Washington State JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Powered by Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle

Recording Date: January 3, 2022
Last Edited: October 27, 2026

Mark Silver

SUMMARY

Mark Silver recounts how his family immigrated from Romania and Ukraine in the early 1900s, with one side arriving through Ellis Island and settling in Spokane after sponsorship by relatives, while the Rockaway family first attempted farming in North Dakota before relocating due to difficult conditions. He reflects on Spokane's transformation into a thriving medical, cultural, and business center and explains why he chose to remain there, citing its quality of life and opportunities to grow his own business. Silver describes his family's longstanding involvement in Spokane's Jewish community, highlighting the transition from farming to successful downtown businesses and the strong support networks that shaped his upbringing. Looking to the future, he expresses hope for renewed community engagement, greater unity among congregations, and continued participation in Jewish communal life and celebrations.

Kara Brown: Today is December 10th, 2021. My name is Kara Brown, and I'm interviewing Mark Silver on behalf of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society. All right. So, Mark, thank you so much for being with me today to speak about your history and the wonderful city of Spokane. Um, I understand you told me you were a fourth-generation Spokane resident, which is quite a feat. Could you share with us a little bit about how your family ended up there in the first place?

Mark Silver: Absolutely. On my grandfather's side, which was a millman mill man, he came to the United States through Ellis Island in, uh, I believe, about 1907. And, uh, he had, I think he had a cousin or an uncle maybe in Spokane that sponsored him. So he eventually made his way to Spokane and, uh. And then my grandmother, my great-grandparents actually, uh, immigrated to, uh, North Dakota in the late 1800s. And they homesteaded some farmland there. And their last name was Rockaway. And the Rockaway, there was a large farming community of quite a few Rockaways, and they ended up in North Dakota. But I'm not sure exactly how many years. But several years after that, I think they found out that farming in North Dakota was a pretty tough life, and they dispersed. They eventually dispersed from there. So, uh, my great-grandparents, the Rockaways, both ended up in Spokane, Washington. And then my grandma, Sadie Rockaway was was born here, and she, um. Yeah. So she was born in the early 1900s, and that's my mom's mother. And so, yeah, that's kind of the story they came from. Um, um, Romania, Ukraine, sort of western Russia, that whole area. So the Milman family was from Romania, and uh, the Rodway family, I believe, was from Ukraine. So there we have it.

Kara Brown: Wow. Um, and that's quite a journey. Um, and quite a story. Uh, how did they end up from, I guess, farmers to? I said, I know you said your parents owned a restaurant in Spokane.

Mark Silver: Well, you're skipping generations, as I said. I read these articles about this farm community in North Dakota, and I just think with North Dakota winters and everything, I think they found out that farming was just an extremely difficult life. So somehow they dispersed into the, you know, other communities, Portland, Spokane, Seattle. But this particular group ended up in Spokane, and they became, um, for the most part, a lot of these folks that came from Eastern Europe became merchants of some sort. And that's how, eventually, my grandparents and several of the Spokane Jewish community ended up with small clothing shops, jewelry stores, furniture stores, and pawn shops. But, you know, they all started with very small, humble beginnings, just as, you know, a small shop. And some of them grew, you know, very large and ended up being a very successful business in the downtown Spokane area. There were at least 15, 20 stores that, as I said, there were 4 or 5 furniture stores, all owned by Jews.

There were at least 6 or 7 or 8 pawnshop kind of jewelry stores that were all owned by Jewish folks, a couple of restaurants, and definitely some clothing stores and shoe stores, right in the heart of downtown Spokane. And they were all owned by Jewish families. Now. My parents got married in 1951. My dad came from Minneapolis, Minnesota. My mom was obviously still in Spokane. They got married and bought a small cafe in downtown Spokane in about 1950- 51. And they kept that for 20 years. And right next door to him, my grandpa Henry Millman, he had a pawn shop, a jewelry store called Millman Jewelers, Easy Loan. And it was there since, I believe, the 20s. And my parents bought that for my grandpa when he retired in 1969. So they sold their little cafe, bought this pawn jewelry business, and, you know, stayed there until my mom retired and my dad had passed away. So but that particular block of Spokane is called the 400 block of Spokane during the 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. It was almost exclusively Jewish businesses.

Kara Brown: Wow, that's very interesting to hear about how things kind of developed over time. And would you say, I mean, it sounds like over the years, more and more businesses have been owned by the Jewish community. Um, has that, you think, increased even more so now or?

