

Chapter 2. First Formations: Early Years in Pittsburgh, 1949–1963

I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 19, 1949, on Juneteenth long before the American people and state and federal governments recognized that date. It was also Father's Day. Although I was the firstborn, my father joked that my arrival "ruined" his Father's Day. Jokes were not Milton M. Graff's strongest suit.

My mother, Ruthe Galanty Graff, was raised in Sharpsburg, an immigrant mill town across the Allegheny, one of Pittsburgh's two rivers that come together to form the Ohio River at the downtown Point State Park, also called the Golden Triangle. My father grew up in Braddock, a steel town along the Monongahela River on Pittsburgh's other side.

Both grew up in small shopkeeping, largely immigrant, Jewish families that served their predominantly eastern and southern European industrial communities. My father was first-generation American; his parents migrated from eastern Germany. My mother was one-half first-generation American from Russia via Argentina and one-half third-generation American, the descendant of post-Revolution of 1848 German Jewish immigrants.

My father was the first in his family to graduate from college. He received a degree in business administration from the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) where he was a member of predominantly Jewish fraternity Sigma Alpha Mu. He then served in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps in the South Pacific during World War II. He took quiet pride in his service but seldom spoke about his wartime experiences. His only memento was his Bronze Star. He did not repeat the words of patriotic veterans. After the war, he joined the family jewelry business in Braddock.

My mother attended Pitt for one year. She briefly flirted with left-wing movements of the postwar moment. Later taking a few courses in her 50s, she regretted that she never completed her bachelor's degree. Throughout her life, she struggled with insecurity, anxiety, and depression, with counseling early in the marriage. I have no doubts that her story explains in part my own history. It was never discussed at home, early or later. I would like to know more about her experiences.

I grew up with insecurity and anxiety. When I was diagnosed as clinically depressed as a graduate student in Toronto in 1972–1973, my father did not want my mother to know. As part of his longtime marital practice of protecting her, he insisted that we speak in code about "my project" on our telephone conversations and visits.

Affecting my psychological development from an early age, my mother's fears intertwined inseparably with the financial insecurity that befell the new family when my father was hospitalized with tuberculosis in my second year. During

the time I grew up at home, she regularly cited examples of wealthy individuals and families, referring frequently to lawyers, physicians, and big businessmen (no women mentioned in the 1950s and 1960s) as exemplars to her children.

Ironically or not, I became a history professor and my younger brother a popular music journalist. We both grew up to write articles and books, albeit in quite different realms of expression and construction. Despite her contradictions, my mother and my father believed that their child-rearing succeeded, and they took great pride in us.

A similar contradiction marked our family environment. My parents were unrelenting in their commitment to fundamental honesty. My brother and I were punished by losing regular privileges if we were caught telling an untruth. At the same time, my mother spent most of her adult life lying about her age. On one hand, she was the proverbial Jack Benny “39” for decades. On the other hand, when voicing a supposedly exact age, she typically shaved several years from the total. A sign of the times, womanhood in transition, or . . . ?

In another sign of the times, mother also rhetorically held up my father as the ultimate arbiter of authority and punishment in the household. This represented a tacit threat in his absence during the daytime. On his part, I believe, my mother’s psychological history combined with long-term financial insecurity led him to support her quietly. Given the period, at the least, these issues were never discussed with or in front of the children. The 11-year age difference between my brother Gary and me exacerbated those gaps and silences.

Among my early foundations were a deep faith in the value and necessity of education at least through college; Conservative Judaism; hard work; financial carefulness and security; and respect and fairness for all others. Despite limited resources, my family subscribed to two daily newspapers, weekly and monthly adult and children’s magazines, and some book clubs. I grew from *Highlights* to *Boys’ Life* and *Sporting News*. Achievement in traditionally literate ways was emphasized. Studying hard and doing well was expected, enforced, and rewarded.

