of a God, (either traditional, less traditional, or in a non-traditional sense). Likewise, as in the Lenn study, one-fourth of all respondents are agnostic or atheist. Of those who are believers, some of the more traditional views of God given, are as follows:

> I believe in a supreme power, who keeps everything going. An Orthodox Jew does not ask "Why" in times of tragedy.
>
> I believe in a God. I think there is one. I feel God will answer prayers, but one should not ask meaningless things of God. One can pray on one's own--and anywhere.
>
> I know God, because in my lifetime, he has been good to me. I feel I am a religious person and I believe in God.
>
> God is an unknown Being. He's the One who guides our destinies and shapes our lives. My God is not much different than my Christian's conception of God, but the way we worship him. There is something greater that controls everyone's life.
>
> I still think of Him as creator of the world, all powerful, all knowing, all good.

Some less traditional beliefs in God, include;

> In art, we are taught to see, and to reproduce what one sees. Everything in nature is part of God. The beauty of the world is seeing God and knowing He is there.
>
> I don't believe in any supreme being. Religion to me is nature, the forces of nature. I could not think of God as a being, I don't believe in predestination. If I had such a belief, it would make the tragic events of my life more acceptable. One plays a big part in one's destiny. When I say 'God' it doesn't upset me, though.

Non-traditional views of God are represented below:

> I look upon God as a force of which we know nothing about. A force that controls our lives.

> I don't have a Biblical concept of God--not in the form of a person--all powerful, and all knowing. God is the natural powers that keep things in order.
>
> My interpretation of God is justice, love and kindness.
>
> I could never set down canons of law, I can't accept the Orthodox viewpoint of God. I personally do not believe in God per se. God came from man's mind. When man dies out that will be the end of the thought of religion and God. The word "God" is immaterial.

As noted earlier, one out of four respondents, doubt or deny God's existence. They express themselves in the following way:

> I just don't believe there's such a thing as God; I don't know how everything got started, but I can't believe there's a God.
>
> I don't know if there is a God. My parents said, "Don't be afraid of crossing the street for God is there," and we were taught that way in religious school. One can pray to God to give you strength or courage, but one can't ask for something. Where science stops, religion begins. I think there is something beyond science. God is connected with superstition. I prayed for father to get better when he was sick. I said, "God, if you make him well, I'll never ask another thing of you." Father recovered, and when he was sick again I remembered what I had said to God.
>
> I don't know if I believe in God. It is hard to come to an understanding of God when I have nothing to fall back on--no background. In services when we constantly refer to God, I have trouble with that; because I don't know how to relate to Him.
>
> God doesn't exist, a second world can't exist.

Feelings when Christmas rolls around

> In grade school we used to have Christmas songs like, "Silent Night" and in our music classes we would sing Christmas carols. In fourth grade, we read stories which would end with the moral, "Jesus will not save you if you do wrongly." Fellow classmates feel we don't believe in God, for we don't believe in Christ.

According to Albert I. Gordon,

> The major source of tension in suburbia becomes evident around the Christmas-Chanukah season. Jewish children then feel most exposed and unprepared, and their parents are generally indignant about the manner in which Christ-

mas has been incorporated in the public school programs, from kindergarten through high school. Preparation for the school Christmas program, emphasis upon gift-giving, discussion of the New Testament's record of the birth of Jesus, the carols with their Christological character--all these are regarded as intrusions into the public school system by perhaps well-meaning citizens who, ignoring the public non-denominational support of the school system and the Constitutional guarantees of separation of church and state, insist that 'this is a Christian country' or argue that 'the rights of the majority must not be ignored by the minority!'[18]

There is much evidence to support the view that when Christmas rolls around in Williamson there is much stress. Jews in Williamson are a definite minority, their children only constitute a handful when compared to the non-Jewish element in the public schools. As a result the Jewish children are flooded with Christian influences. It is a source of real conflict.

> I never liked Chanukah; it came around Christmas and my children always questioned why they couldn't have a Christmas tree when their aunts and uncles (mixed marriages) had Christmas trees. I said, 'Jews do not have Christmas trees,' Our aunts and uncles would put our children's Chanukah gifts under the tree. The children would ask us, 'Why do you decorate the store for Christmas, but not our home.'
>
> It was embarrassing for me around Christmas when the other children would be asked by the teacher what they got for Christmas. I answered, 'I didn't get anything.' My kids would say, 'We celebrate Chanukah.'

The Christmas season, with its electric appeal, has had an influence, moreover, on the way in which Chanukah is celebrated in the Jewish homes.

> We never exchanged presents on Chanukah; always on Christmas morning.
>
> We celebrate Chanukah in a very Christian manner. I don't like it; the children love it. We pass gifts all around, we have one electric menorah--I don't like it at all; it's just like Christmas.
>
> We hung stockings and had Christmas trees. We dyed Easter eggs--it was totally divorced from religion.

> As I was growing up, a Christmas tree fascinated me. We didn't actually have Chanukah or Christmas, but on Christmas Eve, the presents were laid out. I thought the prettiest things were those trees. We never had a tree at the house.
>
> For Chanukah, we decorate, make things and have special foods, but it is competition for Christmas. I once admitted to my children how I wished I could celebrate Christmas. I asked the children if they ever wished this. They said, 'No!'

Yet Jewish parents try to combat the celebration of Christmas and other Christian holidays in the public schools by requesting the right to introduce the theme of Jewish holidays, like Chanukah. For example, one nine-year-old, who is one of two Jews in his class, was permitted by the teacher to utilize a bulletin board for Chanukah decorations.

> One time we built a Succah, I invited our daughter's kindergarten class to partake of lunch in the Succah.

Yet, for the most part, these efforts are in vain. One high school student reports that for the annual Easter program the choral group sings Easter songs and they re-enact the crucifixion.

Thus, in Williamson, the Christian population constitutes an overwhelming majority and the Christian influence is pervasive. The feeling is that there is little that can be done to change this situation; most just accept it.

Publications

Both the men and women of Williamson are eager to seek out Jewish publications. They are anxious to hear what is going on around the country that concerns Jews and Judaism.

Popular Jewish publications like The Jewish Post and Opinion, The National Jewish Monthly, Commentary, Dimensions, Reform Judaism, A D L Bulletin, Hadassah Magazine, are usually read avidly. They want to discuss the events concerning Judaism among themselves. For example, when

they read articles about new prayer books, Hallachah for Reform Jews, or the CCAR's recent decision about mixed marriages, or the influence of the Jewish vote in elections, they long to discuss these matters with their fellow Jews.

Jewish books are also read. Books like, Jews without Money, Conversion of Chaplain Cohen, Growing up Jewish, The Chosen, The Promise, and My Name is Asher Lev.

> We have a large library on Jewish books, especially on Israel. We buy almost every book that comes out.
>
> I'm an avid reader of Jewish history, especially books on Adolf Hitler.
>
> I like to read current Jewish novels. I am more inclined to identify with a Jewish book. The most impressive book that I ever read was Milton Steinberg's As a Driven Leaf.

Moreover, adult education sessions are well attended and draw active participation. Respondents are interested in gaining knowledge about themselves and their religion. Since Williamson is physically isolated from any Jewish population center, much of their Judaism is kept alive through the printed word.

Am I Religious

As we approach this last topic in the chapter, we recall that in the Lakeville study, observance of ritual was in crisis.

> In such a situation, there will be denial of the authority of the past and the call for a new measuring rod of religiosity. . . . As one interviewee has been quoted as saying: 'I feel Judaism is changing. Some people only think of religion in terms of ritual. I don't.'[19]

This has lead Marshall Sklare to hypothesize that there has been a shift in the Jewish religion from sacramentalism to moralism; ethical behavior being stressed over observance of ritual. As was borne out in the Williamson study, even though there is a sizeable amount of ritual

retention, most respondents equate being a good Jew with being a good person and leading an ethical and moral life.

Respondents in the Williamson study were asked, "Do you consider yourself religious?" There seems to be a significant difference in the way "imports" and "home-grown" answer this question. All of the "imports" feel that they are religious and there is more of a tendency to define religion in terms of tradition and ritual.

> I consider myself religious ritual-wise; I understand rituals. I also feel religious because our religion is based on the 'Golden Rule.' I sometimes understand what people don't say.

> I am not religious as compared to what I was brought up with. For the Williamson Jews, yes, I am religious. I am a good Jew, I keep Kosher, my home is Jewish, but it is not a home like my mother kept. I work on the Sabbath.

> I would like to have more faith. I have a terrible fear of not being strong enough when death strikes. Here, I feel I need to be more religious.

> Yes, I am religious. I enjoy certain things. There is a warmth I feel toward the traditional things that we do.

Yet, an "import" who sees religion more in terms of moralism, states,

> If one is decent, one is religious. If one doesn't have good human relations with people, one can't be religious. I can't stand any type of hypocrisy.

Another respondent reveals,

> I consider myself religious. Religious I equate with being human. The only thing I must do is to act as a human being.

Half of the "home-grown" do not see themselves as religious, however, and they deny their religiosity on the basis of not seeing themselves as observant enough.

> I don't consider myself a religious Jew. I don't think I know enough about the Jewish religion. I would lay T'filin right after my Bar Mitzvah, but this doesn't make one a good Jew.

> I'm not religious. To be religious one must go to Temple, light Friday night candles every week, not eat ham or pork and observe every holiday.
>
> I am not particularly religious, because I feel a person who is religious has an obligation of attending Temple and observing the customs of Judaism.
>
> By most standards, I should have to conclude I am not religious. I am not particularly concerned with religion in my day-to-day living. I am not devout and surely not pious or godly. I belong to a religious order and expect to always do so. I am proud to be Jewish and fervently pray that it will always survive. I suppose it's principles are meaningful to me, but perhaps it is the formal or traditional side that isn't. It's hard to explain even to myself.

Thus, these "home-grown" of Reform upbringing feel they do not measure up to what they consider the definition of being religious to be, namely, observant. The "home-grown" who do consider themselves religious, define religious in terms of ethical, moral behavior.

> One doesn't have to go to temple to be religious. If one follows the ten commandments, then one leads a good life. I consider myself to be very religious.
>
> I think I'm religious. I'm a Jew, and wouldn't want to be anything else. I like us as a people and if that's religious, then I'm religious.
>
> I consider myself religious regardless of whether I attend services or not. I want my child to be raised Jewish and get a good Jewish education.

Given these findings that three-fourths of all respondents consider themselves religious, a corrective should perhaps be offered to the data at this point. Professor Lenn has found that,

> Southern-reared Jews are far more likely than their northern counterparts to be religious. Generally speaking, however, it may well be that southern Jews are no different from southern non-Jews when it comes to religion.[20]

Thus, although Williamson, West Virginia, only borders on the South, it is an area of intense fundamentalism. The non-Jews are in general

very religious. In the words of one respondent, "People here are so religious--their convictions are strict. One man said, "The Lord provides us with the weather and one has to accept it." "One feels defensive when other religions are strong. I do not feel religious; but here there is almost a natural bond with Jews."

This environment of devoutness perhaps generates a climate in which Jews also grow more aware of their own religion. This situation may be responsible for the high temple attendance, the stress placed on religious education, the desire to practice ritual in the home, a belief in God and a feeling, "Yes, I am religious," all of which has been evidenced in Williamson.

