

up, in 1911, Benjamin was always cooperative-minded, and he studied cooperatives, and this is what, this was his life. So when he was . . . _____.

Q: Do you want these?

SARAH: No, it's not . . . this is something else that some day I'll give you a copy of it.

Q: Do you want to talk about . . . why not tell about his interests? It's not a secret, is it?

SARAH: No, no. There is no secrets. There's no secrets. No.

Q: Anything you can tell us about him is interesting. Whatever you want to tell us about him would be valuable.

SARAH: Let me see. Interested in Jewish colonization and Jewish cooperatives, and when he was still very young. I was up there and he was down . . . I was his secretary. He was married to another woman, and he lived in Philadelphia, and he made a study of cooperatives, and he got a number of people together in this whole area, Philadelphia, Trenton, New York, around here. A number of young people who were also interested in, in the way he talked about "why not be Jews?", organized this agricultural cooperative, agricultural. He felt that anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism had becomes, progressing, and he felt that this was a way out for Jews, that reorganizing to cooperatives or to farm settlements on the farm, that that could be somewhat effective. Anyhow, we talked about it a lot, and they got together . . . and so a story, and a long, long, story, too, involved, it was before I married him, in 1911 or 1914, something like that, that a group of people organized Philadelphia, right here in the _____ families(?). And they sent out their men to look for a place where they could colonize as, as _____ industrial cooperatives. And they went all over. They found that in _____ town, the government was willing to give land for colonization_____. So they sent him on another committee, and after investigating a number of

places, they were told by the government there, the government up here found that the Jewish people wanted a project, they'd be welcomed. They'll give them land, just reorganize the . . . they organized, he came back to, you know, New York, and they organized themselves into a cooperative project. So which ones . . . not far from _____. They called it the clearing colony, miles . . . the land was not good. They were youngsters, they didn't know enough about it, but still, they probably would have made it, our government. But things that . . . I have to hold this feeling, and I don't want to go into it at this point.

Q: Yeah.

SARAH: So they had the 1912 . . . 1911, 1912, _____ for a number of years, and it seemed to be going well for a time, but then other things happened up there, and they couldn't exist and they had to, after they were sold, some of them left for Los Angeles, San Francisco, California, places in all that. And Benjamin said that in California . . . [Tape stopped] He was asked to, about _____, that Russia was interested in forming the project for declared Jews. And in Russia, then, there was _____ Judaism, in Russia. So Russia was ready to give them a territory called the _____, and they said it . . .

<TAPE ENDS. Session One, Tape One, Side One. BEGIN Session One, Tape One, Side Two.>

SARAH: . . . and he was there, and he investigated and he named him the place, and it seemed all right. And he had organized the commission with a number of people in the department, in the, from Russia . . . [Tape stopped] . . . 1927, in 1927 Benjamin was, he and other people organized a commission under the advice of Dr. Feinwieztman(?) who was the president of the Zionist

movement, you know. And they organized a commission to send his commission to Palestine, to find out about import . . . exports and imports, and Benjamin organized that kind of a commission. This was in 1927. And when you come down _____ I have all that, that's history, too. And later on he was asked to _____, that Russia was interested in forming the project that declares Jews in Russia would _____ to do with them in Russia. So Russia was willing to give them a territory called _____, in Siberia and _____. And so Benjamin was requested again to organize, he organized that commission to investigate the settlement of Russian Jews. That was in the 19 . . . 1929, 1929. And he was there, and he investigated and named them the place, and all right. And he had organized the commission with a number of . . . people from the department of . . . in the, from Russia, the department of agriculture, the commission that, also, it went to . . . Palestine at the time, 1927 . . . 1927. Dr. Harris from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, was one of the members of that commission for Palestine, and a number of other people in the department of agriculture organized that interim committee and they were going to move them first and then to Palestine to find out about imports and exports to Palestine. And they came back with a report. And later on it was the _____ in 1920, it was very _____, and in 1927 also commission American people of the department of agriculture went to _____ to find out the possibility of settling the Russian declares Jews in _____. The project started there.

Q: That's . . .

SARAH: In the interest of organizing the cooperative there, too, because it was to be a cooperative.

Q: Could you, do you remember what happened at the very beginning? How did he win(?) by

he came back from _____, I told you he went to _____, and we were married, and we settled on a farm in Hightstown, New Jersey, and I was _____.

2nd Q: In Etra(?).

SARAH: In Hightstown, New Jersey, which is Etra-Perrineville Road, but it's Hightstown.