My parents’ traditional political liberalism derived from their immigrant industrial-town origins, transition from Orthodox to moderate Judaism, their families’ Depression-era experiences, the New Deal, World War II, and Roosevelt-Truman postwar free-world hopefulness. If they passed their anxieties about status and financial security to me along with the imperative to always strive to succeed even at personal cost, they also instilled a commitment to education, equality, fairness, justice, and democracy.

The “origin” story my parents told me is that they met on a date arranged by a former fraternity brother. They fell in love and married in October 1947. After a train trip to New York and Quebec City for their memorable honeymoon, they purchased a home, and my father opened a jewelry business in the nearby town of Greensburg. (For their 50th anniversary, Vicki and I led them along with my brother and his family back to Quebec City.)



Figure 2.1. Milton and Ruthe Graff, at marriage, 1947.



Figure 2.2. Milton and Ruthe Graff, pregnant with Harvey, 1949.

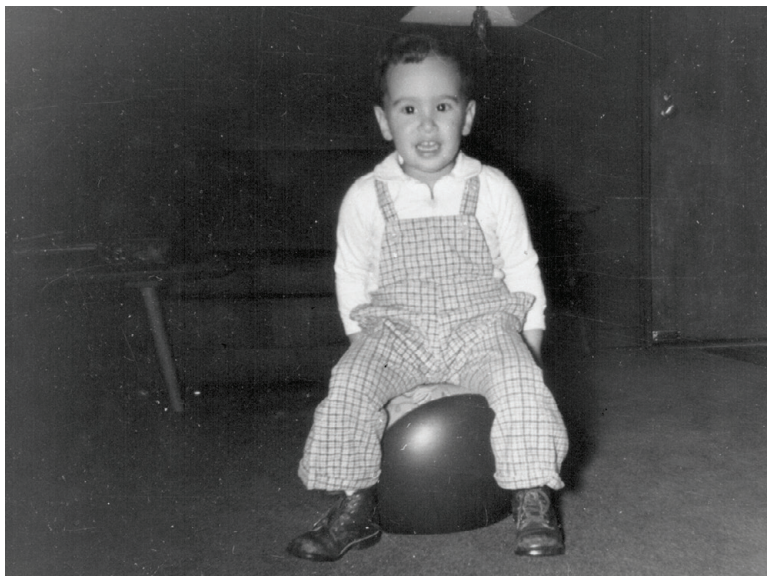


Figure 2.3. Harvey at age 1, 1950, sitting on a ball.

I arrived 20 months after their marriage. According to family lore, we lived happily for more than a year. But between my first and second birthdays, my father was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He was confined to a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital in Pittsburgh for the better part of the next year.

My earliest memories begin at the time of my father's TB. Dad's hospitalization necessitated radical changes. My parents sold their new family home and business, losing their financial independence and security for decades. My mother and I moved into my grandmother's small apartment on the east side of Pittsburgh near Highland Park. We were supported by the GI Bill, the VA, and my mother's family's hardware business in Sharpsburg, managed by her younger brother and my grandmother. My mother's younger brother, my Uncle Sonny, was the big brother that I otherwise lacked. These events permanently marked my personality development, mental health, and need to achieve.

My early visual memories are associated with occasional visits to see my father in the VA waiting rooms, my grandmother's apartment and nearby public parks, and the family hardware store which also sold toys. For years, I was spoiled by my uncle and grandmother as the family "guinea pig" for new toys. My parents were unhappy about that, long a source of low-level family conflict. My grandmother also introduced me to *The New York Times* Sunday edition at a pre-reading age, initiating a lifelong habit. I long recycled copies of the paper by sharing them with friends and neighbors.

With my father's cure and release from the hospital during my third year, the long search for stability and security recommenced. It continued into my adulthood and my parents' middle to late-middle age.

