

ELDRIDGE STREET SYNAGOGUE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Bob Yucikas

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Bob Yucikas conducted by Roberta Brandes Gratz on June 11, 2024. This interview is part of the Eldridge Street Synagogue Restoration Archive Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that they are reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The views expressed in this oral history interview do not necessarily reflect the views of the New York Preservation Archive Project.

Transcriptionist: Audio Transcription Center

Session: 1

Interviewee: Bob Yucikas

Location:

Interviewer: Roberta Brandes Gratz

Date: June 11, 2024

Q: Okay, this is Roberta Gratz, and I'm here to interview Bob Yucikas. Bob, tell us first who you are and where you live and then we will start and discover how you came to Eldridge before the Eldridge Street Project was even started.

Yucikas: Well, of course, Bob Yucikas, and I live in a loft on the Bowery that I've been living in for fifty-two years now. And the first place I lived in New York was 79 Chrystie Street, which was between Grant and Hester, so ever since I've been in New York, that's been my neighborhood. And one of the buildings that attracted me [00:01:00] was the Eldridge Street Synagogue, and I would often walk by and wonder what it looked like on the inside. And I had friends, artist friends, and I might say that I'm an artist primarily. I make paintings, drawings, film, sculptures, et cetera, I do it all. And I had friends who lived in what had formerly been a synagogue on Hester Street, and so I got enchanted by the idea of living in a synagogue and using it as a workspace. Because they were—you know, this was a small gem of—and my friend's synagogue was a small gem of a synagogue. And later on, I got friends, other friends, to live in that building, so.

And I have a little bit of a history with that building—actually a lot of history—because I did some work on it. And [00:02:00] so over the years, I—in addition to selling—occasionally selling art, I would do construction jobs as a way to support the feeding habit. That was, kind of

like, what a lot of artists did back then. And Lower Manhattan was, kind of, like the Wild West SoHo was developing, the Lower East Side was a really iffy sort of area, and certain—the East Village was and the Lower East Side wasn't much better. I mean there was a lot of, you know, drugs and prostitution in the neighborhood, and there's still a little bit of it, but now, it's all legal, so to speak. But the neighborhood wasn't really neat but—

One of the people that I worked for was a fellow who lived on Forsyth Street. And [00:03:00] he had a building that he had bought for a dollar from a landlord who walked away from the building because he had too many violations. He had hundreds of violations, so this guy enlisted me to help remove it. So we started renovating apartments, removing violations, and then suddenly, the building was turning a profit. And so he was one of the congregants at Eldridge Street. It was still a functioning synagogue—

Q: What year—

Yucikas: —but they—

Q: —are we talking about?

Yucikas: We're talking about in the early [19]70s.

Q: Okay, you're living on Chrystie Street?

Yucikas: No, I'm living on the Bowery at that time.

Q: Oh, I thought—

Yucikas: Yeah, I lived in the storefront for about four years. And then when I made my move in New York, I only went one block west, and I went [00:04:00] from the ground floor to the third floor and—

Q: But your friend was a congregant at Eldridge?

Yucikas: Yes, yes, and he also knew somebody, an older guy by the name of Markowitz, Benjamin Markowitz, and he was the shammes of the synagogue. And he was the person who was responsible for, around noon, gathering up people to go have a—to make a minyan, to have a service and stuff. And so they needed work on the downstairs sanctuary because the walls were collapsing. I couldn't believe that somebody was worshiping in such a ruined state but people still were. So they got me in there to renovate [00:05:00] the lower sanctuary, and the whole time I was in there, they had a minyan, they had services. After I stopped working in there, they stopped showing up and—

Q: Because of the work?

Yucikas: Because they liked seeing the work that was being done. They were happy that, suddenly, their part of a synagogue was starting to look nice. And, at a certain point, you know, I

had done most of the work, and this is where I began to get an education about things Jewish. I learned how to build a sukkah, and I got to be a pro on the Lower East Side and—

Q: When you said the minyan, how big was the minyan with that [phonetic] [00:05:57]—?

Yucikas: It had to be a dozen.

Q: I know what it should be, [00:06:00] but how many were there when you were there?

Yucikas: Yeah, he would get like fifteen, twenty—

Q: Oh, really?

Yucikas: —guys, yeah, yeah.

Q: All from—

Yucikas: All from the—

Q: —nearby—

Yucikas: —neighborhood—

Q: —nearby—

Yucikas: —all from the neighborhood—

Q: —stores?