2nd Q: No, they call it Etra now, too . . .

SARAH: They do.

2nd Q: . . . but it was called Hightstown, New Jersey . . .

Q: Well, it's Hightstown now . . .

SARAH: Yeah, I'm sorry . . . our, it was Hightstown, New Jersey, we came there, to organize this . . . so we came here and settled here after our marriage, and he wanted to be on a farm. And he was working for these cooperatives. And he was smiling all the time, he was working for _____. Since he was so successful up there, why can't we _____ the needle trade workers who were all _____ coming to this. Why can't we organize into a cooperative where needle trade workers and see if we can make a go of it? So this was the time that they met a number of prominent people here in the east, Professor Jack(?) of Rutgers University, Dr. Jonah, Rabbi Jonah Weiss of New York City, and a few other prominent people, some of them very wealthy people, some of them business people. And they begin to talk about organizing a project here for the needle trade workers of the whole area who were _____ here. So they started to work on the plan, and this is, they had a plan already . . . [Slaps table with hand] for, for, for needle trade workers.

Q: How did they go about doing it, though?

SARAH: Well, how did they go about doing it, was this. They had the plan, and . . . it was

Jersey Homestead at the time, _____. Yes, they had the plan already for, for cooperative Jewish settlement that they would like to organize here for the Jewish Union Trade Workers.

Q: Was this a government plan? You said they had a plan. Was this . . .

SARAH: The plan that they had was originated with Benjamin Brown and some private individuals, Professor John, who was a friend of his at Rutgers University and people from other universities, professors and business people and labor union leaders, two labor union leaders.

Q: In other words, he, he . . . sold them the idea.

SARAH: He was thinking . . . he, no, he was thinking about cooperative all along. He didn't sell them the idea at that time.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: But then . . . so the problem was, how can you organize something like that for the needle trade workers who are out of work in that whole area, we were part of it now, we were living in Hightstown, New Jersey, this whole area. He knew most of them, they used to call. So what did he do then, at that time? Yes, at that time, I told you that he met this professor, that he knew. They were working on a plan, the plan was already ready. Needle trade workers, union leaders, two of the union labor, _____ and _____, from _____ union, and wealthy people like professors of the various colleges here, like Professor Jack from Rutgers. And they worked, they had a plan worked up for 200 settlers, but where to get the money for that?, all together money. They did not want to appeal to the Jewish people to have it a charitable organization.

2nd Q: How often were you _____?

SARAH: So these are the newspaper, about subsistence homesteads and their friends, and Robert Wilson(?) is the project manager, is the chief of subsistence homesteads. And so the few, the

group that they met, they met in New York, what about approaching them for something like this? All right, Benjamin, go ahead and find out. So he went there, and as I told you that one objective that Jewish colony, but then when they said it was going to be mostly Jews and what did you call it? I have the name, I've forgot now. I get a little bit too much involved in this. It's very painful, the whole business, I get very much involved. And they came to Wilson and they said, "All right, bring a plan and we'll see what we can do." And the plan was brought in, and I said there was one objective, but it was overcome.

Q: Make it . . .

SARAH: Homogeneous. He said a homogeneous, we have to have, he said the word homogeneous group. If other people come in, okay, we won't reject them, but it has to be a homogeneous, in order to _____ the colonization project.

Q: Oh, I see.

SARAH: So within a short time they, they gave the money for a project like that. They kept working with the needle trade workers up in New York City to organize such a project. They money was advanced by the government, \$600,000, I think the _____ money to buy the land. Several farms here were bought. The farmers were selling because things were not good for the farmers in the area, so they quietly . . . Benjamin and Professor Jack and a few other people go around to the farmers there and buy out, and one from Washington, a Mr. Glick(?) was the advisor for the subsistence homesteads, the settlement administration at the time. And they got the farms, united all the farms into one area, which they called Jersey Homesteads, they named in Jersey Homesteads.

Q: How did they . . .

SARAH: They were in trouble before . . . you've got that all down.

Q: Yeah, but how did they, how did they go about collecting the people here? How did they recruit them?

SARAH: How did they recruit the people? That was something, too. Yes, they had, according to . . . they were already an initial organization of Jews from Philadelphia from other places, who organized themselves for the purpose of organizing this project, the Hightstown . . . what did they call it then? Hightstown . . . homesteads or something like that. I don't recall now, I can't think about it very clearly now. And they had a number of people live there who were ready to go in and become members of that colony.