Mark Silver: No. Uh, all those businesses have sold, closed, or retired. So really, there, um, there's almost nothing left of that block that was so incredibly colorful and, uh, I've got sketches and some pictures from that block. It was sort of a it was an interesting block. You know, it was sort of known there were maybe a few prostitutes, kind of prostitutes that hung out on that block. And, you know, it was a little bit kind of a seedy area, but all those businesses have, as I said, owners who have retired, kids like my generation, for the most part, didn't come back and take them over. So all those stores are pretty much closed, sold, retired buildings sold, things like that. I mean, there was a large furniture store across the street from my parents called Liberty Furniture, and that was owned by the Leavitt family. And that building still exists, but now it's a very large independent bookstore, like a four-story bookstore called Auntie's Books. And, uh, so the block still exists and all the wonderful old buildings are still there, but now it's kind of it's sort of a cool block now it's, uh, kind of restaurants and bars and brew pubs and. Yeah. So it's kind of, it's a cool neighborhood now. It's transformed. But not many kids. I say kids, but very few folks my age came back to Spokane after college. There are just a few. So original families. We were talking the other night with some friends, very original families in Spokane, whose parents or grandparents or great-grandparents emigrated here. There's only about maybe 5 or 6 of us remaining.

Kara Brown: Wow. That's. That's not a lot.

Mark Silver: No, because the kids. I mean, let's face it, the kids went off to college. You know, they went to graduate school, they went to med school, they went to law school. And, you know, they ended up in other places that they probably felt were going to be a better place for a career, or maybe, maybe even possibly a better place to be a Jew might be in Seattle or Portland versus the small community of Spokane. But so many folks came back.

Kara Brown: Yeah. Well, what kept you there? I mean, all those years.

Mark Silver: You know, it's interesting, I love Spokane. I went to school at the University of Washington, and I came back, and my partner and first cousin, we opened up, uh, right near my parents' store. My dad really wanted to see us start our own business. So we started our own pawn shop, and we expanded into the Spokane market. When I sold out, we had ten stores. The company currently has, I believe, 27 stores and, uh, throughout the Pacific Northwest. So yeah, I just saw Spokane. You know, it was always kind of considered a great place to raise kids. Um, nice little Jewish community. Real estate was extremely reasonable compared to, say, the Seattle, Vancouver market, or San Francisco, or something like that. So it was a nice place to get married and bring up our children. And the cool thing I'll say about Spokane, it's got nothing to do with the Judaism piece, but Spokane has really come alive, and we have just exploded with not only our real estate, but with development, restaurants, the arts, and the music. And we've turned into a, you know, the secret got out. That's the sad part. The secret's out, and we're seeing a ton of people move from the Bay Area, from Seattle, from Portland. And it's a cool city. Now, I think we're the third hottest real estate market in the country right now. Um, but it's a fun place to live. It's cool. And if you've never been to Spokane, they spent, uh, I wouldn't say 100 million, but 60 or 70 million on our Central Park area, which is surrounded by the river that runs right through downtown Spokane. And it's gorgeous. And, um, people who visit Spokane just can't believe how beautiful it is. So, you know, it's, uh, it's a fun place to be. And up until 5 or 10 years ago, it was kind of a secret. But that secret's out. People know about Spokane.

Kara Brown: Well, hopefully the secret doesn't change anything too much about Spokane, though. It sounds like the changes that have happened have been good ones.

Mark Silver: The other interesting thing about Spokane, too, is that it was really the major medical center between Seattle and Minneapolis. So really, people anywhere from Central Washington through Montana and the Dakotas might come to Spokane for things like heart surgery and things like that, or they'd have to go to Minneapolis. So, Spokane has a really huge medical

community. And we're also flanked by a Fairchild Air Force base.

Kara Brown: So it sounds like there's been a lot of changes in Spokane, um, in your lifetime alone. Nevertheless, the whole history of the city itself, but what have you noticed, I would say in the last maybe decade or two, that's been a marked change, more than just the kind of secret getting out or the development of the city. Has there been anything else that you've noticed?

