



Jack Goldstein
ROBS History Project
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Jack Goldstein was named after his paternal grandfather who passed away before he was born. His father's family came from the Ukraine and Hungary, and his mother's family came from Poland. Jack's father, who was one of nine children, and his mother were all born in the United States. Through social media, Jack has been hearing from distant relatives of whom he'd been unaware

Jack is married with a wife, four children and eight grandchildren ranging in age from thirteen years old down to three. Most of his children live on Long Island, and one lives Upstate New York. Jack and his wife have been married since 1949. They previously lived in Brooklyn, moved to Brentwood in 1953 and then moved to Babylon in 1979. Jack's wife, Sheila, is a modern dancer who worked with the Alvin Haley Company and was also a teacher who taught at Adelphi College and substituted in Brentwood Schools for a while.

Jack was then asked to talk about his children. His oldest is Daniel who was born in 1953 while the family lived in Brooklyn. He was involved in not-for-profit housing but has since gone into financial planning. He is married with one child, and his wife is a psychologist. His second son, Michael, who is a little less than two years younger than Daniel and born in Queens, lives Upstate. He does theatrical carpentry and stage sets for the theater and movies. He attended Brentwood schools up until 10th grade then went to private schools. His third son is David, who was born seven years

after Michael, was born when they lived in Brentwood. Both he and Danny graduated from Brentwood High School. David is a psychologist and works for a child care agency in Manhattan. He is married with a son and a daughter. Although his three sons all work in different fields the one interest they share in common is golf. Jack's youngest child is a daughter, Karen, who is four years younger than David. She is married now and has three sons, the oldest of whom Jack feels the closest with, because he reminds him of how he was as a child. Her youngest children are identical twin boys Stephen and Thomas who are five years old.

Jack was born in Brooklyn in 1928. His earliest childhood memories were of his spending time with an aunt that lived with them at the time. He remembered one time sitting on the floor eating a bottle of olives at about the age of two. They moved to the Bronx, where his mother's family lived, sometime between his age of two and three to the age of twelve. They then moved back to Sheep's Head Bay in Brooklyn. He remembered his mother taking him places and being very warm. She was a voracious reader who went as far as the 5th grade and was an excellent speller. She loved people, and Jack remembers that there were always people in the house both friends and relatives. She enjoyed taking care of people. His father was a smart man, but according to Jack, kind of a failure. He was a heavy gambler and could be physically abusive. Being a difficult family in many ways, it was his mother that kept them all on track. Jack took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went into the army in 1946 for a year and a half when he was eighteen years old, coming out in 1948. He spent most of the time in Okinawa. In 1945 he had started college attending Brooklyn College when he was seventeen years old for a year. He then moved to City College, because they had an outstanding Psychology Department. He started dating his wife when he got out of the Army, and they got married in 1949. He graduated from City College in 1950 and became an elementary school teacher working in private schools for five years including the United Nations School in Manhattan for two years. The pay was not that good in private schools, so he took a job teaching in the Brentwood School District. In 1956 he and his family bought a house in Brentwood in what was known as the Chapel Hill North section.

The question was asked of Jack if there were any other adults in his life other than parents who had an influence on him during the informative years of his life. His aunts and uncles on his mother's side of the family were very much a part of his life. He also mentioned a cousin of his father who influenced him

He was also asked if there were any teachers who were important to him. He remembered his 1st grade teacher, Miss. Gordon. He remembered having to walk to school about a half a mile and having to cross the Grand Concourse. He would clutch onto the traffic light halfway across. He remembered coming home for lunch each day then having to walk back to school.

Who influenced his career choice to become a teacher? Jack said that he had a cousin who was a teacher, and she influenced him to become one too. He also had several teachers who influenced him to become a teacher. He spoke of his 3rd grade teacher, Miss Carter and a 6th grade teacher, Miss Donovan. He chose to be an elementary school teacher because he enjoyed working with young children. He didn't choose secondary education because he wasn't interested in teaching any one particular subject.