We resettled in Pittsburgh, not Greensburg. At that time, it was an exciting city, in its iconic and contradictory passage from a dying Steel City to a "model," "new," white-collar, high-er tech town. It was a historical and a future aspirational urban center. It laid the foundation for my love of cities.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the redevelopment of a high-rise downtown at the Golden Triangle. The site of Fort Duquesne and significant in the French and Indian Wars, this is where shining towers cast shadows over the remains of Revolutionary War encampments. New baseball and football stadiums did not yet occupy the center city beside the rivers. Landmark bridges were under construction parallel to old ones. Downtown was still vital; distinctive neighborhoods had thriving shopping and community centers.

The three of us moved into a two-bedroom apartment in a middle-sized complex on the western edge of the predominantly middle-class and substantially Jewish Squirrel Hill neighborhood. We were not far from the Homestead Bridge to another steel town famous for its mills and great strikes across the river from Pittsburgh. I worked in those aging factories in late-adolescent summer jobs to earn money for college. My father returned to work in his brother-in-law's jewelry business in Braddock. My mother stayed home with me.



Figure 2.4. Harvey at age 5, at Beechwood Gardens Apartments, 1954.

When I turned three, my parents sent me to full-day nursery school at the local Jewish Community Center for the next two years. Early for the time, it was a mixed experience both in their motivations, as I understand them, and my socialization and learning.

The impetus illustrated their recognition of the importance of beginning schooling early. At the same time, I was not ready for two years of full-time, often boring and sometimes unpleasant interactions with teachers and classmates. I suffered burnout before the time of kindergarten at age five. I remember episodes of discipline for my acting out or intransigence.

Kindergarten at age five in the nearby elementary school was a first step toward my life of learning. Two major memories dominate. The first is punishment and a report to my parents for my acting out in class once or twice. Punishments from spanking or paddling to standing alone in a cloakroom or corner were still common if beginning to dissipate. Criticism and then banning of such punishments came in the 1960s. The other memory is of being an experimental subject in both the Salk and Sabin polio vaccine trials, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. My family was resolutely pro-vaccine.

As I turned six, we relocated to the other side of Squirrel Hill during the summer between kindergarten and first grade. We moved into one unit of a four-plex on a moderately quiet street one block from Linden Elementary School, where I spent the next eight years. In the mid-1950s, this was a “good,” middling, White, and safe neighborhood with many families and their baby boom generation children. We played tag, war games, softball and whiffle ball, basketball, and hula hoops in the streets and backyards that often intersected with each other. We shot cap guns and watched westerns on television.

After mixed educational and social experiences in the first two to three grades, I settled in as a student and was tracked into advanced programs. This was a transitional period for public education, unclearly caught between mild progressivism with its selective tracking by tests, teachers’ recommendations, and parental pushes and more traditional, rigid curricula and discipline.

Calls and more active pushes for equity and equality across boundaries were beginning softly in this mixed period after the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling that “separate but equal” is not equal but before the mid-1960s civil and voting rights legislation and court rulings. Fearful White resistance to integration, especially through resegregation by suburbanization, was beginning (for more on this topic, see my “The Nondebate About Critical Race Theory and Our American Moment,” 2022d).

In grades one and two, I had occasional discipline problems (and was threatened with paddling on my rear end by the school principal in the unenlightened mid-1950s). There was a more serious but telling dispute between a second or third grade teacher who thought I was left-handed because of the way I practiced cursive handwriting—unsatisfactorily in her estimation—and my mother and pediatrician who were certain that I was not. I remained right-handed. More signs of the transitional times. My life with literacy had begun.

By the end of third grade, I was more comfortable in the advanced stream. Among my memories are the struggle to move from painfully neat printing to legible cursive script and to begin studying elementary French from an Italian American teacher. When Miss P’s students got to high school, we were immediately identified by our Italian-inflected French accents.

I remain impressed by my singular status in our third grade 1956 mock presidential election. It was my first and lingering awareness that I was different politically. I was the only one in the class who voted for Adlai Stevenson, the Democrat,

against Ike—Dwight David Eisenhower—the Republican incumbent and commanding World War II general. It was also the first of many times that my candidate was not victorious and I was in the political minority.