What is becoming increasingly evident is the influence exerted by the non-Jewish world on the lives, thinking and behavior of the Jews in Williamson. In the next chapter, the Jew's relationship to this Christian environment will be more closely examined.

CHAPTER III

Living in a Christian World

The Jews of America constitute less than three per cent of the total population. They are a definite minority within a society that is predominantly White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Yet, despite their few numbers, Jews are a highly ambitious and visible minority. Such a situation has the potential of creating stress and frustration.

Relation to the Christian Community

One respondent in Albert I. Gordon's study, when pressed to assess Jewish-Christian relations in suburbia offered the following view:

> Our husbands do business with them. We see them in the town's shopping area. It's always a very pleasant, 'Hello, how are you?' kind of superficial conversation. We may even meet at a meeting some afternoon or even perhaps at a PTA school affair, but it is seldom more than that. It is a kind of '9 to 5' arrangement. The ghetto gates, real or imagined, close at 5:00 P.M. 'Five o'clock shadow' sets in at sundown. Jews and Christians do not meet socially even in suburbia. If we do, you bet that it is to help promote some cause or organization where they think we Jews may be helpful. But after five o'clock there is no social contact, no parties, no home visits, no golf clubs--no nothing![1]

Moreover, according to Gordon, this type of comment is the most representative made by Jews and is generally confirmed by Jews in suburbia throughout America.

However, Williamson, West Virginia, doesn't conform to the image set forth in the above description. On the contrary, there is a total involvement of the Jewish community with the Christian community. Most Jews report that at least half of their good friends are non-Jewish, many regard non-Jews as their closest friends, they entertain non-Jews in their homes and vice versa, and Jews join with the non-Jews on the golf course. This is in direct contrast to what Gordon found, namely,

"(Jews') closest friends are reserved for other Jews who have the same community, class, synagogue, and organizational interests."[2]

Perhaps this inter-action is encouraged by the fact that the Jews in Williamson live freely, without restriction amongst the non-Jews; there is no Jewish ghetto. The statement, "Jews usually live in areas that have more Jews than others, not just because they like to be near 'their own kind,' but because non-Jewish families tend to move out from streets on which a few Jewish families have bought homes,"[2] just doesn't apply to the Williamson community.

Another factor contributing to good Jewish-Christian relations centers around the fact that the Jews in Williamson are very much respected.

> Most of the Jews in Williamson are looked up to, respected and well thought of. Our B'nai B'rith is well thought of by the other clubs. I don't treat non-Jews any differently from Jewish friends.
>
> The Jewish community is highly thought of as a whole. They are active, affluent. If a member of the Jewish community steps out of line, the Gentile community is as upset as the Jewish community. For years, they were more concerned whether you were Democrat or Republican rather than Jew or non-Jew.
>
> I think non-Jews like the idea of having Jewish friends.
>
> A lot of the Gentiles admire the Jews for the efforts we make to keep our Jewishness alive.
>
> The Jews are considered to be excellent businessmen. I think for the most part Jews have the respect of the community for what they've accomplished financially and otherwise. They are well regarded, but they're still Jews. To me, when a person mentions the fact of my Jewishness, he's separating me.

In addition, Jews are concerned about the welfare of the community in which they live; they become active and involved citizens.

> Jews are an asset to the community, they play a large role in the community. One year three Jewish men were president of three civic clubs at the same time.

Finally, out of necessity, Jews must mingle with non-Jews.

> In Williamson, my friends must be, in the majority, non-Jews. There aren't that many Jews.

Thus, for all these reasons--the fact that Jews live closely amongst the gentile population, the high status of the Jew, gained through his success in business and by his involvement and concern with the community, and the need for Jews to have non-Jewish friends, all contribute to making the relationship between Jew and non-Jew a most positive one.

Interestingly enough, many of the respondents report that their parents were very anti-gentile; they lived in fear of the Christian community.

> My mother was a scared Jew. She would say, 'You never know when the Christian world will rise up against you.'

> My mother told me that on the Shtetl, on Christmas, all the Jews would be gathered up, for Christians would go on a rampage.

> My parents' attitude toward non-Jews--the outcast was the non-Jew in the Jewish neighborhood.

One respondent recalls his days growing up in the Bronx and his encounter with the non-Jewish element,

> In New York, when I was in school, the Jewish kids were always looked down on as weaker, meeker kids. As the neighborhoods changed and became more gang minded there were challenges; the Jewish gang was ambushed. Many times I had grass stuffed down my mouth and the Jewish gang had to retaliate. Because we were Jewish, we weren't meek. We tried to prove a point. We were not wealthy Jews. A lot of Gentiles in Williamson feel that all Jews are wealthy. They don't realize that Jewish have their poor. It makes it so much harder to survive in a small town with this prejudice. I can't give of the buck so I give of my time. Judaism teaches me to do for others. Basically being Jewish or non-Jewish doesn't make a difference.

Yet, despite all the involvement and interaction between Jew and non-Jew in Williamson, and their acceptance by the gentiles, there is

still a feeling among Jews that, "I am more comfortable with Jews than non-Jews."

> Living in a small town, it is hard not to have non-Jewish friends. One socializes with non-Jews and Jews. I can feel comfortable either way. I feel more comfortable with Jews. I was the only Jewish student in my class. One has to learn to cope with this. One conforms to their standards. We were joked when we ate Matzah, or were out for the holidays--called Christ-killers. It's hard to live with Jews too. One good thing about Jews is that they can't call you a 'dirty Jew.'
>
> I would rather live in a more Jewish world. I have an equal number of Jewish and non-Jewish friends. Yet, Jewish people's viewpoints are more like mine. I'm more comfortable among Jews. Most non-Jews are non-intellectual, right wing, 'Wallace for President' type. I have to meet them on the level of golf and fun. Non-Jews don't see the full impact of 'Watergate' as Jews do. We plan to retire in Miami.
>
> I am more inclined to be attracted into conversation with Jews than non-Jews, all things being equal.
>
> I have to be myself, and I feel I can't be myself around Gentiles and rather than be something I'm not, I just rather not be around them.
>
> I think one feels a kinship toward anyone who is Jewish.
>
> A goy is a goy. I lived through Hitler and when the chips are down, how many will stick up for you. I have quite a few non-Jewish friends and they are good friends, but I wouldn't want to put them to the test.
>
> At the supermarket, I checked the eggs to see if any were broken. A non-Jew said, 'Are you checking to make sure there are a dozen.' That immediately sets up a barrier between us. I'm Jewish--he's not. I was on the defensive. 'At these prices,' I responded, 'I can't afford to have any broken!'
>
> In a small town, being Jewish one has to be careful what one does and says. I can't be myself except when I'm with fellow Jews. I feel more comfortable playing golf with Jews than non-Jews.

Clubs

> I'm involved in everything that pertains to the community in general. This is my home, and town and I feel any contribution that will better our town, I will work on.

> I don't feel any less a part of the system, because I'm Jewish, nor do I feel they feel that way. Most people judge you by what you do and not who you are. It takes all kinds of bones to make up an organization. The wish-bone wishes something could be done, but never volunteers to do it.
>
> The jaw-bone tells what should be done, but never helps. The back-bone does everything but keeps his mouth shut.

> One is treated equally in all clubs and organizations. A Jew can rise to the top in almost all fraternal, civic and social clubs.

These descriptions represent the views of many respondents. It is a fact that both the Jewish men and women of Williamson are involved in and concerned with organizational life. Women are active in the Ladies Auxiliary of the Appalachian Regional Hospital, Lions Auxiliary, Cancer Society, Heart Fund, March of Dimes, Rotary Anns (wives or Rotarians), Junior Women's Club, Garden Club, P.T.A., and Girl Scouts. Men are members of the Kiwanis Club, the Moose, Elks, Rotary Club, and Lions Club.

However, a number of respondents feel that being Jewish sets them apart in their involvement with community organizations; they do not feel at all a part of the system.

> I feel any non-Jewish organization that I belong to, that I am still looked upon as a Jew. I'm always on my guard. I don't feel comfortable. I feel strongly about this. I feel comfortable in Miami Beach--so many Jews there.

> I used to belong to Rotary Anns; the meeting ended with a prayer in Jesus' name. The club had no purpose or aim. The thought of going made me sick. It was purely social. I had nothing in common with the people--just too Churchy--that's all they would talk about. I couldn't talk to them. I never felt a part of anything in that club. Once a year, they would give out a few baskets of food and thought it was really something--instead of year-round charity. That was my only experience with a non-Jewish club.

> I think that in any organization in Williamson, one is only tolerated. Jews in Williamson are employers and not employees. Non-Jews look up to you on a financial basis.

The Mountain Club was organized for one purpose--so that no Jews would be in it. Jews are in all other organizations and in most cases are active. I don't enjoy being anywhere where I am just tolerated. I think non-Jews would just 'a-soon' see us gone.

I joined Rotary at the prodding of a friend. It met at 12:15 on Tuesdays and I went religiously. This particular time, one of the preachers was sitting across from me. A Jewish member got up to say something and the preacher said to his neighbor, 'Did you ever have any dealings with these Israelites' and continued with something derogatory. That was the last time I went to Rotary. A lot of Jews in this town are fooled into believing they have non-Jewish friends.

Most Williamson organizations end with a prayer that mentions Jesus Christ. Christians are doing what is natural to them and they do not mean to leave Jews out. I don't like it because I feel left out.

The whole way of these clubs are so Christian, I'm not interested in them.

There is a small group in every organization who has prejudice against Jews. In Williamson, one doesn't have to hang his head because he is Jewish.

There will always be a feeling of anti-minority, because it is ingrained in the human being. If I do something in an organization, I do it to help somebody in some way. Not because I am a Jew, or in spite of being a Jew, or to prove anything. I feel that if I would run for a public office, (though) my being a Jew might hurt me.

At one time, the country club was allegedly restricted; Jews could not belong. This situation was changed, however. Respondents have mixed feelings concerning the "club" which is the only total recreational facility in Williamson.

If the country club could be all non-Jewish, it would. But if we Jews could afford it, we would have a Jewish club.

My husband presently is president of the country club. Jews were not allowed in the country club at one time. At times, I can't close my mind to this situation. But this is the only recreational facility. If a Black would apply for membership, we would take a definite stand pushing for admittance. It's easy to be comfortable in

your position and close your eyes to the hypocrisy that exists. The Moose club does not allow Orientals to dine there. The Elks club denied a Black doctor a drink. If I lived in a city, I would not belong to the Moose or Elks or country club that has exclusive membership; but because it's a small town it is easy to say, 'there is no other place.' But now it is affecting my child, he questions, 'how we can belong under these conditions.'

The country club was formed without Jews. When they discovered they needed Jews' money, they invited Jews. A lot of Jews belong to the club for convenience and status. I was offered free membership and declined. I didn't want to be taken on the rebound.

There remains one club in town which will not admit Jews--the Mountain club. However, this does not seem to affect most respondents.

> Most members of the Mountain club aren't aware that the club doesn't accept Jews. An unwritten law that they don't accept Jews. It doesn't bother me, for I don't like that kind of club.
>
> An older member said to me, 'See you at the Mountain club meeting Tuesday?' He was losing his memory. I said, 'No you won't; I'm Jewish!'--he was embarrassed.