What was it like growing up during the depression? Jack remembers being very poor. There was always food, but other than that, he remembers wearing all of his cousin's clothes. His clothes were all hand-me-downs with other kid's names in them. He remembers getting a bicycle from a cousin that they had to sell so they could buy food.

Jack was asked if he had chores to do as a teenager. He used to do some shopping and took care of his younger brother. What was his first paying job? At the age of ten in the evenings he worked in two drug stores a block apart delivering prescriptions.

What were some of Jack's interests as a child? At a very early age he enjoyed reading. He also put together airplane models, although he said he was not that good at it. He only made one that

could fly, but it wound up crashing against a wall. Jack laughed when he jokingly said that although he was very interested in airplanes, he was not good at making or repairing them.

Jack considers himself a morning person being an early riser. His favorite season is the fall.

What made him come to Brentwood? There was no particular reason other than that he had gotten a list of all the various school districts on Long Island, wrote to them and Brentwood was the one that answered him. He came to Brentwood in 1956 and was interviewed by Gene Hoyt. His first impression of Brentwood was that it was a decent place to live and work. At first they didn't have a car, so he walked or rode his bike to work each day.

Who were some of the people he worked with early on? Jack worked at Northeast and mentioned Frank Saladino, Andy Book and the principal Ralph Saiken. They were on split session at the time, so Jack taught 6th grade afternoon session for a year or two then the morning session. At the time he was certified in Elementary Education. He took a sabbatical and went back to Columbia Teacher's College to earn his PhD in Psychology. Jack said he enjoyed going to school. He then became a Reading Consultant at Northeast and North Elementary Schools before retiring.

Jack was involved with BTA on and off throughout his career in Brentwood. He was a member in the early years before the union was affiliated with AFT. He helped fight for many of the benefits that Brentwood teachers now enjoy.

What did Jack believe was his purpose throughout his career? He had been licensed in Psychotherapy, and was working in a clinic in Commack part time. He also taught ESL at night school. Working with children gives him "a really good feeling". He told us his purpose as he saw it was making a difference in children's lives.

While working in Brentwood Jack was seen as a risk taker and a leader. He was asked to identify other risk takers he had met at

work. Jack mentioned George Cavuto as someone who put himself out. Jack also named Hiawatha Harris who was involved with BTA. He was a fabulous guy absolutely dedicated to work and a great teacher, a great person and a great colleague.”

When did Jack decide it was time to retire? It was due to a combination of two things. One was that they offered a three-year retirement bonus. The second was that he had a second career in place, and it was time to give up one. At the time of his retirement he was working at North Elementary School as a reading consultant. He worked in Brentwood from 1956 to 1985, and his beginning salary was \$5000. He also taught Evening School when Fred Weaver was the High School principal, and at one time he taught summer school. His first year teaching in Brentwood’s public schools was his best year. One year when he had taught fourth grade was also a favorite year.

What has he been doing since he retired? He retired in 1986 after teaching for twenty-nine years. Following his retirement he taught at Adelphi University both in graduate and undergraduate classes. He also worked with kids at Little Flower and continued part time in his private psychotherapy practice. He has also done a lot of traveling since he retired.

Was there a sigularly important book he remembered reading? He thought for a moment and responded by saying that when he was in high school he enjoyed reading the poetry of Carl Sandburg.

Did you have a hero that you looked up to when you were growing up? He had an interest in Jazz when he was in high school and he played the trumpet, so his idol at that time was Roy Eldridge who was an American jazz trumpet player.

Do you have any insight or advice for young teachers coming into the profession? What do you see down the road in education? He wasn’t exactly optimistic. He sees increasing bureaucracy and a lot more paperwork ahead. He anticipates the growth of an expanding curriculum that’s a lot more detailed. He was much more positive when it came to discussing Brentwood’s youth. Jack

said, *“I have a great take on what is happening with our children and our grandchildren. I think are wonderful. These kids have a tremendous feeling about their own worth. They are not going to take much pushing around. Maybe that’s what it’s going to take to bring the schools back to being real.”*