My next political lesson was my 11-year-old's enthusiasm for the boyish and then seemingly charming JFK's successful candidacy for president in 1960. Both his "the new frontier" and "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" slogans rang loudly to a self-aware preteen. John Kennedy was the last candidate about whom I was excited until I "got clean for Gene" McCarthy as a college freshman and sophomore. I also recall watching Alan Shepard's first suborbital flight in 1961 on a then-large-screen TV in the school auditorium.

From an early age, I was taught racial, ethnic, and gender (long before that word was in play) equality, equity, and tolerance. These teachings came from a combination of explicit parental statements, family and peer examples, liberal democratic values, moderate Judaism, and my own experiences.

The mill town bases of both sides of my family contributed to an expectation of regular, friendly, and respectful interactions with ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse people. My mother's family's hardware store long employed Black skilled workers and served a largely Italian American clientele. My father's family's jewelry business in Braddock served an eastern and southern European and increasingly racially mixed population.

My family employed periodic (every few weeks) Black house cleaners and laundresses/ironers for my father's business shirts and undergarments, an idiosyncratic taste and sign of the times. Although I am cautious not to exaggerate or romanticize our closeness, these workers were treated and we interacted respectfully, "like friends." Or at least that's what it seemed to a growing child and adolescent. Always on first-name basis, we shared family news. They inquired about my schooling, sports, and the like. They regularly reported on the doings of their own families who occasionally would come to pick them up from work. Some attended my Bar Mitzvah at age 13.

I recall the occasion on which my mother decided that I should learn to play the piano. She felt no need to consult me when she purchased a used piano. I was about eight or nine years old and had absolutely no interest in the second- or third-hand baby grand that overcrowded the dining room. After a few months of my unwavering refusal, she sold the cumbersome object to our house cleaner's church for \$25.

In retrospect, this limited but important degree of personal experience compensated at least in part for the fact that our residential neighborhoods and public schools were almost completely segregated. The former determined the latter in the early years between the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision and the partial changes wrought by the civil rights struggles and irregular residential change of the 1960s.

Two daily Pittsburgh newspapers arrived each morning and evening, *The Pittsburgh Press* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, along with my grandmother's *The New York Times* on Sundays. *Readers Digest Condensed Books* came

quarterly; we read them occasionally. *Life* and *Time* magazines filled the mailbox and the coffee table. *Boys' Life*, *Sports Illustrated*, and then *Sporting News* replaced *Highlights*. By my teens, I began to buy my own books, a habit that got out of hand by graduate school and after, leading my wife and me to buy houses large enough to hold our books, construct built-in bookcases, and reinforce foundations after inspection by structural engineers.

A few shelves of books occupied a place in the living room behind the black and white TV. I was encouraged to read regularly and, as a teenager, encouraged to buy books from local Squirrel Hill booksellers. It was an active, traditionally middle-class, White cultural set of traditionally literate print spaces. In high school, I began to turn my reading to the then New Left. Most—but not quite all, especially in the mid-to-late 1960s—kinds of music were tolerated, if not always appreciated.

Less manipulative but supportive was the long-distance support of Uncle Charles, my grandmother's older brother. He was an international oil company and diamond mining engineer who lived in New York City with his wife Marion. Charles was the "black sheep" of the family. First-born and educated at Carnegie Tech (later Carnegie Mellon University), he left Pittsburgh instead of remaining to help finance his younger brothers' educations. He assisted a Belgian exploration company in developing colonial resources in the then Belgian Congo where he knew kings and tribal leaders.

He and his little sister Bertha (my grandmother Nan to the world) remained close. From a distance, he actively loved and supported me. For more than 15 years, he mailed me a monthly check for \$10. When I visited him in New York City (including a memorable lunch with Vicki on our first trip together to the city), he and Marion gave me hand-me-down luggage, briefcase, neck ties, a miniature set of Shakespeare's works that Marion won as a private school girl, and scarves for Vicki. He enthusiastically encouraged my education. The Shakespeare set resides on the mantle in my study.