Yucikas: —yes, and there were a lot of businesses in the neighborhood. And Orchard Street was still a lot of—it was like you would go there on Sundays and do Sunday shopping. And there were a lot of businesses on Canal Street, you know, buy and sell jewelry and electronic appliances, and it was a place where it was legendary, where you could get a good deal. At that time when I first got there, there was a restaurant down on the Lower East Side called the Garden Cafeteria. And it was a dairy restaurant, and the food was so overcooked, [00:07:00] it was like—you know. It was amazing, but it was an interesting place. You walk in, and you feel like you're in another time because the characters were talking about Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution and other things. It was an interesting scene—

Q: This is the 1970s?

Yucikas: This is the late [19]60s, early '70s.

Q: Oh, late '60s, early '70s, okay.

Yucikas: Yeah, because when I came to New York, it was 1968, and I had just gotten out of the army. And when I got out of the army, I just packed up my car. I was in DC, and just—and came to New York, and almost instantly, I found—I stayed with friends in Brooklyn but then had this epiphany that no art dealer [00:08:00] in their right mind was going to go out to Ridgewood, Queens, to visit an art studio. So that prompted me to go into Manhattan after a party one night out there, and miraculously people did go out there.

But I came into the city and bumped into somebody who lived in the neighborhood. And he asked what I was doing in the neighborhood, and I said, “I’m looking for a place to rent, you know, I can’t take it out there anymore.” He said, “Well, there’s a storefront down the street,” and he already had a storefront. He was an artist friend, and he had a storefront on Forsyth Street. And so he showed me his place, and I said, “Oh, this is fantastic, this is exactly what I’m looking for.” I wasn’t thinking loft at that time, because at that time, I couldn’t afford a loft, but I could afford maybe a storefront.

So he said that there was a place across the street from [00:09:00] him on Chrystie Street, so I went, I looked in the window, I said, “Oh, this is it.” And I knocked on the door, and the landlord answered the knock, or I rang the bell to the building. And the landlord lived right above the storefront, and it was the Kriaris [phonetic] [00:09:18] family, they were a Greek family. And when they found out that—what I wanted it for and the fact that I was—I had just gotten out of the army, that sold it on ’em. They wanted to rent to me because, you know, I had done my duty and all this stuff, and I was a nice guy, and when I would go to pay the rent, they would even feed me. They looked at me, and back then, I was like this tall, skinny, wide-eyed, goofy person,

and they liked all of that. I lived there for several years until I heard about the loft. At that point, I could afford something like that and made the move. [00:10:00]

Q: When you worked at Eldridge, who hired you?

Yucikas: Originally, the congregation did, and I don't know who. I think that Judge Bookson was—

Q: I was gonna say it must have been Bookson—

Yucikas: —there was a judge who was like the leader of the pack—

Q: Bookson.

Yucikas: —Judge Paul Bookson. And I'll never forget the day that I was in an office and there had been a bookdealer downstairs. That room had been closed off, and the reason the room had been closed off was, yeah, it—people just put junk in the room. There were metal bookshelves, all the books had fallen off, they were in piles on the floor, it was rubble There were dead rats and, you know, moldy clothes, and it was disgusting. And so they asked if I could clean it up and so I did. [00:11:00] And I was on my hands and knees, you know, pickin' up books and stuff when the door opened, and it was Judge Bookson, and he said, and I'll never forget this, in his voice, "Bob, I got a couple of women here who would like to meet you." And there was Roberta Gratz, Anita Jacobson, and Ruth Abrams, and everybody had these big smiles on their face, and I

just, kind of like, oh, my gosh, and the next was history. They asked if I could—in that room that I was working in, if I could make that their office, and so that was my beginning of working on actually the restoration of the synagogue by building that.

Q: And that office had been the rabbi's study, and the books had been the library [00:12:00] of the rabbi.

Yucikas: I didn't know that it was the library, but I was told that they were dealing books in there because there were also magazine, *Life* magazines and stuff and—

Q: Oh, I don't remember—

Yucikas: —today—

Q: —that.

Yucikas: —those would be collectible items. And I took all of that, all of the books and the magazines. As I recall, I boxed up everything and stored it in the basement of the building. And, at that time, the basement was heated by an old, gas-burning heater in the basement, and at one time, it had a coal-burning furnace. And instead of taking the coals or the slag out, they just piled it up in the basement, and it was, like, full to the rafters [00:13:00] of all this debris and stuff. And so I had to carve out areas to, like, store all of that stuff and—

Q: You've worked on the office, what other spaces—I don't know, it was all downstairs—that you worked on?