Mark Silver: I mean, it's, you know, I'm kind of repeating myself, but it's just when my wife and I got married 38 years ago, Spokane was kind of a chasm of not much happening. You know, the town kind of rolled up the streets at 8:00. It was just sort of a little blue-collar town, and there just wasn't a lot of dining and music and plays, and now we have pretty much all the benefits, I think, of a large city such as Seattle, Portland, or San Francisco. Um, but it's still kind of a nice little community to live in. And it's got a good vibe here. It's nice. I do want to tell one story about growing up in downtown. Several of my friends also had parents who had shops in that vicinity, and as young as five or six, seven years old. We were all working at our parents' stores. We'd walk those streets together, meaning we'd go to other, you know, shops and look around and fun little stores. And, uh, there was just no problem with that. It always felt safe to me. I never felt threatened by anybody. And, it was just a very fun block to grow up on. And most of the Jewish kids my age, they would help their parents, whether they had a pawn shop or a stereo store or whatever, we all ended up kind of. I think our parents sort of expected that out of us, and they sort of instilled that hard work philosophy that they had because our parents and grandparents, as you might expect, had to work hard to get somewhere in this world. So, they all did really well. That was the cool thing. The Jewish community, professionally and business-wise, thrived here in Spokane.

Kara Brown: And it sounds like that kind of push to, or I guess, internal drive rubbed off on you. You mentioned that with your pawn shop business, you know, you expanded. It seems like you have a very good business mind. You knew you wanted to do more than just one little shop.

Mark Silver: And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my good, my dear friend. And I don't think he would mind, but my dear friend Murray Hupp and Murray's great-grandpa started a small Pawn Shop. I can't tell you the year, but it was the early 1900s. And then it was his grandparents. It was called Huggins. I think back then it was just pawn or something like that. But then Murray's dad, Sam Huppin sort of saw this niche back in the 60s about cameras and stereo. I mean, nobody knew this. It was kind of a secret. And he expanded his shop into, uh, a nice camera store, an incredible stereo store. And then when Murray, who's about my age, a little bit younger, came along, he saw a whole different expansion possibility. He came in on the heels of the internet starting up, and he said, "You know, what is this online thing?" And he exploded their business from a really nice one-location company to one of the largest online presences in the country. And, he recently just sold out. They crushed it. They had two beautiful stores, but they did this incredible online thing. So yeah, you're right. There was always this push to sort of improve. And, you know, my grandpa's store was really small. My parents expanded. That got much more bold and expanded how they did business. And then my partner and I came along, and we decided, hey, this is not a single shop deal. Let's expand this. So, yeah, the Jewish community here in Spokane, business-wise, has done very well. And also, let's not forget, there was, I think there was a huge influx of doctors that came to Spokane, probably in the 80s, kind of like our age, maybe a little bit older, but it just seemed like all of a sudden, overnight, in the Jewish community that several young doctors moved to Spokane. And raised their families here, and started practice and stayed in Spokane, and they're all still here. So that was kind of cool. When I was growing up, there was one Jewish doctor whom all the families went to. His name was Albert Wilen. We all had to go to Doctor Wilen, and he had that old kind of office that would scare the heck out of you as a kid. Now in Spokane, there are probably 20 or 30 Jewish doctors. So, a lot and lawyers too. There are a lot of professionals who ended up moving to Spokane.

Kara Brown: Wow. It seems like with every generation then it kind of just expands and keeps growing. And I know you mentioned you have children. Do they still live in Spokane?

Mark Silver: No, well, one's in school here. One's in nursing school. He's gone back to school after taking some time off and traveling the world. And another one's in Seattle. He's an engineer and is married in Seattle.

Kara Brown: Well, hopefully at least one of them will come back to Spokane and maybe continue the growth.

Mark Silver: We're not counting on it. And I see with the kids, like my kids' age, that have gone off and gotten their, you know, their doctor degrees or lawyer, you know, lawyers and everything. They're not coming back to Spokane. We have a dear friend of one of our sons. He's at Yale, he's a doctor at Yale, and others are there. One in San Francisco, so they're not coming back either.

Kara Brown: So if they're moving, I guess these kids are moving on, you did mention, though, that Spokane is still growing and people are coming in. As far as how that's changed, I guess the community or even, you know, the greater community or even just the Jewish community. What changes have you noticed with?