Regrettably, elementary school was the last time that learning about science interested me. Eighth grade physics left me uninvolved and distracted. Then and later in high school, as with so many other U.S. school children, the problem was in large part poor teaching combined with poor textbooks. For my cohort, this problem was exacerbated by our status between traditional science texts and instructional styles and the new, post-Sputnik, innovative and active approaches that began in the early 1960s. These approaches appeared under various abbreviations, such as BSCS for biology, PSSC for physics, and often as "project" or "new" biology, chemistry, physics, and math.

I was partly lost and partly turned off by the many "news" combined with off-again, on-again instruction. Some of us learned to play bridge quietly in the back corner of our seventh grade biology class taught, literally, by Miss Mildred Hinderer. At least as often, the old appealed to me more than the new. This continued through high school science and off and on with math, although I learned to fool instructors with integral calculus equations and such.

Innovative and transitional social studies and English/language arts classes proved more to my liking and abilities. In retrospect, those subjects and their often young and innovative teachers who emphasized primary texts laid the foundations on which my best high school and university history and social science and high school English teachers built. The personal, the academic, and the place—with the political beginning its influence—began to emerge in my first four to eight years of schooling and increased steadily. At first, history and the social sciences followed behind languages and math in their appeal to me. Clearer links between understanding myself and my world in contemporary and historical context developed in high school. My life with literacy developed.

Nonacademic subjects deepened my understanding negatively and positively. I inherited my mother's inability to carry a musical tune, although I like to sing or hum. In third grade music class, the old-fashioned teacher ordered me *not* to sing and positioned four of us presumed talentless students in the classroom's four corners. This left a small but lingering scar, leading me to do most of my singing in showers. My wife tells me that in my 60s and 70s, I more often carry a tune.

My music teacher's small slap to my young ego was countered by the school's participation in the Pittsburgh Symphony's Young Peoples Concerts series. We were bused to the concert hall several times a year to hear the renowned symphony led by remarkable conductor William Steinberg play the classics.

Another treat was a class outing to an early live recording of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, the iconic, early public television children's program. I appeared on the still-new TV screen. The program originated at Pittsburgh's pioneering WQED station before PBS television and NPR radio were organized.

Health class—physical education and hygiene—was worse than music. Taught by the coach, hygiene was contentless, especially in any material that might actually help a child of, say, 8 to 13. Anatomy, physiology, sexuality, or disease transmission were seldom if ever mentioned. In gym, Coach did his best *not* to instruct or instill an appreciation of either physical prowess or exercise. He had no organized school teams or leagues to actually coach despite his title! His specialty was shooting underhand baskets standing by himself in any open basketball court.

By the sixth to eighth grades, the fault lines of my hierarchical and competitive social worlds emerged: the combined intersections of the overlap of the social, cultural, and educational realm, revealingly close to the economic, and internalization of the subtle and overt pressure to achieve. Following chapters will reveal how this played out, especially in the academic and social tracks. It is a lifelong dynamic and dialectic and set of contradictions, not at all exceptional to my experiences.

One crack in that wall of intersections appeared with the required seventh and eighth grade, one-half-day-each-week, woodshop and mechanical drawing class—aka “prevocational training” for nonvocational students. We walked a moderate distance from Linden Elementary School to another school in a neighborhood more mixed along class, ethnic, and racial lines just outside of Squirrel Hill.

The official premise of going to these classes was that we were learning valuable life skills and also an introduction to working manually. The experience was all but useless, other than reinforcing nonvocational preferences and prejudices. The small prizes we made in these classes that our families displayed typically in kitchens were wall-mounted notepaper roll holders and little three-legged stools that we laboriously fashioned and proudly presented to them. Cooking and home economics, required for the girls in our class, would have served me much better. I had no choice, of course.