Yucikas: Oh, I worked on the upstairs also, the main sanctuary—

Q: What did you do there?

Yucikas: You would go in and there was an area to the left. It was like a little nook that it was a room, and I'm not sure what that room was.

Q: We figured—

Yucikas: [unclear] [00:13:42]—

Q: —it out.

Yucikas: There was the water—

Q: It had been a men's room.

Yucikas: A what?

Q: It had been a men's room, but it was then a storage closet with a lot of dishes and pots.

Yucikas: Yeah, I removed all that stuff and then built a stand in there for—it became a display cabinet. [00:14:00] And I worked on every bench in the place to make secure—to make sure that the benches weren't going to collapse, and I cleaned every bench in there, I moved every bench in there. And then when the actual renovation of the place started—we were cleaning up mainly until the renovation started. And then I drilled holes in the supporting columns in the—of the upstairs balcony area so that we could put the—an iron beam to support that part of the balcony because there were issues with, you know, the structure there and—

Q: [00:15:00] We put in a steel beam for the balcony eventually.

Yucikas: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. I mean, I was there, yeah, and then I put the plates in and everything like that.

Q: Who actually paid you money, was that Bookson, so—?

Yucikas: At that point, I think, yeah, when I started working on the actual synagogue, I think that the group paid for it. I forget who was paying me, but it wasn't Bookson, and it wasn't the congregation. I think it was the—you guy—the—

Q: I'm talking about before us.

Yucikas: Oh, before you. I don't know. No, I did get paid from Judge Bookson, and I remember one time, I had to send him a bill, and he said, "Bring it to me at the Courts Building," [00:16:00] and that's where he worked. And I went to the court, and that was the first time I'd ever seen him without his hat on, and he was in the chambers. I had my invoice, and I sent it to him, and then somebody came from his side of the bench, and they picked up my thing and then they took it and gave it to him and then he gave this person something. And it was a cash payment from him in the middle of a case that he was trying. Later on—

Q: What—

Yucikas: —with Judge Bookson, I—well, that's kind of like a side story, but I also painted his apartment. It seemed like everyone I worked for, I ended up painting their apartments or they were buying art [00:17:00] from me, so, you know, it was an interesting situation to be in. And he was definitely a character, and I think, you know, him and his trademark cigar off the side and that hat that he wore, he was quite a figure. We were having a plaquing ceremony to put the landmark plaque on the building, and I think that—was it Donald?

Q: My Donald—

Yucikas: —had it built. And they gave me instructions on how to install it, and I actually did the installation really into the building and then putting the—

Q: The plaque—

Yucikas: —the—

Q: —that says—that gives the name of the synagogue and the dates?

Yucikas: Yes.

Q: Donald made that?

Yucikas: Mm-hmm.

Q: I didn't even know that.

Yucikas: And so I put that on, but [00:18:00] before the ceremony happened, I was noticing that the—there was—half of the Ten Commandments was missing—

Q: Oh, right—

Yucikas: —so—

Q: —over the bimah?

Yucikas: Over, yes, and so I—

Q: —over the ark actually—

Yucikas: Yeah, over the ark. And so I took it upon myself, unknownst [*sic*] to anybody on the restoration committee or group, and I think that Amy Waterman, was she—?

Q: She came—

Yucikas: She was—

Q: —later—

Yucikas: She came later, but anyway, I—well, she was there when the plaquing ceremony took place. When I brought it to her—and I really analyzed the existing commandments and so then I did as close to a duplicate or a—some—

Q: Same [phonetic] [00:18:59].

Yucikas: —replacement [00:19:00] as I possibly could. And I took it to a scribe on Essex Street, and walking into that scribe's place, was seeing all of these scrolls piled up, and everything was in Hebrew. I brought my thing to make sure that I had it right and it was totally kosher, so to speak. Even to, you know, like all the little details of the knots around and everything like that. I brought it to the synagogue the day—maybe the day after and told Amy that. I said, “Look, I did

this because I don't think it's right that you're missing all the—missing that particular part.” And so I gave it to her, and she burst into tears that [00:20:00] like—she couldn't believe that I had done that. That's where I was putting my art talents to real good use.