Mark Silver: I think with the Jewish community, it's pretty obvious, when I was president at Temple back in the early 2000s, I

probably knew every congregant, and we had maybe 200 families, kind of in that ballpark. And now I'm not sure where we're at family-wise, but if I look at our temple directory, I don't know half the people. I might not even know 75% of the people. There's just a lot of new folks that have come into Spokane, and they're establishing their lives here. And then, of course, with COVID, I haven't met any of these people because there haven't been any big bar mitzvahs and stuff like that. One thing sort of off topic, but we hired a new rabbi, you know, during the 60s and 70s, we, you know, we sort of had these older, uh, you know, God love them, you know, sort of near retirement type of rabbis. And we had one Rabbi Gottesman, whom we loved. Um, but he was an older sort of traditional rabbi. And, we eventually hired, uh, this rabbi, Jack Isaacson. And his tenure lasted about, I think, about 15, 17 years. And, things at Temple exploded during his tenure at Temple Beth Shalom. And, uh, he lit a fire under our kids. So when our kids got bar and bat mitzvahed, that was really. We call it the golden age of Temple Beth Shalom. We would just have huge crowds. Nice attendance for just regular Shabbat services. And really great. They're so active in USY. And, um, they would go to regionals, they'd go to nationals, they'd go to internationals. They all went to camp. Solomon Schechter, uh, it was fantastic. And I think that's really sort of changed. And I can't really comment on the current status of all that stuff. But gosh, when our kids were in their teenage years, it was just both kids. Both my kids went to Israel. Most of the kids went to Israel. They went on active or they did the one-year program. Um, so yeah, it was a great time to be a kid in Spokane back in the 90s. I'd say 90s and in 2000, early 2000.

Kara Brown: Yeah, it definitely sounds like there was a lot of connection and interaction, and exploration in the community.

Mark Silver: And one thing to point out, and maybe if somebody already mentioned this, it would be, you know, you could just say, we've already talked about this, but there was a specific donation that happened back in the 80s or something like that. It was a well-known dentist in Spokane. He didn't have any children. And he left a lot of money to the Temple Beth Shalom. But it was to be used only for youth activities. So the scholarship got set up. And, you know, I don't know how I never did. Even as president, I couldn't access the accounts. I didn't know how much money was in it, but I assumed several million dollars. And they essentially scholarship all these activities for the kids. So starting with Camp Solomon Schecter, Kadima, USY, and then all the Israel programs. They were essentially paid for by the Temple for all these kids. And what a fantastic opportunity. Because when there would be a regional or international convention, gosh, Spokane was in like 25, 30 kids, and that was probably the whole youth group because everybody wasn't going to turn down a trip to Toronto or something like that. So it was an incredible blessing that this money got left. And it's still there. The money still lives and funds a lot of youth programs.

Kara Brown: Well, let's hope once we get through the next, I don't know, year, I guess now or another year from now, that maybe some of that youth programming will start up again.

Mark Silver: Yeah. And like I said, there's a bar or a bat mitzvah tonight. I have no idea who this person is, who this family is. And it's just sort of interesting. And, you know, when I was president, we'd have to sit on the bimah with the rabbi, so I had to sit on the bima for 104 straight Shabbats. And the rabbi made all the kids in their one-year countdown of B'nai mitzvah also have to sit on the bima, so it was such a joy. I got to sit on the bima with like these 10 or 12 sort of squirrely, 12-year-olds and just got to know them all and just loved that whole process. And that's been sort of lost for now. But like I said, let's hope once COVID's over, things get sort of fired up again.

Kara Brown: Yeah, I think the last couple of years of moving everything, you know, online have their benefits. But also, it sounds like in this case, it's definitely had its drawbacks.

Mark Silver: Yeah.

Kara Brown: Um, and then I guess, well, let's continue along this path. I mean, in the future, for the community. Like, what are you hoping? You know, once we come out of COVID, let's pretend in a perfect world, it's gone. We can go back to normal as we knew it. What are you kind of hoping to see?

Mark Silver: Just a resurgence, you know, really a resurgence and participation. I don't know if you're aware of the temple. Beth Shalom was a merger back in 1966 or 1967. Yes. You do know of a conservative and a reformed congregation? Yes. And then, you know, I'm not sure what happened. I can't make a commentary on it. But, you know, eventually there were probably several Reform Jews who weren't happy with the sort of conservative lean of Temple Beth Shalom, and they broke off again. So they use our facility. They're extremely welcome. We do things, a lot of activities together. We share the same rabbi. Um, but they still like doing their own thing. And, uh, my hope eventually is to kind of come right back to that 1966 or 1967 decision of like, come on, there's got to be a way we can all be part of one congregation. We don't have to split off. So that would be my dream. And then, of course, you know that people start to participate again because it's just with COVID, it's been difficult. And they are doing some stuff in personnel. We haven't attended, but I think Hebrew school is back. I think Sunday School is back in person. And you have to have your COVID-19 vaccination record registered with the temple. And if you do, can you show up and go?