My early foundations embraced family, friends, play, and religious education in addition to public schooling. We were a close-knit family, often mixing with grandmother and mother's younger brother, many aunts, uncles, and cousins, as well as neighbors. At times, I felt closely connected; at other times, more of an outsider, especially as my intellectual and political interests developed and as a competitive and sometimes inhumane teen social life developed, a pattern of conflicts and contradictions to which I became accustomed.

My father worked long hours, often falling asleep in the living room after dinner with the newspaper on his lap. He was not athletic, barely able to help me when I was young mount my two-wheeled bicycle without its training wheels or throw a baseball.

In my late elementary and middle school years, my mother had not yet returned to her own forms of work. As I moved into middle school grades, she gave up awakening early to serve me breakfast and see me on my way to school. I missed that but never complained. At about that time, I learned by myself to replace shirt buttons that fell off—very poorly. Housekeeping duties were never my mother's forte, a disaffinity I inherited.

Mother did greet me at the door on my return home in the afternoon. Together, mother and dad were no-nonsense about the priority of my studies, which came before play, setting a lifelong pattern. They were not inflexible, but they were firm, their expectations for excellence clear. I felt both implicit and explicit pressures. To their credit, they did not succumb to the excesses of my grandmother who rewarded each "A" on my report cards with \$1. That left a small but unfortunate sub- or semi-conscious imprint.

My street and the adjoining blocks were full of children approximately my age. We were the baby boomers, the postwar American generation, overflowing, primed for achievement, and often pushed beyond fair expectations and trapped in social, cultural, and economic contradictions of the times and place. The lines between friendly contests and divisive, fun-destroying competition were thin, often brittle. I learned this in neighborhood games of tag, whiffle ball, and basketball and in my short time in both Cub Scouts and Little League. I was not a joiner. I did not follow the leader well. This tendency marked my college and graduate school experiences and my scholarly career.

Soccer on the school field at recess was one informal, less competitive respite. Little League, from which I dropped out quickly, was not. My pseudo big brother

Uncle Sonny tried to pass on his passion for golf, basketball, and tennis. As soon as I was able, I walked the golf course with him on weekend mornings. I played golf for a few years with junior-sized clubs that he gave me, bicycling to the nearby public course. Eclipsed by tennis, it didn't stick. An early interest in tennis long proved satisfying. As a teen, I often played at my family's modest swimming club, continuing illegally after they ended their membership, and with schoolmates.

My early teenage competitive experiment was short-lived. The thin lines between fist fights on the street and in organized boxing sessions at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association were another element of this culture of competition. My continued interest in sports fell into individual sports and noncompetitive play rather than team sports. I enjoyed watching the major sports championships on television and occasionally in person.

Especially pleasurable were the broad interests across the family and throughout the community in Pittsburgh's iconic professional baseball team, the Pirates, and football team, the Steelers. My father and uncle splurged on tickets for games, including season tickets for the Steelers as I approached and into my teen years. I often attended games, bundled up for late fall weather, with them or with schoolmates.

Both teams were led by stars like the Pirates' outfielder Roberto Clemente and the Steelers' sports-betting quarterback Bobby Lane, with almost equally outstanding players on both teams, such as baseball players Dick Stuart and Dick Groat and footballers John Henry Johnson, Jimmie Orr, and Ernie Stautner. Among the strongest memories of my childhood is the Pirates' 1960 seven-game victory over the heavily favored New York Yankees. Bill Mazeroski's and Dick Stuart's game-winning performances are frozen in the eyes of Pittsburghers. Some of the plays are etched in the annals of sports history. Some years are best forgotten.

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Other formative experiences and memories surround my haphazard religious education. Our family proudly identified as recently immigrated American Jews, more culturally than religiously observant. When my active bachelor Uncle Sonny finally married Janet, a non-Jewish woman, in the mid-1960s, she converted to Judaism with instruction at a Reform temple.

My parents continued the orientation of their upbringing as Conservative or moderate Jews, as opposed to more liberal Reform or much stricter Orthodox Jews. Although they had been raised in more traditional synagogues, my parents chose the Conservative Tree of Life synagogue not far from our house and near my elementary school as their decades-long base. (This was the site of an antisemitic mass murder in 2021.)

