

BS1 – Ben Siegel, “First Job at the Shoe Store”

Time Line: Decade III, Local and National Events, General, end of Time Line for this section.

Transcript: pp. 6-8

BS: Yes, it was only seventy-two hours a week. So it was really like striking oil. So I was very happy about that. Five dollars a week, went to pay for the rent for our family. It amounted to, I think, eighteen dollars a month. Four times five is twenty, so there was two dollars to spare. That went on for a few years, during which time I learned about shoes -- being a shoemaker's son -- so I was familiar with leather, and I had a first step-up already, compared to the other kids. I liked leather, and I liked shoes, and the job was great because I didn't have to get on my hands and knees to pull out weeds and clean the stall and stuff rags and stuff. This was really a very nice stage of my life. I also, ultimately, became one of the sought after shoe salesmen in Bridgeport because I was very, very diligent about fitting people properly when I sold the shoes because I had, in my own experience, trouble. Because my brother, Maury, was smaller than I was, and his feet were obviously smaller. But he never wore his shoes out, and I was very tough on shoes. So to wear his hand-me-downs, I had to curl my toes up in order to wear his shoes. It was a very uncomfortable situation, and I vowed that I would not allow people to have that problem with their shoes.