And we put it up there, and it just—it was so amazing because, at a certain time in the afternoon as the sun was going down, a ray of sunlight came through the window where there was a lot of missing glass. And that ray of sunlight shined right on the Ten Commandments, and my Ten Commandments was absolutely glowing. And there were cards that were made that illustrate that particular point because in that card, it was a card with a picture from the balcony of the down—shooting downstairs. And you can see [00:21:00] quite clearly that one of them, one of the commandments is brighter than the other one. And so that was one of the things I did. And then every year, I did mention earlier, that I built the sukkahs. They were downstairs in the little alleyway off to the side and they were—

Q: With their plastic-colored lights.

Yucikas: Oh, were they? Yeah, I was taught how to do it right and like I—

Q: By Bookson, I assume?

Yucikas: By Bookson and my friend who got me involved with it—

Q: Oh, right.

Yucikas: Because for him that when he was living on Forsyth Street, he had two apartments on the first floor of that building that he had removed a wall to make it one apartment. [00:22:00] And it looked into a backyard, and there were all these doors down there. He wanted a sukkah made out of those doors and so that was the first one I made, and that's where I got the information about how to do it right, and you don't put any metal or nails in it. And one time when the project was putting a sukkah together in that parking lot area behind the building, they had erected these metal poles and put white plastic around and everything. Some rabbi came and said, "It's not kosher, it's not kosher, you can't have the wood on top of the metal," so I said—I mean, the branches of the trees and stuff, and I think we were using bamboo. And so I said, "Well, it's a simple [00:23:00] fix," and I said, "What you do is you take these two by threes or like a one by four or something and put twine and rope it to the top of it. So you build a platform to put on the—that you can put the bamboo on top of." So the bamboo is not touching metal, but it's touching wood and so what if the wood, that wood is touching something else? As long as the roof wasn't touching—

Q: It—

Yucikas: —that.

Q: —solved the problem.

Yucikas: It solved the problem; it solved the problem.

Q: So what was your interaction with Mr. Markowitz? What was his first name?

Ken: Benjamin.

Q: Benjamin Markowitz. I should say Benjamin Markowitz was the shammas for the building. He would open the synagogue every Sunday for tourists. He would pass the hat asking for donations. I don't [00:24:00] know if he had come through Ellis Island, but he looked like he was still wearing the clothes that he came through—

Yucikas: Exactly—

Q: —Ellis Island.

Yucikas: —and he had that thing about adding things to the heels of his shoes.

Q: What was that?

Yucikas: He was actually wearing platform shoes.

Q: Oh, was that right? I didn't—

Yucikas: It was very strange, very strange.

Q: Well, he was a short man.

Yucikas: He was a short man, and I think he never married. I think he was a bachelor all of his life, and he was totally—

Q: And I don't know—

Yucikas: —dedicated to this—the building.

Q: Do you know if he had a profession before he came to the synagogue?

Yucikas: I don't recall that.

Q: And I think Mr. Bookson probably came—gave him—kept him alive by making him—

Yucikas: Giving him work, yeah.

Q: —work but to be the tour guide and everything else.

Yucikas: Yes, yes.

Q: So [00:25:00] what kind of interaction did you have with him?

Yucikas: Well, it was just a friendly, you know, action—interaction, it wasn't like—

Q: Do you—

Yucikas: I don't—

Q: —remember any kind of interesting information about him? Did he tell you where he was from or when he arrived?

Yucikas: No, no, he didn't give me any of that information.

Q: I mean, he was classic, but I never knew what his actual background was.

Yucikas: Yeah, I don't know what that was.

Q: And I think he was the one who went around the neighborhood and collected money and got people to come to the minyans.

Yucikas: Yes, that's right, that's right. And, you know, people in the neighborhood knew him. I mean, he was like—you know?

Q: Right.

Yucikas: And he was real nudge, and he would, you know, get the people out there. And there was another guy a little bit like him who would cruise Orchard [00:26:00] Street looking for people. And that guy was a little—yeah, I never knew his name, but he had a definite red beard and red hair and I—probably an interesting figure. But he was always asking, “Are you Jewish, are you Jewish?” and like “Come on, come on—”

Q: Yeah, they—

Yucikas: And also, he was like hustling to get people to go to a clothing store that he worked at. In fact in those days, a lot of Orchard Street was still Hasidic stores, and a lot of the businesses on Canal Street were also, those guys were—

Q: They all were and—

Yucikas: —and—

Q: —eventually, they all moved to Brooklyn—

Yucikas: Yeah, they’re all—

Q: —which is why—

Yucikas: —gone.