Kara Brown: Well then. Good. So hopefully in a year or so we'll see things will be back to somewhat normal, I would say.

Mark Silver: Yeah.

Kara Brown: That's wonderful to hear. I think it sounds like you're very excited for that to happen as well.

Mark Silver: Yeah. I mean, we're sort of at the age, you know, there's always this thing like when I was president, I'd say to some friends who were past presidents, they say, you know, we don't see you around anymore. And we'd go, you know, kind of why is that? Once your kids leave, you know, you did your eight, ten years on the board, you're kind of over it, I guess, there's maybe, you know, a proper word might even be a little bit burned out because with our kids, we had kids three years apart. That meant the rabbi required that the kids be at almost every Shabbat Service on Friday and Saturday. So, I mean, we had about a 5 or 6-year run of going to services every single weekend. And then me on the board, and my wife, Sue, was on the board at 1.2. And it just you give so much time and your energy to the temple that you sort of reach this point at our age, in our mid-sixties, where you kind of go, yeah, you know, we're going to step back and let's let another group take care of things, and we'll just get to enjoy what we want to enjoy, but no pressure to do anything. So, um, yeah, I mean, I hope things do get back to a real sense of normalcy and hopefully we'll participate a little bit then, too. Yeah.

Kara Brown: Well, now that you have all this free time on your hands with your semi-retirement, um, I guess you need something to keep you busy, right?

Mark Silver: Right, right. Exactly.

Kara Brown: And what have you been doing? I guess in this stage of semi-retirement, living through a global pandemic keeps you kind of busy and active.

Mark Silver: My wife, Sue are major world travelers. We would always take a couple of nice trips per year, whether it be to Europe or Southeast Asia or whatever. Uh, we were in Mexico when the pandemic hit, and our son, our oldest son, who is in nursing school, he says, You know, I don't know what you guys are reading down there, but I think you should get home before it's too late. So we got our stuff together and came home after a couple of months in Mexico. But, uh, we love to travel, and all that's been put on hold. We've done some, you know, we went to Newport Beach. My mom lives in Scottsdale, Arizona. We visited her, but for the most part, we've put things on hold. So, you know, what do we do? We volunteer where we can volunteer here and do it safely. And yeah, just kind of hang around. I think Netflix and Prime and Hulu and Disney+, and Apple+ are all our best friends now.

Kara Brown: Yeah, definitely. Um.

Mark Silver: A lot of content.

Kara Brown: Yeah. And I feel you on the traveling bit. Um, I like to travel as well, so that's been very difficult to deal with.

Mark Silver: I want to go back to Main Avenue because I just have such a rich history there, in such beautiful memories. One thing, when my parents had this little restaurant, it was called Stan's Coney Island. My dad was Stan, and it was just a, I don't know, 3540-seat cafe. But what was cool was that during Pesach, my mom would kind of flip the restaurant into Passover stuff. So my mom actually would make homemade. My mom was an incredible cook. She would make things like gefilte fish. Certainly matzo ball soup, fried matzo, and brisket. And that restaurant would just be packed with Jews for those eight days. It was so much fun. And she made chopped liver and and it just, you know, would only have matzo. And it's not that she would like to keep kosher in the place for Passover. I think they still had regular clients, and they probably did their hamburgers and things like that. But she did have all these Passover offerings, and the Jews just flocked there. And I just have fond memories of, uh, of that in Spokane, because where else could you go? Where else could a Jewish merchant eat in downtown Spokane and be able to get Passover fixings? So that was fun. And we like to talk about that memory. And another memory that was just so fun to my heart. When I was as young as five years old, I'd work either in the restaurant or I'd work with my Grandpa Henry Millman, who had the pawnshop. And at 5 or 6 years old, he was teaching me how to sweep the sidewalk, how to wash the windows. Taught me how to polish rings. And so I would go to work with him. I'd spend the night with my grandpa, go to work with him, spend the day with him, and just have such wonderful memories of being mentored by this. I thought, Really cool guy. And that was cool. And he was such a generous, sweet guy. My mom tells the story of how he loved to take, you know, we had this big, uh, Air Force base in Spokane, and during World War II, he used to love to call the base and say, Do you have any soldiers? You know, any Jewish soldiers? You know, it's Hanukkah, it's Passover, it's Yom Kippur, whatever. We want to invite them over to our home. And they would do that. But the really neat thing my grandpa would do was back then, a soldier, if he had a girlfriend, he'd say Well, let's get, you know, the guys being shipped off, the soldiers getting shipped off to go to war. And he'd want to marry his girlfriend. He'd say, Well, let's get married. And my grandpa sold wedding sets. And he had a special for service, guys. I believe it was $29.95 for a 14 karat