In summary, the Jews are very active in the organizational life of Williamson. They not only give of their time but also of their money to these organizations. They do so because they feel it is their duty as citizens. Yet, there is a feeling among some Jews that being Jewish does affect one's relationship with these groups. The clubs have Christian overtones which tend to make many Jews feel like outsiders. Perhaps as a result, the Jewish women are most active in temple sisterhood, which has a reputation for initiating and carrying out many worthwhile projects, it is indeed the backbone of the temple. The Jewish men are quite supportive of the local B'nai B'rith which is a respected organization in town. It may be that at these Jewish meetings, Jews can feel more comfortable. As one respondent noted, "I can't be myself except when I'm with fellow Jews."

Cliques

It has been noted in Gordon's volume that suburbia often "has its castes and classes based upon economic differences."[4] It has been observed that people who can afford the same quality of material comforts, who have the same kind of homes, cars and attire usually associate with each other.

In Williamson, cliques do exist, however, they are not formed on the basis of economic class (probably because most respondents are of the same socio-economic class anyway; middle to upper-middle class).

One factor which might determine the composition of a Williamson clique is whether one is "home-grown" or "import."

As one "import" remarks,

> There is a caste system in Williamson; cliques definitely exist. The cliques consist of those who want to be cliques. Those who were born in West Virginia are more cliquish. When I first came to Williamson, I got the feeling that a non-West Virginian Jew was not accepted as readily in the inner circle of the Jewish community. Some of the people in the Jewish community can make fellow Jews feel like outsiders.

Cliques are often formed in Williamson on the basis of common concerns:

> It's normal for cliques to form, mutual interest, problems bring people together. You're friendly with people on your own intellectual level. We all have many worlds in which we live.
>
> Everyone has their own group of friends. Among Jews, when there is a joyous occasion, all cliques dissolve; it becomes a unified family. When there is a need there is no clique.
>
> Cliques exist in Williamson. I belonged to a clique, until I realized it was hurting other people.

Finally, there is a fear expressed by some, that as the Jewish community of Williamson diminishes, the cliques are becoming more and more

pronounced and this is contributing to a divisive force in the community.

> As the community grows smaller, it seems to be splitting up. Because of cliques, the community has become divided. There are personal disagreements and arguments.
>
> There are cliques in any group and this group is getting smaller and the cliques are more obvious.

In the coming years, the real challenge for the Jewish community will be to pull together in unity, to dissolve any cliques that may exist, and to work hard for the survival of their community.

Intermarriage

In the past few years, there have been numerous reports testifying to an alarming increase in the rate of Jewish intermarriage. The most recent study reinforces these reports.

> Some of the worst fears and some of the best hopes of those American Jews concerned about Jewish intermarriage are being substantiated by the preliminary findings of the National Jewish Population Study. While Explorations in Intermarriage by Dr. Fred Massarik, released at the Toronto meeting of the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds last November, only scratches the surface of the subject of intermarriage, this preliminary report suggests that some startling findings will ultimately come out of the vast body of new data. Two conclusions which can be drawn from the data available at this time, however, are: 1) projections of the rate of intermarriage have greatly underestimated the incidence of intermarriage.[5]

The single most startling statistic in the preliminary report is that the rate of intermarriage, which according to the report never reached 13 per cent prior to 1960, nearly tripled in the period 1961-1965 and reached 48.1 percent for the period 1966-1972.[6]

> and 2) the commonly accepted view that intermarriage is tantamount to leaving the Jewish faith and the Jewish people is only partially true.[7]

The National Jewish Population Study figures show that 98.4 per cent of the children of intermarriages in which the wife was Jewish were being

raised as Jewish, indicating that despite the rarity of non-Jewish men converting, the woman tends to retain her Jewish identity and to determine the religious orientation of her children. In cases where the husband is Jewish and the wife not Jewish, the percentage of children raised as Jews drops to 63.3, which is still above the prevailing expectation.[8]

We must now investigate the attitude of Jewish parents with regard to the question of intermarriage. In the Lakeville Studies, there was substantial resistance on the part of parents to the intermarriage of their children, but many showed a degree of resignation to the inevitability of intermarriage.

> The majority of Lakeville Jews had been more profoundly influenced by the prevailing culture (than by traditional Jewish values). Not only did they believe that love was the basis for marriage; they also thought children should be treated as autonomous individuals, free to make their own decisions and mistakes. Besides, parents feel they ought to be consistent in maintaining their accustomed liberal orientation in Jewish-Gentile relationships--an attitude which conflicted openly with the traditional Jewish norm of banishing the errant child. As one mother put it: 'We've tried to teach non-prejudice and tolerance to the children, so we couldn't react too much.'[9]

Moreover, in a follow-up study by Sklare in the late 1960's, it was shown that there was a growing submission to intermarriage, a feeling that it is the law of life, that it cannot be resisted, that it may occur at any time.

Yet, it should be noted that the Fein study (1972) reports that, "75 per cent of the adults hold it essential, or at least desirable, that one marry within the Jewish faith."

The attitude of respondents in the Williamson study is of one accord, namely, that intermarriage is bad. They realize that in Williamson there are no Jews to date. One either doesn't date or dates gentiles. As one

respondent stated, "Jewish children grow up as sisters and brothers and would never date one another. They must date non-Jews." Yet despite their willingness to allow their children to date non-Jews, nevertheless, respondents discourage intermarriage and will try to do everything in their power to prevent it. But in the final analysis, will not disown their child for intermarrying.

Some views of respondents with regard to intermarriage are as follows:

> My best friend is not Jewish. Yet I want the children to marry Jewish, so that we will have this togetherness. We should treasure our freedom and respect the religions of others.
>
> I don't want the children to intermarry, not because there is anything wrong with non-Jews, but it changes all family relationships, and your family is your life, and the coming together of a family is important. I don't think my children could accept the supernatural Christ. My children have to date non-Jews. There aren't Jewish children for them to date here.
>
> My father said don't cheat yourself of life; marry whom you will be happy with. I decided I couldn't be happy with a non-Jew.
>
> My wife was the only Jewish girl I ever dated. My mother had qualms of my marrying Gentile. If I had to marry a Gentile, I just wouldn't of gotten married.
>
> Up until now I firmly opposed intermarriage. My mother would turn over in her grave if she knew I was dating a non-Jew. I don't think I could ever be happily married to a non-Jewish woman. I want to come home on a Friday night, light candles, have Challah and wine.
>
> We live in Williamson, we live in a non-Jewish world. My son dates a non-Jew. My son would never convert. I would want my children to marry Jews and encourage it, but I would not disown them if they didn't.
>
> If my children were to marry a non-Jew, I would have a feeling of deep hurt, I would attempt to dissuade it from happening, with everything possible short of severance--and after all that, accept it. My pride would be hurt. I would hope that he would be a good person.

> I never dated non-Jews, I always wore my Jewish star in Brooklyn to make sure everyone knew I was Jewish and no non-Jew would ask me out. I sure hope none of my children would marry non-Jews.
>
> Someone can convert, but they still don't have Judaism in them--they don't have background in them. They can convert and still would not be Jewish to me. I wouldn't disown a child, though, like the Orthodox would.

Furthermore, there is evidence to show that parents of respondents took an even harder line with regard to this issue.

> I grew up in a family where it was the worst thing one could commit. My mother would go into tantrums if you would date a non-Jew. She put the fear of God in all of us. We had a strong family. This brushed off on me. I could never approve of it.
>
> My parents never wanted me to date, for there were no Jewish boys to date. 'You don't go out with a Shaygitz.' My mother can't understand that one goes out merely for companionship.
>
> My parents told me they would be very unhappy if I married a Schicksah. My parents were against intermarriage. My father said, 'You have the blood of Israel running through your veins.' He said to his grandchild that he would not go into her home if she married a non-Jew.
>
> My mother always said it's okay to go out with non-Jewish girls--but marry a Jewish girl. In Franklin, Kentucky, I was the only Jew in the whole high school. We were the only Jewish family in Franklin.
>
> Our parents, during our dating period, were anti-intermarriage and would probably sit Shivah for us. But their attitudes have relaxed over the years.
>
> My parents definitely wouldn't have wanted me to marry a non-Jew. When I was in high school, I met a Catholic boy. I wanted to go out with him; my parents forbade me. I'm against intermarriage.
>
> To my parents, there was no such thing as a Jewish girl dating a non-Jew. I knew of a Jewish girl who married a non-Jewish tailor. She went out of her way to be a super-goy. Her son became a Lutheran minister. However, by non-Jews she was still considered a Jew. Both the woman and her son found their way into concentration camps.
>
> My husband was working in New York City in the diamond industry. His parents lived in Williamson and they sent

> him to work in New York. They didn't want him around Williamson with no Jewish girls. They told him that he should come back after he married Jewish.

Despite all these strong feelings against intermarriage, there have been many incidences of it among the children of respondents. However, they report that in all cases their grandchildren are being raised Jewish and in most cases the non-Jewish spouse converted.

> My son married a Gentile girl and she converted though her parents don't know it. My son had a tough time; he was young and in love. My husband and I were hurt. Our son could never attend a Church. He could never be anything but Jewish. Now they are very active Jewishly; their children are raised Jewish. He wouldn't of married the girl if she didn't convert.

> Our son married a non-Jew, she converted, and the children go to a Conservative Sunday school. The kids go to Temple, occasionally, eat Matzah (during Passover) and identify themselves as Jews. They have no Jewish friends. We were very unhappy about the marriage.
>
> Marriage is hard enough without adding more differences. There are differences even after conversion. You want your child to be happy first and foremost. We tried to talk him out of it, and pointed out the difficulties, but when we failed, we didn't reject them. We hoped they would be married by a Rabbi and would raise their kids Jewish, and they did.

> We were opposed to it, we didn't want it. It was hard for our son, he knew how strongly we felt. It was a high school romance. We tried to break it up. Our son said, we taught him to be liberal and not to discriminate and therefore we should also keep consistent with regard to intermarriage.
>
> What does any parent want for their children, but to see them happy. Our daughter-in-law didn't convert. Our son was twenty-two, our daughter-in-law twenty-one, and I heard they were going to elope. I called them over and we talked. They were in love and they wanted to get married. Our daughter-in-law believed the children should be raised Jewish according to the head of the house. I asked her how she could raise children Jewish without being Jewish. She said she could and she did.
>
> She sees to it that the kids go to Sunday school--she reads about Judaism, and her mother talks lovingly of her Jewish grandchildren.

One respondent sums up the situation of intermarriage in the William-

son community as follows:

> Everybody who raised their children with all the holidays and have children who have intermarried, none of these children would give up their religion. The influence of the home, helped them to remain Jewish.

Thus, the prevailing sentiment in Williamson is anti-intermarriage, however, they have had their share of marriage out of the faith. It is interesting to note, though, the fact that children born out of these mixed unions are being raised Jewish.

CHAPTER IV

Particularism - Universalism

Anti-Semitism is defined as hostility or discrimination directed against the Jews. But one must ask, "Why do people hate the Jews?" Usually this hatred is a combination of two or three of the following factors.

1. Because of what the Jews believe. This type of hatred was characteristic of the Medieval Ages.

2. Because of the national character of the Jews. This prejudice was found in Germany in the period after the French Revolution where the Jews were perceived as a state within the state, a nation within the nation and therefore have no place in our (Germany) nation.

3. Because of racial characteristics. The sentiment here is that Jews possess racial characteristics that are hereditary, which separate them from the dominant element.