The cultural slang for their orientation—"three-days-a-year Jews"—described our practice. Religious attendance was mandated for the High Holy Days: the autumn celebration of the Jewish New Year called Rosh Hashanah (on the distinctive Jewish calendar), and the Day of Atonement called Yom Kippur. The latter is a day of prayer and fasting. I fasted inconsistently as a child and teen and never

again after my first year in college when I fasted and then proceeded to get drunk like a typical, 18-year-old college freshman! My religious attendance and practice substantially stopped after my Bar Mitzvah at age 13 and effectively ended when I left home for college other than close friends' and families' celebrations. Learning about the multiple meanings of Israeli Zionism and the troubled history of Israelis and Palestinians helped to push me away, long before the events of October 7, 2023, and their aftermath.

Following parental ideals, I began weekly Sunday school sessions during my mid-primary-school years and Bar Mitzvah (or for girls Bat Mitzvah) classes, led by the synagogue's cantor, several years before my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. That is the date for the ceremonial passage to "man- or womanhood" in the Jewish faith.

Neither set of classes appealed to me. They were a chore, with a dominating emphasis on memorization, softly but uncompromisingly compelled by my parents. The Sunday school curriculum was murky at best, a confusing *mélange* of Jewish history, Old Testament Scriptures, moderate rather than zealous Zionist support for Israeli independence and a Jewish state, and an insufficient bit of comparative religion.



*Figure 2.5. Harvey at age 13, Bar Mitzvah, June 1962. Photo by Wolowitz.*

This admixture is summed up well practically and symbolically in the substantial number of trees planted in my name in Israel through contributions from my few dollars a week allowance in reward for household chores and small exercises in familial fundraising. I left Sunday school shortly after I was Bar Mitzvah'ed, resisting pleas and invitations to continue on to the "college of Jewish studies" for high school-age students and beyond. I had no interest. If narrowly defined religious belief and practice never appealed to me, a deeply felt ecumenism and "faith" in and respect for all religions and all persons did. That is not insignificant.

The Bar Mitzvah experience among middle- and upper-middle-class, urban and suburban Jewish families is long and complicated. It is much more than a religious rite; it is a time of joy, accomplishment, stress, and competition among young people entering their teen years and puberty and their families. For my circle, based largely but not exclusively in Squirrel Hill, Linden School, and the Tree of Life synagogue, it began before the 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. For the baby boom cohort, the immersion was multi-year.

It commenced with the Bar and Bat Mitzvahs of older cousins and siblings, Hebrew school for our preparations, seventh and eighth grade dancing classes to prepare for the new teens' parties that were inseparable from the larger constellation of events, and a full year of events during which each of us turned 13.

I recall with laughter more than 60 years later the silly Genevieve Jones, our local middle-aged dance teacher. Leading by hilarious personal exhibition, she tried to take 12-year-olds experiencing coeducational, heterosexual, awkward, and sometimes stressful and competitive early adolescence through the two-step, four-step, waltz, jitterbug, and close and distanced partnering. New to our era were the Twist, Pony, Freddie, Hitch-Hike, Loco-motion, and Mashed Potato. Among the countless moves of the times were the Shimmy, Swim, Boogaloo, Bristol Stomp, Chicken, Drag, Hully Gully, Jerk, Monkey, Strut, and more. It was a lot to learn and practice. I had the great and loving assistance of my older cousin Sharon, who lived two blocks from our house.

A seemingly never-ending cycle of Saturday morning (and for some Reform Jews Friday evening for girls' Bat Mitzvahs) services at which the Bar or Bat Mitzvah boy or girl read from the Holy Torah, chanted a bit, and made a little speech thanking everyone and calling for peace and happiness, occupied my 13<sup>th</sup> year. These were shared, celebratory moments that occupied part of almost every weekend.