Q: —they disappeared. And we also had on Canal Street, the Canal Street Dairy [phonetic] [00:26:49], which was our lunch place that had great, traditional Jewish food. There was a woman [00:27:00] who only spoke Yiddish, who is the cook. Any rate, so you worked on the office and was Bookson—? Before we arrived on the scene, did you have the feeling Bookson was trying to make things as good as he could to keep people happy and coming?

Yucikas: Oh, absolutely, absolutely, I mean, he was dedicated to the place, totally dedicated. In addition to doing—working at the synagogue and then doing Bookson's apartment, I also renovated the apartment where he grew up and—which was on—I think it was on Clinton and East Broadway, right across the street from the library and the Education Alliance. And, you know, he had a relative there, [00:28:00] Yossi Paston?

Q: Oh, yeah.

Yucikas: So he lived in the same building where—or I think he may have been a relative of Bookson.

Q: I think he was, I also think he was—

Yucikas: 'Cause they're—

Q: —at one point, part of something in the synagogue, he may have been. He was connected to the synagogue.

Yucikas: Yeah, he was, but it's, kind of like, vague right now.

Q: Do you—

Yucikas: —and—

Q: —remember when—? Okay, so you said a day came that the three of us were interviewed to you—introduced to you.

Yucikas: Yeah.

Q: Did you have any thoughts about who were these crazy women who think they're going to reno—restore this place? I mean, what kind of response did we cause on you?

Yucikas: Well, I was totally psyched and it was like—[00:29:00] for me, I mean, it was kind of like a dream that I just lived a couple of blocks away, I just—I had to walk to work. I knew the—like, all the eating places in the neighborhood. And remember also that after I built the offices there, we built the offices on Canal Street on the second floor of that building. So, at that point, I was getting into building almost full time everywhere, it—it's, kind of like, been fifty

years of hard work, I mean, it's really. When I think back about all of the Sheetrock, all the joint compound, all the plywood that I lifted and put up on walls and—

Q: You were young—

Yucikas: —ceilings and, yeah, young, and I had energy and you know, like—[00:30:00] Yeah, I felt like I was doing good things.

Q: Did you get to know any of the guys who came for the minyan?

Yucikas: No, no, no, there wasn't—

Q: So basically—

Yucikas: —no, there wasn't.

Q: —you knew Markowitz and you knew Bookson, and that was it?

Yucikas: Bookson and Paston and—

Q: And Paston—

Yucikas: —him, and there was one other congregant, his name was Andy Goldberg, and he had been in the clothing business. And he, at one point, told me that, you know, I wasn't dressing right, and so he gave me some shirts that he knew were—he knew what my size was just by looking at me, and so I thought, oh, this is interesting. And so I did a renovation of his apartment also.

Q: Oh God.

Yucikas: So it's like everybody I was knowing, I was doing work for, [00:31:00] it's like—you know?

Q: Yeah, you painted my dining room.

Yucikas: I did, I did your whole house up on Sixty-Second Street.

Q: I'm still—

Yucikas: I did your—

Q: —there.

Yucikas: —house in Fire Island, I worked on your house upstate, and, oh, we did a lot of work together.

Q: Absolutely—

Yucikas: And that you got—

Q: —absolutely.

Yucikas: —I'll never forget that time when the bookcases came into your house and what a struggle it was. And Donald had built them and he had measured—

Q: Into my apartment?

Yucikas: Into your apartment. When you walk in the door, it's like there was a bathroom—

Q: And—

Yucikas: —next to it, and I think it'd been a previous—

Q: Oh, the big—my study.

Yucikas: Your study, yeah, yeah. And I remember I had to chop out part of the wall to make sure that—

Q: To get it in.

Yucikas: —that it—yeah. And then you had me do that impossible thing of—in your dining room [00:32:00] of cutting a hole in the wall and putting your door—

Q: Make a closet—

Yucikas: —in so that you could have a closet that went to the other room. And—

Q: To like closet—

Yucikas: —it was, kind of like, all this stuff. I was making all this stuff up, I mean, it was, kind of, like improvisation.

Q: Well, that's what started with Eldridge.

Yucikas: Yeah, and the Eldridge led to doing the—rebuilding the sukkah on the Civic Center Synagogue. And I did work in—

Q: Civic Center, is that the White Street one? I dunno what—

Yucikas: No, that was—I think it's on Beekman Street.