Taken as a whole any one of these three can provide a genuine ideological motivation. The person is convinced that the Jews are evil. Moreover, a manipulator, such as a Hitler, will use the presence of this ideology for his own purposes.

Furthermore, added to these ideological factors, are psychological ones. For the individual, Jews have often served as substitute father-figures. For others, Jews have been represented as the Id and animal sexuality. In addition, one must examine what is happening in society as a whole. Are the Jews, for example blocking a group who wants to rise from below. Also, in the presence of economic catastrophe there is often a need for a scapegoat. Thus the ideological and psychological motivations exist in an active degree in a small part of the population and a lesser degree in a larger part of society, but is raised to a much more active role during a period of catastrophe.[A]

This chapter will thus attempt to examine respondents' perceptions

of anti-Semitism and the logical off-shoots of this topic, namely, Jewish identity, the Holocaust and Israel.

> America is the home of American Jews. They know that they are secure in this land by right and not by sufferance. Economically, socially, educationally and psychologically, the American Jew feels that America is his land, and that he is as much American as is anyone else.[1]

This description of Jews living in suburbia, offered by Albert I. Gordon, characterizes well the view of the majority of the "home-grown," but does not provide a mold into which the "imports" would easily fit. For it is in the area of attitudes toward Jewish versus American identities, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Israel, familiarization with Yiddish, where the "imports" differ most from the "home-grown." The "imports" appear to be more "particularistic," whose primary loyalties are to Jews and may be considered as people who deny that all Americans are the same. On the other hand, the "home-grown" are more "universalistic"; they "represent what used to be regarded by many as the standard Reform position --that American Jews were Jewish Americans, or, as viewed by some-- Americans of the Mosaic faith."[2]

Respondents were asked, "do you consider yourself a Jew first or an American first?" The "imports" almost unanimously and without hesitation answered that they were Jews first. In fact, this variable proved more significant than any other which was studied. Some responses of "imports" include:

> I think one can change one's nationality, but one cannot change one's religious heritage.
>
> If this country would turn its back on Jews, then it would turn its back on me.
>
> If I really had my 'drothers' I want to be in Israel and die there--for inevitably I see another Hitler.

I'm a Jew first. If two guys were lying in the street, and I knew one of them was Jewish, I'd first help the Jew.

In New York, most of my friends were Jewish, and I identified with being Jewish. Here in Williamson there is a (Jewish) group and we identify with it. We take America for granted; being Jewish is something one protects. I'm a Jew first.

I would consider myself a Jew first. I don't feel that American. I feel much more at home in Israel than here in America.

I consider myself a Jew first. I always felt this way--that is how we are considered by non-Jews.

One can clearly contrast the sentiment expressed above, that of, "By all means, I am a Jew first," with the attitude toward this topic held by the "home-grown."

If America went to war with Israel--the hell with Israel.

I consider myself an American first. Jewishness is religion and has nothing to do with nationality.

One's a religion, the other is a nationality. In case of war with Israel, I would have to be an American and fight on the side of America.

I am an American first. Without the U.S., we Jews wouldn't enjoy the position we do today. The old-timers came here to flee religious persecution.

We were children during World War II and patriotism was instilled within us.

I'm an American of the Jewish faith. I resent it when people say are you American or Jewish.

It seems that the attitude of the "home-grown" affirms Simon Herman's contention, namely, that "the amount of overlap between Americanism and Jewishness is small. The American Jew tends to see his Jewishness as related to specific limited regions of his life."[3] In order to discover some basis for the differences of opinion between "import" and "home-grown," one might consider the respondents' background characteristics.

The "imports" have predominantly Orthodox or Conservative backgrounds, while the "home-grown" are almost entirely from Reform backgrounds. According to Dr. Lenn, "Reform Jews from Orthodox backgrounds are more likely than those from Reform backgrounds to have particular views. . . . This may be due to a greater degree of emphasis on Jewish culture and nationality than might be expected from Orthodox and Conservative backgrounds."[4] One respondent bore out this hypothesis. He remarked:

> I would have to consider myself an American first because of our religious background. I think of myself as an American Jew.

Another factor operating may be the regional differences between the two groups. The "home-grown," by the definition given, were born or raised in West Virginia, as opposed to the "imports" who originate, for the most part, from the East. Lenn points out that "Jews are very low on particularism amongst those who were raised in the Southeast or South Central States. This in large measure reflects the much greater pressure on conformity to majority group values in the South."[5]

These two factors, then,

1. religious background and
2. regional differences, may be significant influences shaping the various attitudes of the respondents. As we proceed to examine feelings about anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Israel, and consider the extent to which Yiddish has been retained, these two elements may be responsible for divergencies.

Anti-Semitism

Albert Gordon maintains in Jews in Suburbia, that the uniqueness of present-day Jewish suburbanites, is that they feel at home and secure in their Americanism, unlike their fathers' generation.

> The American Jew is convinced that the virulent form of anti-Semitism that had for so many decades been natural to Russia, Poland, Rumania and Germany will not manifest itself here. He is well aware of the attempts of such organizations as the Kuklux Klan, the Silver Shirts and America First to spread their poisonous philosophy into the bloodstream of the nation, yet he does not regard them as typical of America.[6]

Yet, although according to Gordon, overt anti-Semitism is not a serious problem in suburbia today, "one may intermittently detect latent indications of an unfavorable attitude toward Jews."[7] "Three hundred and eighty-eight respondents, or 63 per cent of those suburbanites who replied to my (Gordon's) questions on this subject, believe that there is no anti-Jewish feeling in the suburb in which they reside. Eighteen others indicate that if there is any anti-Semitic feeling, they "are not aware of it." Yet 190 person, or 33 per cent, believe that there is or may be "some" anti-Jewish feeling, even though they could not often particularize."[8]

More recently the Fein report revealed an interesting finding regarding anti-Semitism:

> One statement that elicited the most widespread--indeed, near universal--agreement, . . . was the statement about anti-Semitism. The overwhelming majority of all respondents, in every temple, rejected the view that "anti-Semitism will never be a major problem for American Jews.[9]

It is against this background that we shall want to examine to what degree anti-Semitism is viewed as a problem in Williamson. With regard to this issue it seems that the "imports" much more readily than the "home-grown," acknowledge the presence of anti-Semitism in Williamson and are quicker to give specific examples:

> When I first came to town, it was claimed that there was no anti-Semitism here. It isn't true. Anti-Semitism is more marked among upper-class Christians.
>
> When I was in the hospital with my daughter, a nurse came

by and said, 'That's the whitest Jew baby I've ever seen!' I think Jews are distinct here, but I want to be distinct. I feel there's a lot of anti-Semitism here!

I've seen non-Jews make anti-Semitic remarks and yet be loved by Jews. I don't buy it.

I don't think Jews are accepted in every area of the community. There are no Jews in the Mountain Club. A Jew in Williamson is accepted on the surface. I think the only reason Jews are accepted into the country club is because they need the Jews financially. There are latent hostilities everywhere in the world toward Jews--also here in Williamson. There is a quota on the number of Jews allowed to serve on the Board of Directors of the banks in Williamson; one per bank.

A grocer in Williamson distributed matches at his drive-in with the saying, 'Nazi persecution of Jews does not justify Jewish persecution of Arabs.' And he stamps his checks with 'Help support the Arab Guerillas.'

An interesting observation made by an "import" was that, "If you're not a Protestant in Williamson, you're a 'foreigner.' I'm a 'foreigner' because I'm Jewish. Anyone who is not a mountain person is a 'stranger.'" This same situation was pointed out in Gordon's volume. "Because Jews in suburbia are comparative newcomers, they are on occasion regarded as 'foreigners' who have no right to thwart the will of the older settlers."[10] Furthermore, Gordon states, "New residents are even more a cause of aggravation if they happen to be members of a different faith. They prove doubly annoying if the communities from which they come are regarded as socially inferior. It is assumed that cultural levels and standards will necessarily be low."[11] It may thus be that the "imports" are doubly aware of their status as "foreigners." For they are not only "newcomers" to the West Virginian community but also happen to be Jewish.

The "home-grown," however, to a greater extent either deny the existence of anti-Semitism in Williamson or are more reluctant to cite examples. The reply, "I have had no personal contact with anti-Semitism

here, is often repeated,

> When I grew up in Williamson, all my friends were Gentile. And we would discuss religion often. I never felt any different than anyone else--we were just kids growing up. Parents often instill into the child the idea that 'remarks' are anti-Semitic. They misread comments.

However, many "home-grown" feel, as do the "imports," that anti-Jewish feeling is present in Williamson.

> One just knows that these people (non-Jews) don't care for Jews; it's a gut feeling. And if they are friendly, you get the feeling that it is because they consider you different from most Jews.
>
> A fellow businessman told me: 'You're a good Jew. I always heard Jews were "Kikes"--but you're a good Jew.'
>
> I have two girls working in the store. Some Jews they despise, not because they are Jews, but because of their individual personality. They never forget you are Jews!
>
> Even now, with all our non-Jewish friends, I am sure there is underlying hostility.
>
> I think there is a little amount of anti-Semitism in everyone, but we have to overlook it. I will not fight it.

There have also been "incidents" with respect to anti-Jewish feeling in relation to the public schools.

> One time my child came home from school very upset because a fellow classmate called her a 'Goddam Jew.' We phoned the boy's parents and invited them and their son to our home to discuss this matter. We explained to our daughter's classmate that 'if one can't get along with another person, one can understand this. But one should not base one's dislike on grounds of religion. This is something which our daughter cannot help.' A huge tear slowly rolled down the boy's cheek.
>
> Our daughter was fourth in her class and in line for public recognition in her senior year of high school. She is suddenly dropped down to seventh rank. We talked to the principal; we wanted to know how she dropped from fourth to seventh rank, and her grades in her senior year were either the same or better. We felt the reason was her being Jewish.
>
> Jewish Children generally are brighter than non-Jewish children. In school, there was a tie in an essay in

American history between a Jew and a non-Jew. The non-Jew's essay was selected as the winner. The judge was a D.A.R. and she felt the non-Jew's essay had more realistic feeling seeing how roots of non-Jews go back farther in America than those of Jews.

When our son was president of the senior class and ranked third in his class, at the time the schools were integrating, our son fought for the rights of the Blacks. Not only that, he complained about the nature of Christian songs at the Baccalaureate Service. As a result he never received his high school diploma. Now he is a lawyer.

At one Baccalaureate Service, we were the only Jews there. The text of the sermon was, 'You have to take a chance to go down to the sea in ships.' Then the Minister says, 'Jews never left their homes; afraid to go out and take chances.' As we were walking out, people were saying, 'wasn't that a wonderful service.'

The teachers at the school did not like the Jewish kids too well. One teacher admitted that she purposely left our daughter off the honor society list.

In the schools, there has been a priority of teachers toward Jews over non-Jews. Non-Jews regard the teacher as right, always. Jews will try to find out why a child is bad and often doubt the correctness of the teacher. A Jewish parent is more concerned with children. So as a result, a Jewish child is given greater priority. Also Jewish merchants show patronage to teachers. When a teacher comes to the store, a Jewish parent gives a nicer gift. Other children may feel anti-Semitism due to this favoritism.

Our daughter reported to us that her teacher said, 'Jews have contributed to our community greatly,' but one student shouted out, 'You can be sure prices are highest in Jews' stores.'