Q: But these, these, these were officials who . . .

SARAH: People who were . . . no, no, no, no. No, those were not officials. Those were private, union trade workers. The officials were those that were, had the idea of a project like that to be organized for the needle trade workers. In that committee they had, as I said, they had people like from the trade union movement, they had various people . . .

Q: How did they, how did they recruit these people into the community? How did these people get into it?

SARAH: Well, they, they interested them in, in organizing to help the, the workers, that's all

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: And they, they did have two representing the needle trade workers, see, two people.

Q: And they were gotten from the union, the people who represented the needle trade workers were members of the union?

SARAH: Oh, yes, all of them. This was a beginning, they said, that all of them should be union.

They were, my husband was not going to fight unions. He was interested in unions. And he said, "We are going to have anything that we organize here is going to be with the consent of the unions and with the unions." So they had two representatives of the union when they asked the government for money, their committee, on their committee when the money was given. Then they had a convention or a conference in New York City and the members were the right group for this kind of project.

Q: How . . . they had this conference and they called together members who would be, people who would be interested in this community, is that it?

SARAH: That's right. Some were already . . .

Q: How did, how did they inform the people about it? How did they notify them?

SARAH: It was, see, it was announced in the newspapers.

Q: I see.

SARAH: All over the country. Not all over the country, but in their area . . .

Q: Yeah, I see.

SARAH: . . . to the needle trade workers. It was announced by the unions, by the various organizations, that such-and-such a convention will take place . . . with the purpose, for the purpose of organizing that kind of a project for the needle trade workers, for the unemployed needle trade workers of that whole area.

Q: Uh-huh. Did they get an enthusiastic response?

SARAH: Yes, very . . . Admiral Wilson from Washington was there at the time . . .

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: . . . and so at that time, afterwards, the money was allocated for the project up here . . .

Q: And did they . . .

SARAH: and the . . .

Q: What?

SARAH: . . . and the idea of building the simple homes, as I told you. And the plan that they had was two-hundred-something, similar to the Swedish cooperatives and their homestead.

Q: How did they gather the people? Did they take anybody who wanted to come? All volunteers?

SARAH: No. No.

Q: What were the requirements?

SARAH: There were requirements.

Q: What were they?

SARAH: For one thing, they had to be union members.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: That was the first requirement, union members. They had to be unemployed. They had to put in, the plan was that the factory that would be built would be also cooperative garment workers factory. And for the factory, the money would be allocated by the government for building the homes, and they were to pay a certain amount per month for each . . . until they pay off and then would become their home.

Q: Didn't they . . . didn't the workers have to contribute something, too . . .

SARAH: And that's what I'm going to tell you now. The workers had to contribute, who came in, who were to come in, in the colony, and before they came in . . .

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: . . . contributed, were to contribute \$500 each for the . . . the factory was to built by the government, but for the material and for the, what would you call it?, the . . .

Q: Machinery?

SARAH: No . . . for the . . . the machinery and everything else in the factory, that was to be supplied by the members who were to join the colony. But those that were many who did not, who joined but couldn't come in yet. And as soon as the home, the homes were to be built, they were to come in.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: So the built the first eight homes, eight people came in here, and they were to start the factory up here. And this was to be a cooperative factory. But Benjamin suggested that for two years or so, in order to get on their feet, but nobody knew how to organize cooperative garment workers factory, that they should, they should get some private industrials who were, who owned factories in New York City to get one of them to run the factory, to show them how to run the . . . and one who was interested in creating something like that for the people. And so . . .

Q: Did they do that?

SARAH: And this is what they . . . yes, they tried, they tried to do that. They got two people, who were two . . . here, I have them here . . . let's see. [Searches through papers] I am amazed that they gave them to . . . I put it in this morning. I just . . .

2nd Q: Yeah, she had _____.

SARAH: . . . marked it, and I did it before I came here, because I didn't want to run to the . . . I didn't know I was going to be here . . . so I didn't . . . [Pauses] Yes, I have the names. Okay.

Two manufacturers of Ladies Garment Workers in New York City, big ones, one by the name of

Seigel and the Heft, Mr. Heft. I have their first names, too, I marked it down today. Heft and Seigel, they were approached by a committee of the homesteaders, many of them lived in New York, if they would run the factory for them for about two years. Because what they wanted, they didn't, they said they wanted, actually, to have a cooperative factory. And they told the people this, so the bigger one of these producers, of Ladies Garment Workers, was a Mr. Heft, Heft, the Heft factory. And he was approached, he was very interested. He was going to run the factory here for the . . . see, they were to put in \$500 each for it, the machinery and things like that. That was to be owned by the people in the project here. But the working of the factory, the factory would belong, it belonged to the government, but later promised to be owned by the Jersey Homesteads, as it was called at the time. And in the meantime, they were to put in \$500 each for running the factory, that was the main, for running the factory.