wedding set that had like a 20-point, you know, quarter carat diamond in it, something like that. And he'd sell that for, you know, $30, and he would pay for their cab, because in the state of Washington, I think you still had to do a blood test, or there was some hurdle or something hard to get over. But in Idaho, which is only 16 miles from Spokane, there was a little kind of Vegas-style place called the Hitching Post. The Hitching Post is still there. It's in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. And my grandpa would pay for their cab, and I think he even gave them another 5 or 10 bucks for dinner. So he'd sell them the wedding set, put them in a cab, send him to the Hitching Post, buy him dinner. And that was just his way of taking good care of the soldiers heading off to, you know, to a war that very possibly they weren't coming back from. Um, so yeah, there were a lot of cool things happening downtown.

Kara Brown: Thank you for sharing those memories. Those are wonderful and interesting to hear. I do have to ask you because you said your mom is an excellent chef. Um, what's your favorite recipe or meal that your mother would make for you?

Mark Silver: Oh, that's a tough one. I mean, first of all, she owned a restaurant, but she was just such an incredible cook. She really was. And it wasn't just Jewish food either, but she made fantastic fried chicken. She made an incredible brisket. She made incredible chicken-fried steak, you know, just whatever. And the thing that would just blow us kids away. So here she's got four little kiddos. We're all five years apart, so she's got these four little kids. She's down working 60-hour weeks in the restaurant, and somehow she'd come home. They. I think the restaurant stayed open until 10 or 11, but somebody took it over for that evening, a kind of short evening shift. And, you know, my mom and dad would get home about 5:36, and it always seemed like by 6:30 there'd be this wonderful meal on the table. It's like, how'd that happen? I, we can't do that. I can't do that. Like, how did it get shopped for, and how did she whip that out so fast? But she just would be the type that would, you know, nothing was from cans or instant mixes. I mean, she would do things from scratch the old-fashioned way. And she says her grandma taught her to cook. She said her mom was a lousy cook, but she said her grandma lived with them. And she said her grandma taught her to cook. My mom's 89, and, uh, she can still cook. She, you know, it might not be easy for her to cook for a family of 12 for Thanksgiving or Seder or something like that, but she, uh, she still has it. And yeah. Incredible cook.

Kara Brown: Wow. Yeah. That's an incredible woman. It sounds like, as well.

Mark Silver: She was, and then, of course, there. This is silly. Has nothing to do with Judaism. But their restaurant was called Stan's Coney Island. And if you don't know what a coney is, they're kind of from the Midwest, but it's just sort of this hamburger, chili sauce. There are no beans in it, but there's this hamburger chili sauce that just goes over a hot dog with a few onions on it and stuff like that. And that's still. Absolutely. That's a family recipe. We don't give it out. And my mom can still whip out a batch of coney sauce, and they are really good. And she used to have service guys come into the restaurant because I asked her just recently, I said, what's the most that that, you know, a young man would order maybe. And she says she'd have some guys that would come in and order six to start, and then they'd want six more. Uh, they were at that point, back when I was a young kid, Coney Islands were $0.25. So they'd get like a dozen colonies to eat.

Kara Brown: Wow. That's amazing. Well, okay, I won't ask you the family secret recipe, then. Even though you got me interested.

Mark Silver: You're not going to get it.

Kara Brown: Sorry. Darn it. I guess to follow up on all these great memories of your family, you mentioned working with your grandfather, and that he was really kind of a mentor for you. I wondered if there was, like, a lesson that you learned from him that you'd be willing to share or something that sticks out in your mind.