However, despite these occasional tremors of tension and unrest, it appears that most respondents would agree in whole or in part with the following assessment of the nature of anti-Semitism in Williamson as offered by a respondent:

> There is an undercurrent of anti-Semitism here. It is in every town. It is not as overt as in other places for Jews take an integral part in the functioning of this community. The Jew in Williamson is a powerful force in terms of what he can do.

Holocaust

"The judges at the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem observed: 'The memory of the Holocaust stirs to the depths the heart of every Jew.'"[12] Moreover, Professor Simon Herman, in his study on Israelis and Jews, states that, "the implications of the destruction of the Six Million reverberate within all Jews, profoundly influencing all their conceptions of Jewish collective existence and relations between Jews and the Gentile world."[13]

Now we must ask just how profoundly were the "home-grown" affected at the time of the Holocaust, and what are their feelings now when they recall the extermination of one-third of the Jewish people.

One Williamson "home-grown" Jew asserts,

> The Holocaust is part of our heritage, and struggle for survival. It didn't affect me personally. I feel for those who had family involved. I feel, although it was terrible, it didn't affect my life; we still live in Williamson in our little nitch.

Another "home-grown" remarks,

> It was something awful that happened to somebody else, which we read about.

In contrast, are the views of one "import" who lived through many of the turbulent years in Nazi Germany. The Holocaust, more than any other event in her life has shaped her thinking and attitudes and its memory is ever so vivid.

> Most of the American youth forget about the Holocaust. They don't know much about it, and I think it is wrong--Six Million were slaughtered. It should be brought occasionally to their attention. Be careful that it doesn't happen again. Don't forget!
>
> You live in Germany for generations, and then someone points the finger, and says, 'get out!' We had comforts in Germany, but without our honor and respect, it meant nothing. When they arrested my husband, he got a lawyer friend to find out the charges. The Nazis told him, the charges were

> that 'he was a Jew.' I said 'this is wrong! This can't last. Right will triumph in the end!'
>
> We were Germans, who were Jewish. Hitler reversed it; we were Jews who lived in Germany and had no place there. All Jewish books (by Jewish authors) were burned in 1933 at the marketplace. Heine's books were first! Even Heine, who didn't want to be a Jew.

It is interesting to note, that it is only among the "home-grown" that the sentiment is expressed, "It could never happen again, here."

> I don't think the people would let it happen here!
>
> I've heard some say that what happened in Nazi Germany could happen here! I don't believe it!

There seems, however, to be a growing awareness among "home-grown" respondents of the extent and effect of the Holocaust as time goes by.

> At the time, I was a college student. We didn't know too much then. It was an unbelievable thing. We couldn't envision its extent or atrocity. It seemed like another world. I felt motivated getting into World War II--being American and Jewish.
>
> After the war, when it all came out in the open, it probably hit me more and more as time went on. It strengthened my feelings of being Jewish--made me feel I wanted to do more for the surviving Jews of the world. It influenced my financial giving.
>
> I hope it never happens here--sometimes I think it could. I would never go to Germany. I didn't realize, at the time what was going on there. Afterwards I was shocked.
>
> I abhor it and it's hard to believe it ever happened. We wish now we would of been more aware of it. I would never dismiss the thought that it could happen again.
>
> It made me realize that it could happen anywhere. I was disappointed in the United States. It made me stick with Jews closer.

On the other hand, there are no "imports" who have discounted the possibility of the Holocaust happening again and there are none who seem any less than deeply affected by its impact.

> The Holocaust scares me still. I'm not convinced that it can't happen again. Especially when I see men like Wallace attain high office.

> I was greatly affected; I shiver to this day, although I was not directly affected. I witnessed the faces of the people who escaped. When I was a kid, I watched Diary of Anne Frank, and I swore I would never see it again--to this day I haven't. The effect on my children --I don't know. I refer to the Holocaust in discussions with the older children. My son is aware of the Holocaust. He tried to get into a fraternity and was rejected because he was Jewish. He is conscious of being Jewish and he has taken a lot of ridicule for it, but he stands up for his Judaism--he was the only Jew in his graduating class. My son says, as bad as it is, the Six Million had it worse!
>
> I feel we should never forget it, for it could happen again. Herzl said, 'Wherever the Jews have it good, Jews go there, and it could happen again. Deep down you don't know how Christians feel about you. Many probably have a deep seated hatred toward us.
>
> It's a frightening thing to look back and to think that in this scientific world to have something like this happen. Humanity sat by the wayside and didn't do much about it.
>
> We should know about it, not forget about it, tell our children about it--and learn from it. One can never deny that one is Jewish. Protest is good--it's good to holler. There is not enough hollering by the right people. I think the Holocaust, could easily happen here.

Thus, although it is only among the "home-grown" that the view, "the Holocaust will not recur," is expressed, and an attitude that "they are only remotely related to the events of Nazi Germany," is present, nevertheless, both "home-grown" and "imports," for the most part, not only were affected by the Holocaust but also feel that it influenced their attitudes toward non-Jews, and caused them to identify more closely with Jews. This conclusion is reinforced by this final account,

> I remember, at the time, I went to Ashland for a meeting. On the news, there was a report about Jews being mistreated, brutally beaten. A companion said: 'That might be the beginning of a new philosophy.' A fear crept over me. Jews should never feel too secure that these things could never happen again. I feel that 99% of non-Jews feel that Jews are set apart.

Israel

"There was a time in American Jewish life when the idea of a Jewish state was an object of intense ideological dispute . . . . The Reform movement was, for many years, visibly identified with anti-Zionist arguments."[14] However, in the late 1930's and 1940's, in light of the realities of the Nazi death machine, and the urgent need to save Jewish lives, the arguments dealing with abstract issues could no longer be waged. The establishement of a Jewish state was seen by all Jews as a dire necessity. Yet, the question that must now be considered is whether there remains in the views of this generation of Reform Jews, some residual effects of the anti-Zionist feelings of pre-statehood.

In the Lakeville Studies of 1957-1958, the importance of support for Israel was rated fourteenth out of twenty-two items. Among the fourteen items more heavily endorsed than support for Israel were contributing to Jewish philanthropies, belonging to a synagogue or temple, attending services on the High Holidays, knowing the fundamentals of Judaism, marrying within the Jewish faith, as well as accepting one's being a Jew.[15]

But there has been a change in priorities over time. In 1971, according to the Fein study, "Israel has become dominant in our congregants' Jewish lives. No other concern, not Jewish education, not temple membership, not even charitable giving, is assigned so high a place in the listing of their Jewish priorities."[16] Respondents rated Israel fifth out of the same twenty-two items used in the Lakeville study.

There are several explanations for this shift that has been observed. One may be that 1967, represents a climax in pro-Israeli feeling. For in 1967, unlike 1948 and 1956, Israel stood alone to fight her adversaries and scored a stunning victory. She came of age. When most was

at stake, she stood up and shaped her own future. "For Israelis it marked the transition from adolescence to maturity,"[17] but for American Jews, it helped consolidate pro-Israeli sentiment. One respondent in the Williamson sample noted,

> The Six Day War gave us an identity. That was the proudest day. 'See what Jews can do.'

Another declared,

> After the Six Day War, there was complete respect for Israel. That Israel is something and can take care of itself.

Simon Herman claims, "No Jew can escape the necessity of defining his Jewish identity in relationship to Israel, particularly after the Six Day War . . . the compelling impact of these events has brought about a renewal of identification with the Jewish group on the part of many marginal Jews."[18]

This change in attitude toward Israel among Reform Jews may also have been out of guilt. Dr. Michael A. Meyer, professor of Jewish History, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, asserts that the thinking in the Reform movement may have proceeded as follows: "we have been guilty; we were anti-Zionists, let us now show the world that we are better Zionists than anyone else; we can be 100 per cent pro-Israel."[19]

A third factor, may be the "continuing change in the composition of Reform Jewry. Sklare had found, in his 1957 study, that Reform Jews who had been raised in Reform households were the least likely to support Israel, and he conjectured that the increase in Jews of Eastern European origin in the Reform movement would bring about an overall shift in attitude."[20]

Thus, in turning our attention to the Williamson sample, it is found that a respondent's upbringing may affect his views toward Israel, but

only to a small degree. It is in fact found that among the "imports," who have Orthodox and Conservative backgrounds, there is enthusiastic support for Israel.

The following "imports" all echo the feeling that Israel has given American Jews a new dignity, added strength to our identification as Jews, and they feel an intense pride in Israel's accomplishments.

> I think Israel has done so much for Jews. I think Jews in America have found their place in the sun because of Israel. I'm dying to go to Israel and take the children. We would like to go to Israel together.
>
> It is a marvelous feeling to know Israel exists, that it is there to open its arms. Israel is giving us an identity that is great. Israel represents a fulfillment to all Jews. I would like to see Israel.
>
> I think Israel has helped the image of the Jew in America.
>
> I want to go so bad, I can taste it. I'm very proud of Israel. I'm proud to have a place that is ours.
>
> Yes, I'm proud of all the things they've done there; they are such fearless people. It strengthens my identity as a Jew. Israel presents a good image of Jews versus the money grabbers portrayed in The Merchant of Venice.
>
> We've got to support it. God help us if there wouldn't be an Israel. If Israel falls, that's the end of Judaism! Where would we go? The only place is Israel, where Jews are welcome.

One respondent, who was born and raised in Israel relates,

> When I left Israel, I was terribly homesick, but there were many economic advantages to living in the U.S. My Israeli uncle always said to my American uncle, 'it's our duty to build up Israel and to be there.' My American uncle would reply, 'You can do plenty for Israel from the U.S.' Israelis feel it is our duty to be in Israel. Israelis felt it was the duty of Americans to give money. After 1948, Israel needed people so badly. After our Independence, we all got on the street and danced. The next day we had to stand guard while the Arabs left. I stood with my mother.

Although the "home-grown" are also pro-Israel, it is only among the "home-grown" who are raised in Reform homes, that any type of mixed feel-

ings toward Israel are expressed.

> I am resentful of speakers who try to tell me Israel is my homeland. This is my homeland. It's all I've ever known. I have no interest to go to Israel. There is too much here to see.
>
> I would like to go (to Israel) just as I would like to go to France and Spain. I have no special feeling for it as a 'homeland of Jews.' This is my home. I would not want to live there, but go there as a tourist.
>
> I hope the U.S. will never get involved in the mid-east, in a war. The feeling (in America) will be 'why should we send our boys to fight for 'damn Jews!' If it comes to the worst, we have somewhere where we are welcome. I have no desire to go to Israel.

However, most "home-grown" share pro-Israeli attitudes. Some have visited Israel, others have even contemplated living there.

> I think of myself as a Zionist. I was happy to see Israel come into existence, for I knew there was a homeland for my people. It is every Jew's duty to support it. I resent what America is doing by selling arms to the Arabs in exchange of oil. When we were visiting Israel, I thought I might like to live there. Now I feel the Israelis are the most beautiful people in the world. Israelis live their religion every day of their lives.
>
> I wish I could afford to live in a Kibbutz and be part of it. Not just visit it as a tourist. I'd like to share the hardships of those people.

The "home-grown" also acknowledge that Israel has given the American Jew a new image:

> I think Israel and what they've done over there has done more for America than for themselves. It made the American Jew a prouder Jew, gave him self-respect and brought him out of himself.
>
> I think it's created a new image of the Jew, instead of the underdog. Those damned to eternal suffering are now strong.