Q: And how about Mr. Heft? Did he come in and run the . . .

SARAH: Mr. Heft was very willing. I have all this material at home . . .

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: . . . I have a whole four-drawer, large cabinet that I keep all this material, since it's, since it's starting at the beginning, right at the beginning. And Mr. Heft was very willing to do something like that here for the colony, to come in and run the factory.

Q: And did he do it?

SARAH: No, he didn't do it.

Q: Why not?

SARAH: Why didn't he do it? Because there were objections from . . . _____ at the time, there were objections to it . . .

2nd Q: He was subject to _____.

SARAH: But this . . . that's right. Heft was going to come in and run the factory on the terms of the colony as it was proposed. There was a Mr. Dresen here, who were people who became members before it even became into the colony, I think you know that, to the project. In New York City, this was announced, this, this sort of thing was to be organized. They had a conference, a convention there and people became members.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: Said they would become members. And the idea was that each one of them who would become a member would invest \$500 for the . . . not for the home, but, not for the colonization of the project, but for the factory, to run the factory, \$500.

Q: But why did they object to Mr. Heft?

SARAH: Now, Mr. Heft was to have come in here and run the factory. Dobinsky(?) objected. Dobinsky, when he, now there were two labor union members on the committee for this whole thing when it was first organized, the project. They had two labor union members. But when they found that this was really to be organized, Dobinsky objected . . . he objected in, because he was afraid that they would have, what do you call this . . . factories, factories that are not union.

2nd Q: The organized, they wanted to be union.(?)

Q: Yeah.

SARAH: Huh?

2nd Q: Scab.

SARAH: Scab? Something like that, I can't think clearly now. My . . .

Q: But if they, if they . . . how could they be scared if they were union members?

SARAH: They, that's it, they were all to be union members. But Dobinsky objected to the organizing of something like that. He objected, he came to Washington, he sent his people to Washington, they had public meetings, they had the Jewish Press and all the large newspaper, The New York Times, the Inquirer and . . . some other forms.

Q: So, in other words, what happened was, the people had to run the factory by themselves without the help of anybody else.

SARAH: So, later on, yes, they were going to do . . . Dobinsky, I think, said something that they were going to run it, _____ was objected.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: That the union should run it. It was to be run by the people themselves who came in here and became members of the factory.

Q: Do you think . . .

SARAH: And they were to appoint and elect the people to, to, to, to be in the project, to be president(?).

Q: Do you think that the factory might have lasted longer, that the cooperative would have succeeded more readily if they had the help of someone like Mr. Heft to teach them how to run it?

SARAH: Well, Dobinsky objected.

Q: Yeah, but I'm, yeah, I'm not asking that.

SARAH: And they tried it.

Q: Yeah.

SARAH: Dobinsky objected to . . . see, he was the labor union, he was the member of the labor union. And Dobinsky of the labor union, since most of them that came in here were members of

Dobinsky's union that came here, the garment workers that came in here, they were garment workers.

Q: Yes, but if, but if, if Dobinsky had not objected, if Mr. Heft had come in here and taught the .

SARAH: And it was going?

Q: Yeah. If he had taught them how to organized the factory, how to run the factory, do you think that the cooperative would have lasted longer.

SARAH: Dobinsky did not want . . .

2nd Q: But, Sarah, you said that before.

Q: Yeah, I know, I know that. I'm trying to ask another question. If Dobinsky had not interfered, and Mr. Heft had come in to help run the factory, to teach them how to run the factory, do you think it would have lasted longer?

SARAH: We don't know, it might have. It would have been run by the people here in the project. They are also the workers who were here.

Q: Uh-huh.

SARAH: See, they were organized as a . . . the place was organized as a, what was that? . . . Jewish cooperative, just be a Jewish cooperative plant. Jewish cooperative unionized plant.

Q: Did you have anything to do with the farm cooperative here?

SARAH: No. Farm . . .

2nd Q: The one they had in Hightstown that they, I think cooperative . . .

Q: No, no, that's not what I'm talking about.

SARAH: No, no, no, no, the farm . . . yes