Mark Silver: For him, it was just that he was a sweet and honest guy. And I will say this, and I've said it to my friends. He didn't become the biggest businessman down there. There were a few of the guys, you know, same age as him, that ended up much bigger and probably much more profitable and made more money. But my grandpa was just super honest and sweet. Maybe to a fault. But if he taught me anything, it was just to be, you know, nice to people and above all else, honest. And you know, that was it. And he just, uh, he was just such a wonderful guy to hang out with. And, after work on Saturday, he'd say, "Well, you worked hard today. Let's grab a bite out." And, gosh, you know, in those days in pawnshops, they had things like shoes and coats and suits and, uh, okay, here's one more funny story. It's one of the oldest tricks in the book. He had suits for sale. You know, they were probably, you know, used suits, but they were probably 10 or 20 bucks or something like that. Well, if you found an old, broken watch, and in those days, there were probably a lot of broken watches. But if you had a broken watch, he'd hide it on the inside pocket of a suit, and a customer would come in and they'd feel that watch, and the customer would go, oh, yeah, I think I'm going to buy this suit because they think they've, you know, found a $50 treasure in the pocket or something like that, when in fact, all they were getting was a broken watch. My grandpa used to tell that story, that he just loved to pull that little trick on people. And I know I just said he's, like, a really honest guy, but he did have a huge heart, and he would help people out because that was, you know, the pawn business is lending people money on their items, you know, and we don't need to go down that list. But he would help out anybody on just about anything. He was just a super, sweet guy.

Kara Brown: Yeah. Well, thank you for that story. Yeah, just kind of negated the honesty. Yeah. Kind of.

Mark Silver: Yeah, that sounds a little bit, you know, a little. Yeah. Funny. But, I think they did it more for a kind of almost laugh. It's like, oh my gosh, I'm going to buy this suit because I think there's an expensive watch. They lost in it.

Kara Brown: Right. It would. That's something I would do if I felt that in the pocket, I'd be like, oh, I'm getting a deal, have to buy this one. Yeah. So smart businessmen and. Yes, and clever as well, I guess. Thank you for sharing all of these. These memories have been just wonderful to hear. And I was wondering if there's anything else that you'd want to share with us about Spokane. As we kind of wrap up here, um, that sticks out to you as something you want to be remembered.

Mark Silver: You know, Spokane has always been a very close Jewish community. And I think to me, the one thing I was taught that sort of is a great example is, I hate to say it, but funerals. And when someone's passed away, whether it be some tragedy or just an old person, it doesn't matter. This community always rallies around the family. And, you know, with showing by ways of great attendance, you know, it could be almost like a nobody passes away, like nobody even really, maybe knew this person. And you'll get 150 people to show up for the funeral. We have just been taught that that's our obligation. So, of course, we show up for weddings and bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs. But it really it to me, it just comes full circle when there's a, when there's been death, and the families get support by the incredible generosity of people like Shirley Grossman, who might arrange for a bunch of food to be dropped off for the minyan. For the Shiva minyan? Uh, it just, uh. Yeah, because I've had death in my family, and the community rallies around the family of the person who's passed away. And you're taught that at a very young age. So, you know, I might have friends my age who have been to two or three or four funerals. I mean, I've been to hundreds, I hate to say it, but I'm sure 100 or plus, it's just what you do. If somebody passes away, we go to the funeral. So I think it just shows Spokane, um, they really are a close-knit community, and we don't all socialize together. You know, that's not the name of the game. But when push comes to shove, and there's some sort of, uh, event, uh, life cycle event, the community comes around. So, yeah, it's neat to be part of that.

Kara Brown: Yeah. I was going to say it sounds like in Spokane that even with all the change and growth and new people coming in, at the end of the day, you know, you're all still there for each other when you need it most.

Mark Silver: Yeah, yeah. I remember my kids' braces, and there were probably 200 people at our house, my dad's funeral, my stepdad's funeral, and my grandparents' funerals, just, you know, they're always very, very well attended, which is nice. It's very comforting for the family.

Kara Brown: Yes. Of course. Well, thank you, Mark, so much for taking the time again with us today and talking about Spokane. It's been wonderful to hear all your stories and to hear how this city has, has changed and grown and hopefully continues to do so in a positive way.

Mark Silver: You betcha. Kara, I want to show you, maybe when we're done. Uh, and if we stay online, uh, I.