Thus, though it is only among the "home-grown" that mixed feelings toward Israel are expressed, there is a general consensus of opinion in Williamson that "Israel, whose achievements have astonished the world,

has become the symbol of the Jew reborn."[21] If the "home-grown" were in fact raised in a climate of anti-Zionistic feelings, there is all indication to believe that this feeling has vanished, in all but a few cases. There is an interest in and a readiness to support the State of Israel in Williamson. As one respondent states, "Jews of the world must do everything to see that it exists; it is our future salvation." The Jews of Williamson support Israel mainly through philanthropy. Respondents contribute generously and enthusiastically to the "United Jewish Appeal." A majority of respondents buy Israeli bonds yearly. There is a feeling that it is their obligation, indeed the obligation of all Jews to do this much at least, to help ensure the continued existence of the State of Israel.

Yiddish

> The sudden disappearance of the use of the Yiddish language in the suburbs is often noted by observers in all parts of the country. Not only are there no longer many readers of Yiddish newspapers, but Yiddish terms and expressions which children acquired through their parents are rapidly fading from the vocabulary of the suburban Jews.[22]

As one respondent stated, "When we went to visit my grandmother to introduce her to my fiancée, my grandmother couldn't believe she was Jewish--for she knew no Yiddish!"

In keeping with many of the findings of this chapter, it appears that most "imports" understand and speak Yiddish, as compared to only a couple of "home-grown" respondents who can boast of this skill. One "import" reminisces,

> A man in Schul would get up and relate a Yiddish story to raise funds. Although I did not understand every Yiddish story, I knew the context and the basic content. Yiddish was spoken in the home.
>
> I was brought up with Yiddish and Hungarian. When I was spoken to in Yiddish, it was expected that I reply in Yiddish--but often I didn't. I've retained Yiddish.

> I was always Jewish minded. I never denied being a Jew, always liked Jewish songs, dances, and the Yiddish language. Both my parents spoke Yiddish and I picked it up. My parents read the "Forwärts" and "Tag."
>
> My mother spoke only Yiddish. She went to night school to learn English. She spoke only Yiddish to us. I can speak it. At the time, I wasn't impressed (with my Yiddish ability), it was just a way of life.

The "home-grown" in comparison have little Yiddish knowledge.

> Yiddish was spoken in the home, I didn't pick up any, though, I didn't seem to want to or care to.

One "home-grown" regretfully declares,

> I once mentioned to my mother that it is a shame that she didn't teach us any Yiddish so we could in turn pass it on to our children.

One "home-grown," whose father was born in Russia, perhaps offers a clue why parents of "home-grown" did not want to press for the transmission of "Yiddishkeit" to their children.

> My father wanted to be accepted by Christian businessmen and the Christian world. In a larger city, one does not need to do this.
>
> When I went to college, I grew more Jewish conscious. I joined a fraternity which had many nice Jewish boys, who were religious--even those who would lay T'filin and speak Yiddish. I could understand Yiddish well. The older I got, I became more aware of everything Jewish.

So we may infer that living in the predominantly Christian world of West Virginia is less conducive for retaining Yiddish forms than is the East, from where the "imports" originate. The "home-grown" experienced more pressure "to fit in" to strive for sameness. For the "imports" being Jewish, and all that goes with it, was being part of a majority.

In concluding this chapter, a pattern seems to have emerged. In each of the five categories, Jew or American first, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Israel, and Yiddish, the "imports" prove to be more particularistic; they identify more strongly with fellow Jews, Judaism, Jewish-

ness and Jewish culture. The "home-grown" often have a different outlook. They are more universalistic, they see themselves as Americans first, they tend to hesitate to particularize cases of anti-Semitism. Some of them are ambivalent to the Holocaust and feel America, rather than Israel, is their homeland, and Yiddish is a much more foreign vehicle of expression. However, in light of the religious backgrounds and regional differences of both groups, these differences are to be expected.

CHAPTER V

The Family

The family is the basic unit of every society. It serves to help the individual meet needs imposed on him by nature and society while at the same time it protects him from that society. The family unit takes on a special significance within Judaism because through it the bonds of cohesion to the Jewish people and maintenance of a distinctive Jewish life style were assured. The Jewish family served as a vehicle through which Jewish tradition, ethics and faith were passed on from one generation to another. It has been likened to a miniature sanctuary which served to mirror the most noble of values. Through times of persecution and times of freedom the Jewish family remained an indestructible source of strength providing for the survival of the Jewish people.

> 'The society of scholars and the family are like a stone roof,' observed the sages of Israel. 'Remove a stone and it collapses; add burdens and weights and it endures solidly and firmly.' This perceptive passage from the Midrash sums up the unique character and quality of the Jewish family. For if there has been one salient feature about the Jewish civilization it is this: the Jewish family has been exemplary--the pride of the Jewish People and a model to the gentile world. The Jewish home has become synonymous with loyalty and love, decency and devotion, kindness and consideration.[1]

As Gilbert Rosenthal observes in his book, The Jewish Family in a Changing World, the Jewish family was noted for its cohesiveness; strong bonds of love, duty, and responsibility tied each member of the family to one another. Moreover, each family member had clearly defined roles; each knew his place, his duties, his job. In the words of Tevye, from Fiddler on the Roof, "Because of our Tradition, everyone here knows who he is and what God expects him to do." And the Jewish family possessed a rich religious tradition. Jewish rituals and norms were integral parts

of the Jewish home. The Jewish family had a low divorce rate and a negligible infidelity rate. It had little incidence of alcoholism or drug addiction. It knew of almost no wife-beating or child molestation. It boasted of an inordinately low rate of crime and juvenile delinquency. On the whole, the Jewish family was stable, enduring and secure.

However, there are recent reports which indicate that the "cohesive Jewish family is unraveling."[2] The world has been rapidly changing and the stereotype Jewish family has been changing along with it. Jewish families are mobile and are dispersing rapidly. The old Jewish domestic roles are blurred. Religious observances are at an unprecedented low level, infidelity is beginning to attack the Jewish home, and the sexual revolution has its Jewish accent. Juvenile delinquency, drugs, crime, have now become Jewish problems too. These new developments are seen by many as posing a threat to the survival of the traditional Jewish family and to Judaism itself. Many feel that, "the family unit is what has preserved Judaism, while other peoples perished, (and that) . . . the family has always been the bulwark upon which the religion is structured and the conduit for its passage from one generation to the next."[3]

The Williamson community is also not immune from the divisive forces which are pulling apart the traditional family unit. As their children mature, they most often seek to move elsewhere. There is a longing by the young to live in larger communities, where opportunities are more varied and experiences richer. Jewish parents of Williamson, likewise, have had to cope with the realities of inter-marriage and drugs. However, there seems to be a very strong sense of family shared by Williamson Jews. Family solidarity is viewed by all as the most important aspect of life.

In the words of one male respondent,

> Home life is 80 per cent of living; even more.

Another respondent explains,

> What's more important than family. That's everything. All character, attitudes about Judaism and country come out of family life.

Other congregants state,

> The crux of Jewish living starts in the home. One cannot just go once a week to temple. One needs a Jewish home.
>
> The home is the basic environment for all the acts of the children. Home will have a bigger effect on the children than either the school or outside peers. But it must be a strong home.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, Albert Gordon discovered that the Jewish mother of suburbia was clearly in charge of child-rearing and that her ideas, opinions, and values dominated the home scene. The father, on the other hand, due to his involvement with business affairs, was left with little time for the family. He felt his primary responsibility was to provide for the economic well-being of his family. One respondent in Gordon's study, expressed her feelings regarding the absence of her husband in the home, as follows:

> My husband seldom sees the children during the week. He has to rush off to the office early in the morning. When he gets home, the children have usually had their dinner and are already doing their homework. Of course, he speaks with them and jokes with them. He even gets a quick report on how they are doing in school and with their music lessons. But he really doesn't know them very well. I wish he would spend more time at home with them.[4]

> Thus, mothers have the responsibility not only for managing the home, choosing schools and actually rearing and guiding the children, but also for making the choice of religious, congregational, organizational and social affiliations. Whether the home will include Jewish ritual and ceremony; the extent of religious worship on the Sabbath and festivals; whether the children will be expected to observe the traditional ritual, and to what

> degree--these matters, regarded a generation ago as the direct responsibility of the Jewish husband, are now increasingly the responsibility of the wife.[5]

In way of contrast here is what one Williamson father maintains,

> Family comes before everything. . . . I love my family and home. I love to spend as much time here as possible. I think the quantity of time with the children, as well as quality, is important.

It is true, Williamson fathers also are entrusted with providing for the economic welfare of their families and yet, matters concerning family, child-rearing, decision making etc., are more jointly shared. An important factor contributing to family cohesiveness lies in the fact that fathers work within a five minute drive from home. They are easily available to their families all day. Most fathers arrive home early and the family sits down at dinner together.

> Family life is very important. The evening meal is important; a time when we sat down as a family and did things as a family.

But not all Williamson Jews would agree that a joint effort between husband and wife in family matters is a desirable situation. One grandmother, raised in the "Old Country," expresses her opinion as follows:

> A home life and family life is the essence of any good home or any good Jewish home. As a twig is bent, so a tree will grow. The father respecting the mother and vice versa. The mother forms the character in children. Father brings the money home.

In general, however, there is a total involvement of both mother and father in the upbringing of their children; parents' lives seem to, in fact, revolve around their children's.

The extreme importance of family to Williamson Jews is demonstrated even more clearly in their responses to a question asking "what their goals in life were." In an earlier study, Max Lerner[6] classified the five major goals in American life as success, prestige, money, power, and

security. Many acculturated Jews in suburbia accept these standards as avidly as most other Americans.

However, most respondents in this study see their goal for life in terms of their children.

> If I can raise these two children to be moral, decent, adults, then I have done something in life.
>
> I'm fulfilled with being a Jewish mother and wife.
>
> My goal is to keep providing a good, happy home for the children.

Others merely want their children to be happy and content.

> My goal is to see our children and their children grow up to be happy, adjusted and happy individuals.
>
> To raise children, that are well-adjusted, who can cope with life and be happy themselves.
>
> Children should live in happiness. Children should be well and happy.

Some parents want their children to marry Jewish--that is their goal.

> I have hopes for my children that they marry Jewish, raise their children Jewish and have their children marry Jewish, in other words, perpetuate it.
>
> One of the most important things is to see my children marry Jewish and to be successful.

Very few respondents expressed goals in terms of money, success, or power. It is their family that is of top priority.

Thus, although the family institution may be in a state of crisis generally, there is reason to believe that family ties in Williamson are still strong enough to resist the new pressures. For Williamson Jews, family remains the most important aspect of life.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Main Themes of Jewish Existence

To attempt to pull together and synthesize all the opinions, attitudes and impressions voiced by Williamson Jews, in order to arrive at a definitive statement describing their identity as Jews, is no easy task. There are, however, main themes of their Jewish existence which dominate their thinking. One of these themes is a feeling of superiority. The idea that we are a "chosen people," a people set apart and above. This is reflected in the views of many.