Q: Oh, okay.

Yucikas: Beekman, and it was on the roof of their building. And the problem that they had was the stairs to it, it wasn't—the platform wasn't directly on the roof, but it was raised [00:33:00] so that there were stairs that had you go up. And if anybody over a hundred pounds stepped on the stairs, they would've—it would've collapsed. So I had to do that and other works for them.

Q: So all of this is interesting, it takes us away from Eldridge.

Yucikas: Yeah, and—

Q: Is there anything about Eldridge that we haven't spoken about that you wanna, sort of, go on the record with that you—in your own interaction with the building?

Yucikas: Well, the building, it was obviously in terrible shape. And one of the scariest things I ever did in that building was when you go in the main entrance and you go to the left, there were—and you go up to second floor up to the balcony area, there was a ladder that went up to the attic. And I was given the task of [00:34:00] going up that ladder with a bundle of wire mesh and closing holes in the—

Q: For the—

Yucikas: —in the windows—

Q: —pigeons.

Yucikas: —so that the pigeons couldn't get in. I'm not sure if an exterminator came or not, but going along those floorboards was just—I was sweating. I just thought I was gonna go through and go collapsing down. And the metal ladder was only about twelve inches wide, and I'm a big guy, and going up that flimsy, little ladder carrying things, it was so scary—

Q: Well—

Yucikas: —and I—

Q: —it stopped the pigeons.

Yucikas: Yeah, it stopped the pigeons, yeah, yeah.

Q: I think that's it.

Yucikas: And somewhere—

Q: Anything, Lynda [phonetic] [00:35:00]?

Lynda: No.

Yucikas: —somewhere, I have—one of the most exciting things that happened when I was there, it was at—when I was working downstairs, I would go into a little office area off to the side back where the downstairs, they had a curtain where it was the women's section back there. And then off to the side, there was a room that it was, kind of, like an office, and there were a couple of safes in there. And I would just casually go in there and eat a sandwich on top of. I would sit in there and wonder if there was anything in there.

Q: Yeah, we opened—

Yucikas: And then one day, the safes were opened, and once [phonetic] [00:35:47] somebody from Sotheby's there to check it out, and I think somebody was doing video, but I did Polaroid photographs. And when I saw what was in those safes, all the breastplates [00:36:00] and the pointers—

Q: Do you still have those photographs?

Yucikas: —and the books. I may still have some of those photographs.

Q: If you have any of it, we could use it.

Yucikas: As I recall, I bundled up all of that stuff, and the newspapers got it wrong, or maybe they were trying to deflect. I bundled it all up in cardboard boxes and then used a hand truck to take it down to a Judaica store—

Q: Ziontalis.

Yucikas: Yeah, between—

Q: It was just up—

Yucikas: —Hester and Canal.

Q: —the block.

Yucikas: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and they had a safe, so it went there. And newspaper said it went to a nearby bank, but it didn't. I was like, well, what happened with all that stuff now?

Q: It was never ours, it was always the congregation, so I don't know what happened to it.

[00:37:00] Ziontalis moved, and I don't know what happened to all that Judaic—

Yucikas: 'Cause I think that there was a book in there that was 1696 or something like that—

Q: I don't remember that.

Yucikas: —a really old book.

Q: Don't remember that. Anyway, I think that's it, Ken [phonetic] [00:37:16]?

Ken: Mm-hmm.

Q: I don't remember there being any book, only—

Ken: Oh yeah, there were—

Q: —silver stuff.

Ken: No, there were books in there.

Q: Really?

Yucikas: Well, there were several safes, one had that stuff and then one had books.

Lynda: When did he stop working, ask him when he stopped working.

Q: What?

Lynda: Ask him when he stopped working.

Q: Oh, when did you stop working at Eldridge?

Yucikas: Oh, I have no idea, I—

Q: It was probably when we started the work, the actual restoration—

Yucikas: Yeah, and—

Q: —'cause then we had—

Yucikas: Reams [phonetic] [00:37:57]?

Q: —formal crews coming in.

Yucikas: [00:38:00] Somebody, and was his name David or Daniel Reams [phonetic] [00:38:04]?

Q: Reams, Brian Reams.

Yucikas: Brian, right.

Q: That was my nephew.

Yucikas: Yeah, wasn't he—didn't he become the contractor?

Q: He was working for the contractor and then, eventually, he moved to Israel. So he's part—

Yucikas: Yeah, and after—

[END OF INTERVIEW]