After large, catered luncheons, parties often with disk jockeys (on rare occasions a small band) playing the tunes of the day with occasional hits of the past for parents and relatives occupied Saturday evenings. Bar and Bat Mitzvah was a Saturday (or Friday and Saturday for young women) spectacle as we struggled to outdress, outdance, and be cooler than the other 13-year-olds.

These were the showpieces of the rite of passage for the principals and their associates. They were intensely competitive for parents and 13-year-olds. This was the end of elementary school, for most the end of formal religious

education, the experience of puberty and early adolescence, and more: a heavily weighted and freighted time.

For my family, the Bar Mitzvah season came less than two years after the birth of my younger brother Gary on November 7, 1960, JFK's election date. I was 11. My parents' unusual family planning, with more than a decade between the births of their two sons, was never discussed with me. I was surprised but joyous to welcome a lovable little sibling and become a big brother after more than a decade as a sometimes-lonely only child. After his first year or so, with his crib in my parents' bedroom, he shared my bedroom.

A sign of the times in gender norms and expectations, my father resisted baby care. At 11, I changed diapers and dealt with the soiled diaper pail in the days before disposable diapers. Within a couple of years, I was declared the "built-in babysitter" whose family obligations took precedence over his emerging, adolescent social life. I was not pleased about that.

My little brother and I were always close, limited by physical separation when I left home for college at 18 and he was not yet 7. He learned mixed lessons from me. His observations taught him to exclaim, "damn it" ("dammit," in his memory), when his building blocks tumbled down. I taught him to go on strike—in Spanish, no doubt an influence from Cesar Chavez' organizing for immigrant farm workers. And his term of condemnation was "that's riskusing" (translation: "that's disgusting"). The sentimental little fellow cried when I departed for college and later cried at the airport when my future wife and I left after visiting Pittsburgh.

My achievements were at first a problem for a younger brother to counter. But as he grew into his later high school years, his talent for journalism began to shine. Editor of the Allderdice High School newspaper, he was also a stringer for *The Pittsburgh Press*. Graduating journalism school at the University of Missouri where he also wrote for national newspapers, he accepted a position as popular music critic for the *Detroit Free Press*.

Not long after Gary's arrival, without much discussion in front of me at least, my mother returned to work for the first time since marriage. The example of the Bar Mitzvah year and the success of my events stimulated her to put her shingle out as a social consultant. This not-quite profession preoccupied her for the next few decades. Working with caterers and florists; stationers and calligraphers; owners of social halls, restaurants, and country clubs; even car and van renters; and the like, she planned social events, most of them weddings and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

Her never-quite-successful business venture could dominate the household. Long before cell phones, mother managed to tie up two phone lines simultaneously with her solicitations, negotiations, and consultations. I recall evenings and weekends in which my father and I, with a little help from young Gary, prepared bags of paper rose petals for wedding guests to throw at newlyweds in lieu of the rice that was banned in sanctuaries, wedding halls, and hotels. The paper petals stuck together in their manufacture. They needed to be fluffed out in the clothes dryer, then counted and packed in small plastic bags tied with tiny plastic bows.

The guys in the house did not enjoy this task. A decade later on visits to my family, Vicki made corrections to calligraphy on invitations and name cards.

I also recall my first social date in my late 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> year with a female neighbor and eighth grade classmate named Bess. I played ball with her brothers and their dog. My father drove us to a local movie theater on a Saturday afternoon. After the film, we went out either for ice cream or pizza. I am certain that there was no touching, not even holding hands. At that age, as well as I can recall, girls and boys were more or less equal, except for competitive sports and who paid. That soon changed.

My 13<sup>th</sup> year, and this second chapter, ends with elementary school graduation in June 1963. I have no distinct memories of this event. That summer we moved back to the other side of Squirrel Hill to a duplex with our first owner-occupied house since I was an infant. It had separate bedrooms for my brother and me. Happily, it was only four blocks from Taylor Allderdice High School where I started on the pre-collegiate, advanced track the day after Labor Day in September 1963.