> I think when I go any place, I add something by being Jewish. I feel special.
>
> I was born a Jew and it is a unique grace.
>
> Non-Jews believe we are God's chosen people. Gentiles envy our freedom. We are not kept in Temple because of fear or because of promise.
>
> My children will never change their religion. My children feel Judaism is the best!
>
> I think Jews are an asset to the community; they play a large role in the community.
>
> A Presbyterian minister's daughter wrote on the sidewalk all the way around the block, 'Gloria is a Jew.' We talked to the child's parents. They had her clean the sidewalks with scrub brushes. Gloria knew she was Jewish and was proud of it.
>
> I always want the image to be that I am Jewish. A barber in town asked me if I was Jewish or not. The barber didn't think I was. When I said yes, he asked if I was a full-blooded Jew. Many Jews feel it is a compliment not to look Jewish. I think the Jewish people try to promote the image that Jews aren't pretty. I think there is a Semitic beauty.

Another recurring theme is that the Jews of Williamson have a longing for Jewish contact. Some mothers will drive their children to Hunt-

ington or Charleston, West Virginia, a two-hour drive, so that their children can be together with other Jewish children. One boy, upon his return from Miami Beach, was ecstatic; he could not believe that everyone in his grandmother's apartment complex was Jewish. "Even the lifeguard's were Jewish!" he exclaimed.

Williamson Jews miss not being able to go around the corner and grab a corned beef on rye. Such delicacies as lox and bagels have to be imported from without.

Due to this void of an accesible Jewish environment, Williamson Jews will take hold of any kind of Jewish stimulation; Jewish records, books, magazines, all capture the interest of Williamson Jews.

Moreover, despite the great involvement of these Jews in the community at large, Williamson Jews still feel set apart. On the one hand, they attempt to penetrate non-Jewish circles, but on the other hand, they huddle together defensively. When one member of the Jewish community makes plans to leave, it is met with great concern, almost fear. There is a certain amount of strength to be had from sheer numbers, and the number of Williamson Jews is quickly diminishing.

Furthermore, leisure time is much more available to Williamson residents. This much sought-after luxury is not easily obtained for most American suburbanites. In the suburbs there are usually too many places to go and things to do for a person to find time for himself. But in a small community, like Williamson, a father and mother do have the time to spend with their families. Such family activities include: dinners, where all family members are together, drives into the country, a day at a near-by lake, fishing, boating, water-skiing, swimming. The family is of utmost importance to these Jews and through it the parents try to trans-

mit Jewish learning, customs, and traditions.

One will perhaps best understand the life-style of a Jew living in Williamson if we contrast it with the picture of a family living in suburbia.

****

There is a frightening sense of isolation that carries into the home. It is hard to make friends because your friends move away so quickly. Friends often leave after six months of acquaintanceship with them. There is a lack of close relationships.

Husbands leave early in the morning, between 7:00 and 7:30. There is a long stream of cars leaving and the same stream returns between 7:30 and 8:00 that evening. My husband was seldom home.

In suburbia, no one has roots, no one has a sense of cohesion. When we moved to Suburban Heights, we had hoped for stronger religious

ties. We joined the Reform Temple and after five years we knew five families by name. We felt a distance from the Rabbi. There were no responses during the services; the Rabbi did everything and everyone just sat there. One was not to bring children to services under the age of nine. When my child was Consecrated, I brought our younger child to witness this event. I felt so much pressure from those around me that I had to leave. We decided to switch over to the Conservative synagogue for friendship and we found more of a warmth there.

In suburbia there is a breakdown of family; a breakdown of husband and wife relationships. Our children became nervous, and withdrawn. They preferred to stay with us and not go outside the home. My oldest son, age 10, had no friends, our 9 year old had two friends, and our youngest had one friend.

Shabbos was hard to impress since my husband was not home to celebrate it. It didn't seem worthwile pressing. When our youngest was born we had the B'ris at home. This occasion impressed me the most, and I remember it with the greatest pleasure, because all of our family showed up.

The children had no special feelings of Jewishness. They were harassed at school. As early as the first and second grade, my children were harassed for their Jewishness; we stepped in once.

Some of the frustrations include a total and complete isolation from the neighborhood and community. The frustration of trying to build a neighborhood feeling. In one year there were 600 kids between the ages of 12 and 15 who were reported as runaways.

Moreover, in this situation, children don't see men. All my children's teachers were women. The streets were filled with women and seldom

did one see men at the shopping centers. The lack of men was disturbing, but no one knew what to do about it.

An extreme disadvantage of suburbia is the high cost of living, which looms as a constant pressure. There was nothing one could afford to do but eat. One reaches a point where he will do anything for contact with others. There wasn't anything for anybody to do--not even volunteer work. I was a Den mother for Cub Scouts and it was a requirement of the local Boy Scout Council that each Den carry out a charitable act at Christmas time. This act consisted of gathering a basket of food to be given to a "poor" family. The problem in Suburban Heights was that there were no "poor" families to be found, other than cleaning ladies. I ashamedly had to admit that I didn't have a cleaning lady, and everyone else's cleaning lady was already taken. After calling the local and county welfare departments, I learned that all the local poor families were already taken. At the county welfare department I was told that if I had wanted a family to help, I should of called earlier than October. "Did I expect families to be waiting in line for me to call." I volunteered my own family, but that was considered presumptuous.

We were worried about making ends meet. I would run out of grocery money, would charge my groceries, which would start a spiral of bills. We felt a constant pressure and we fought a lot. Then we would start screaming at the children because they were there. We found ourselves over-punishing and over-compensating.

The only advantages of suburbia that I felt were that people can live in a single-family house instead of an apartment, and suburbia is relatively safe; kids have a yard in which to play without fear. In addition the schools are good. In suburbia the curriculum is geared to

upward striving; and children don't have to go to school with Blacks. There is a tremendous racial hatred between inter-city and suburbia on the East coast.

Ninety-five per cent of our friends were non-Jewish. We lived next door to a Catholic family, with four boys. The mother said to me, "She felt sorry for my kids because they didn't have Santa Claus to believe in." Suburban Heights didn't have Jewish neighborhoods. One was forced into friendships with people who didn't move, with whom you didn't fight, and who had children the same age as your own. First I was set apart as a person, and as a Jew I felt odd.

We felt locked into this situation. We couldn't afford another house, and we didn't want to move into an apartment. One develops a classic blank look, a semi-pleasant look. One doesn't want to look unpleasant enough to draw attention.

There were four divorces out of six couples with whom we were acquainted. Suburbia has much infidelity, husband and wife swapping. There is the desire to be desired, needed and wanted--an uneasiness, discontent, and anger. Even families who were not financially pressed, were frustrated. There was heavy drinking and at most parties everyone got drunk.

When we moved into the community we liked one another, felt secure, felt good. When we left, we were closer to divorce than we had ever been. We finally got out!

A Typical Day in Suburbia

Our day begins at 6:00 to 6:30 when we arise. My husband leaves the house at 7:00 and arrives at work one hour later. The children leave the house at 8:30 and walk to school. I then make the beds, and do the dishes. In the morning the women all go out and bowl. When we are not bowl-

ing we spend time in the stores. We were at a mall every day we had a car to get there and this was standard. All mothers are home by noon to prepare lunch for the kids that come home from school.

From 2:00 to 3:30 there is coffee and gossip time. At 3:30, the children come home from school and coffee and gossip continues til 5:00. Husbands come home at 7:00, and the children are fed dinner early. One starts drinking at dinner time and continues til you go to sleep. Major form of entertainment was the cocktail party. We played bridge morning, afternoon and evening, especially if one didn't have a child to watch constantly. Often evenings are spent ironing or watching T.V.

A typical day was dull. Husbands would ask, "What exciting things did you do today?" This was a major irritation. There was pressure to do something worthwhile.

In this portrait of suburban life there seems to be two dominant themes. One theme is the total lack of any sense of community. There is a loneliness and alienation. There is desperate longing for closeness with others, a need to relate with others on a personal level. A second theme is the need for a male presence in the home. The father is absent from the home a good deal of the time and families are under great tension and pressure. Keeping these facts in mind, we turn our attention to the life style of a Williamson family. Although Williamson Jews experience cohesive family ties, and a keen sense of community, there is also a sense of isolation. But not a social isolation; rather, physical isolation, being isolated from the services and activities of larger communities.

I feel that our home is our hub. Our life revolves around the home; the children are always at home. I see us as a wheel; we all go out from

the center like spokes, but come back quickly; we are pulled back to home as if connected by elastic. Outside the home, there is little we can do as a family besides going out to dinner, or to a movie, or playing golf occasionally. But at home we play games. We play cards, monopoly, scrabble, and a Williamson game called "forty-points." We pop popcorn and seem to do things together as a family.

The children are also close to their father. Where else can children see their father at noon. This doesn't make them worldly, but it gives them security. I would like to think that in the larger city our family would be as close, but I'm not so sure.

If one does not have Judaism in the home, one will lose it. There is nothing in the community to which the children can relate Jewishly. They meet in churches for practically all activities. Social activities also take place in the church, like dances. There is no non-denominational social hall in town. There is no Jewish art or music--there is nothing outside of home and Temple. If I lived in a big city, we would not put as much pressure on ourselves to follow tradition. We want the children to have our heritage.

There are many disadvantages to living in a small town. One disadvantage is that the schools here are way below par. My children have told me that children from other cities are more advanced intellectually. When my children go to conclaves, they do not feel quite so sophisticated. In some of the discussion groups, my fifteen year old daughter feels inadequate, uninformed, and feels uncomfortable when other children use such big words.

The Williamson schools provide limited foreign languages, but they have no language labs. If your son, for example, must take Latin for

medicine, one has to send him away from here. My daughter is interested in arts, but she is unable to pursue her interests in the Williamson school. She is stifled. So, we send the kids to camp, not to get rid of them, but to offer them that which they don't have here.

My daughter complains that there are not enough activities in town. There isn't even a bowling alley. If there's an X-rated movie, or no basketball game, there's nothing for the children to do on a Saturday night.

One of our hardships is that we often have to travel several hundred miles to join Jewish activities in Huntington, Charleston, Louisville or Cincinnati. The children have even been sent to Cleveland to take part in a Temple-sponsored youth weekend there. We feel that providing the children with Jewish exposure has priority over everything else. We've made a disadvantage an advantage. Realizing the disadvantage of raising the children here, we've done even more for the children in terms of traveling and exposure to other places, but also becoming closer as a family.

I remember when I drove to Huntington for a Haddassah meeting, but I had to turn back because of high water. I drive 20,000 to 22,000 miles per year. We must go out of town for orthodontia, skin treatments, and eye care, because we don't have these facilities here. My youngest says, she wants to live in a city that has an orthodontist, skin doctor and ophthalmologist.

My other daughter has told me that she likes this town, but wishes she could of been brought up in a larger city. She meets people in camp, like from New York, but never sees them again--we are so removed from the Jewish centers.

Then there are the everyday frustrations of life in the small town. For example, there's a lot of gossip in town and people know other people's business, and there is plenty of small town jealousy and pettiness. In addition, even though one does not outwardly criticize others, if you do not band together with others, they take it as criticism. It's harder to keep your own identity. Moreover, let's say you want to do something like learn to play a guitar. You have the time to do it and the funds, but can't because there's no one to teach guitar.

Yet, the small town has advantages too. For one thing, it is easy to be a big fish in a small town. One gets his name in the daily paper frequently. In the "Society Column" it is announced whenever a couple travels out of town. In a small town, one can walk downtown and be able to greet amost all the people you meet. My children know everyone else in their school and at lunch time everyone is very much together.

In a small town there are a lot of gentiles of lesser means than we. Relatively speaking, the Jews seem to be affluent. In a small town, especially, there is something that sets the Jews apart. Most Jews here have a decent place to live, although there is certainly not the extreme wealth found among Jews in the larger cities. Yet, the non-Jews regard us as rich. I might not of had as many non-Jewish friends in a larger city, because I would of found the same kind of people, who were also Jewish. I would be more in Jewish circles. I look at my friends, though, as individuals, not as Jew or non-Jew. Within Williamson, I don't feel any more comfortable with Jews than non-Jews, but in a larger city, I might. My daughter must date non-Jewish boys or not date at all, but she has assured me that she could never marry a non-Jewish boy.

I think that when the Jewish population diminishes, the Temple will

go with it. I would really miss the Temple. We go to services every Friday night. My husband feels one must participate. We'll affiliate somewhere else if the Temple ceases to exist, like in Huntington.

I don't want to push my children away from home, but I don't want them to come back to live in Williamson. They would return to a non-Jewish existence. My son has never expressed a desire to come back to work in the store. But when the children leave I will be absolutely out of my mind. Then I'll probably work. I would like to work part-time, but it's hard to find part-time work in town. If I were to retire and leave here, I'd want to go to a Jewish community.

All in all I have no regrets. The town has been good to us. My husband loves his work and that is why we live here. The store has grown tremendously. My husband likes the people and the challenge. He's happy with what he's doing and I'm happy with what I'm doing. One has to find peace in one's home. There are no escapes. There is nowhere to run to.

A Day in the Life of a Williamson Family through the Eyes of a Housewife

We all get up between 7:30 and 8:30. Sometimes I fix breakfast or the kids get their own breakfast. My husband drives my two high-schoolers to school on his way to work. He leaves the house at 8:20 and he's in his store at 8:30. Our youngest enjoys taking the school bus to school and leaves the house at 7:50.

I clean up from breakfast, once my family has left, then I do laundry and general cleaning. We have help two days a week and she does the scrubbing and heavy work. I start preparing dinner at noon or early afternoon. My husband usually eats lunch in town, but sometimes he comes home for a special lunch. Sometimes I meet him for lunch. On some morn-

ings I do the grocery shopping. I'm always home at 2:30, when my youngest comes home. I don't like to see the children come home to an empty house. They always have something to tell me. They have a snack. My two other children arrive home at 3:30. The store closes at 5:30 and my husband is home at 5:45. If my husband has work to do at the store, he first comes home for dinner. We always have dinner together.

In the evening we're often involved with meetings; Boy Scouts, Sisterhood, Jr. Women's Club. In a larger town, I wouldn't of joined a Jr. Women's Club. I would of joined a Jewish club that does community work. We used to have dessert meetings. It seems to me that Jewish women don't usually have this sort of thing. My husband often does homework with the children, when I'm doing the dinner dishes. For example, my children will say, "I have a spelling test tomorrow, daddy, can you help me with the words." We watch the news together after dinner. We don't watch T.V. with dinner. If there's a special program on T.V. the children watch it. My son watches all sports events. The children and my husband like Waltons. I like historical programs. We read two newspapers and all the weekly magazines. I'm now reading Sheila Levine, the answer to Portnoy's Complaint. The children go to bed at 10:30 and we retire to bed about midnight.

Prospects for the Future

The prospects for the future of the Williamson Jewish community are not very hopeful. Already while this study was conducted, two members died and three families left the community to spend their retirement years elsewhere. The Jewish community reached its peak in the early 1950's when there were approximately fifty-five Jewish families living in Williamson, however, within five years the Jewish community will probably

be reduced to ten families.

It saddens one to see this flourishing, vibrant Jewish community slowly die. On the other hand, it served its purpose. The town of Williamson provided a means of livelihood for the Russian Jews who first settled this area. They in turn were able to pass on to their children successful businesses. But the age of the small family-owned business is drawing to an end. Even in Williamson, there has been an influx of the large discount chain-stores which increase the competition. Parents do not want their children to remain in Williamson; they want them to seek a new life elsewhere.

The Jews of Williamson have a deep sense of satisfaction for they feel they have been able to transmit a love of Judaism to their children. Although limited with regard to the extent of Jewish exposure, one senses that there is a depth of Jewish commitment which is deeper and more sincere than found among Jews in other larger Jewish centers. The Williamson Jews feel that they belong to the Jewish group, that shares a common religion, heritage, culture and memory. They feel that they know what it means to be Jewish and what their Judaism demands of them. The Jews of Williamson are concerned and enthusiastic Jews who do not take their Judaism for granted.

APPENDIX

1.) Try to narrate experiences.

2.) Relate your memories

3.) What are some of your experiences: date, time, and what occurred there.

4.) What are some of your early memories of your childhood.

THESIS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Profile of Respondents

Age, secular and religious education level, occupation, birthplace of respondents, their grandparents and parents, length of time in Williamson.

2. Description of the Home

Art objects, Jewish objects, books, style, pervading atmosphere. How would I describe the ambiance of the home?

3. How does your Religious Background compare with your Jewishness now

TEMPLE

a. did your parents belong to a temple (Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform)?
b. how regularly did they attend?
c. what was the extent of your parents' involvement with temple?
d. how regularly did you attend services?
e. did you have a Bar or Bas Mitzvah, or Confirmation? A ritual circumcision? Describe your memories of such an event.
f. did you have a religious school education?

RITUAL

g. how regularly do you celebrate the Sabbath in your home and in what way do you celebrate it and how does this differ from your parents' observance of the Sabbath?
h. do you light Sabbath candles, say the Kiddush, do you smoke in the house on the Sabbath, do you have a special dinner on Friday night?
i. do you have a Mezzuzah on the door; did your parents?
j. do you keep Kosher; did your parents?
k. do you eat bacon and ham; did your parents?
l. do you say daily prayers at home; did your parents?

m. what do you feel is the most significant holiday that you observe? How do you observe it?
n. did you have a Passover Seder? Did your parents conduct one? What changes have taken place in the Seder since your childhood?
o. do you eat Matzah for the entire length of Passover? Did your parents?
p. do you have a separate set of dishes for Passover? Did your parents?
q. do you have a Chanukah menorah? Do you light the Chanukah candles?
r. DID YOUR CHILDREN HAVE ANY EFFECT ON YOUR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE?

PUBLICATIONS

s. was there much Jewish literature in your parents' home? (Books, publications, newspapers, etc.)
t. do you read Jewish publications; which ones? What other publications, what T.V. programs? Radio?
u. was there any foreign language spoken in your parents' home? how much of this language have you retained? Your children?

EDUCATION

v. how important do you feel religious education is for your children? Do you send your children to a summer camp (Jewish oriented?) Why do you send your children to summer camp?

VIEWS

w. what is your image of the "good Jew"--what do you think your parents' image would have been?
x. how do you view God?
y. do you consider yourself a Jew first or an American first?

4. Clubs, Organizations, or Special Interests

a. what temple-related organization do you belong to?
b. what Jewish fraternal and recreational organizations are you involved with?
c. what kind of activities are you involved in?
d. what leadership roles or committee activities do you hold? What satisfactions, disappointments in the activities?
e. which involve the Jewish community and which the general community?
f. how much time do you give to the various activities and what useful purposes do they serve?
g. how do you occupy your leisure time and how much of this time do you have?
h. narrate experiences in non-Jewish organizations.
i. what does being Jewish do to you in those situations?
j. how did you see things; how did they see you?
k. are there things they do which make you feel less a part of the system?
l. how do they feel about your being Jewish?

5. Friends

a. do you have mostly Jewish friends?

b. how many non-Jewish friends do you have?
c. what was your parents' attitude toward non-Jews?
d. do your children associate with non-Jews? How do you feel about that?
e. do you live near to non-Jews?
f. do cliques exist? Describe.
g. when do you entertain non-Jews in your home and vice versa? When was the last time? Give specific details.
h. Simon Herman maintains that members of a minority, much more so than a majority, are conscious of being marked off from others. How do you feel about this statement?
i. when meeting a stranger are you concerned as to his Jewishness and do you worry about how your Jewishness affects him?
j. do you think that a sense of identity and self-esteem helps a minority to integrate into the American framework?
k. how does your minority status affect the ways in which you feel?
l. how do you perceive the overlap between the Jewish and American subidentities?
m. can Jews in America be regarded as an ethnic group, as the Irish, Italians, Poles, or is Judaism a religion only?
n. has interdependence rather than similarity been the determining factor in your ethnic identity in the U. S.?

6. <u>How did you come to live in Williamson, W. Va.</u>?

a. as a Jew in Williamson, what is your relation to the community at large?
b. DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THAT EXISTS IN THE CONGREGATION? Describe.

7. <u>Anti-Semitism</u>

a. have you had any anti-Semitic experiences?
b. did your experiencing anti-Semitism change your attitude toward non-Jews?
c. is there a concern with what non-Jews think?
d. do you find discrimination in obtaining housing? Is there discrimination in the schools?
e. is there evidence of religion in the public schools?
f. do you feel secure as a Jew in America? Could the Holocaust happen here in America?
g. to what extent do you find that American youth is sensitive to the enormity of the Holocaust?
h. do you feel that the memory of that traumatic experience makes Jews in the United States and elsewhere more concerned about the plight of Russian Jewry?
i. to what extent do Americans (Jews) regard themselves as survivors of the Nazi Holocaust?
j. is a feeling of responsibility for Jewish survival part of the sense of identity of the post-Holocaust Jew in America?

8. Attitudes towards Temple

a. what is the extent of your involvement with the Temple?
b. what was the extent of your parents' involvement?
c. do you feel that your involvement would be less with the Temple if you lived in a larger city?
d. why did you join the Temple?

9. Views on the Prayerbook

a. are the prayerbook services meaningful to you?
b. what would you do to change the prayerbook?

10. Attitude toward Israel

a. have you ever been to Israel?
b. if not, do you have a desire to go?
c. would you consider living there? Do you buy Israeli bonds?
d. do you contribute to the UJA
e. do you regard Zionism as an essential part of resolving Jewish identity in the U. S.?
f. what forms of Jewish identity do you see among your own friends?
g. what are the prevailing conceptions of the meaning of Israel for Jewish life and how do they influence contemporary Jewish identity?

11. Do you consider yourself religious?

a. in what way?

12. Attitude toward Inter-marriage

a. parents' attitude toward intermarriage.
b. did you date non-Jews?
c. did you have non-Jewish friends while you were growing up?
d. how would you feel about your son or daughter dating a non-Jew? Marrying a non-Jew?
e. do you know cases of intermarriage?
f. what is your reason for not favoring or favoring intermarriage?

13. The Family

a. how important do you consider home life and family?
b. what are some family functions that you engage in?
c. who is primarily responsible for raising the children?
d. how do you see your role as mother or father in the family?
e. do you or your husband play a more dominant role in the Temple?
f. what are your expectations with regard to your children's education?
g. WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR GOAL IN AMERICAN LIFE?
h. is the American home a major influence in the Jewish identity of American youth?

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[18]Theodore I. Lenn, Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism, (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1972), p. 181.

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[21]Ibid., p. 95.

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[13]Ibid., p. 40.

[14]Ibid., p. 46.

[15]Albert I. Gordon, Jews in Suburbia, (Beacon Hill: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 150.

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[10]Albert I. Gordon, Jews in Suburbia, (Beacon Hill: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 183.

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